

TENANT INFORMATION BOOKLET

SHELTERED

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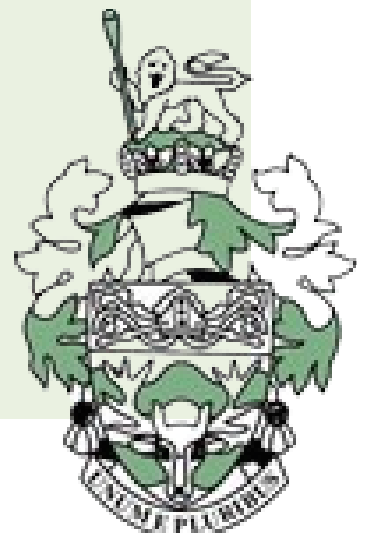


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WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to your new home.

General Information:

We have produced this booklet as a guide to provide you with useful information about the services we provide. If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact your Independent Living Officer.

We understand that, when it comes to housing and support, everyone has different requirements. We aim to tailor our services to meet your needs as best we can.

The schemes are made up of bungalows or flats. Independent Living Officers are on duty from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday (apart from bank holidays) and are allocated to two different schemes for a duration of 6 weeks. They then rotate to another set of two schemes.

They will not be on site at each scheme all day. There will be a notice on the office door which provides their mobile telephone number for you to call if and when you need to speak to them.

Most schemes have laundry facilities, a kitchen, and communal lounge where residents are encouraged to meet and socialise with each other. There is also a communal garden for you to enjoy.

AIMS OF THE SHELTERED SERVICE

We will:

- Provide an environment which is helpful and friendly, encouraging independence and safe and secure living.
- Provide an emergency response to tenants twenty-four hours a day if required.
- Work with tenants, their families, and other professional agencies to help ensure the necessary support is available to maintain independence.
- Ensure that a member of staff will visit each scheme Monday to Friday between 9 – 5 (except bank holidays).
- Encourage tenants to provide positive and negative feedback on the services received, to help improve our services.
- Provide tenants with the opportunity to organise and join in social activities. Tenants can participate in whichever of the social activities they choose, or no activities at all if that is what they prefer.

We will do this by:

- Carrying out weekly and monthly compliance checks to ensure that your accommodation is safe.
- Having a call system in place for your safety and will show you how this works.
- Going through service information with you that is specific to your needs.
- Raising any concerns that we have with the appropriate agency to ensure that you are safe.
- Providing an out of hours service called Forest Care in case you need support when we are not around
- All staff having a Disclosure & Barring service check (DBS) before they are employed by Wokingham Borough Council.
- Operating within our policies, procedures, and work with best practice to ensure that we carry out our duties safely.

We will:

- Respect the individuality and personal rights of each tenant, including any cultural, religious, or other specific needs.
- Understand and respect confidentiality.
- Offer an impartial service.
- Maintain professionalism at all times.

Your commitment to us:

- To go through service information with us so we can discuss what support we can offer, or any other services you may need.
- To press the 'I'm Okay' button on a daily basis.
- To provide us with the name and contact details of a key holder for your property. This should be a family member or friend who can be called upon in the event of an emergency. Key holders can be anyone you want, although it is advisable that they live locally in case they need to attend in an emergency. We only call key holders when you ask us to do so, or when we are concerned about your safety.
- To let your Independent Living Officer know if you are going away overnight or longer so that we do not contact your next of kin to check your whereabouts.
- To tell us when you are returning home after a period of absence.
- To behave responsibly in your home and around the scheme and be considerate towards other tenants and their visitors, for example: ensuring that the volume of your television or radio is not so high as to disturb your neighbours.
- Not to behave in a discriminatory or adverse way to any tenant, visitor, staff member, or contractor within the scheme, regardless of their ethnicity, disability, or other personal characteristics and choices.

The Independent Living Officers

The Independent Living Officers are responsible for:

- Checking calls/visits Monday to Friday.
- Carrying out tenancy checks.
- Carrying out weekly and monthly compliance checks.
- Reviewing service information in consultation with each tenant.
- Signposting support, care needs, and other issues relating to daily living including Home Care, repairs and maintenance, and signposting to welfare and benefits advice.
- Helping to report any concerns tenants may have to the appropriate departments, including helping to chase repairs and maintenance on behalf of residents.
- Co-ordinating with other professionals to ensure services are provided as identified within the Service Information Document.
- Raising any safeguarding concerns with the appropriate services.
- Working with other services to ensure tenants are safe in their properties.
- Working with tenants' families and, where appropriate, raise any concerns.
- Assisting with any queries/concerns relating to the tenancy agreement.
- Helping to organise social activities and events within the scheme.
- Monitoring the cleaning of communal areas.
- Carrying out property viewings.
- Dealing with any breaches of the tenancy agreement.
- Carrying out Scheme Inspections.
- Working with residents and managers to help with improvements in the schemes.

What the Independent Living Officers are not able to help you with:

- Providing personal care of any description.
- Lifting or moving you if you fall.
- Applying dressings or giving medication, eye drops, etc.
- Going shopping or collecting pensions on your behalf.
- Cleaning your home or doing your laundry.

- Dealing with your personal finances, wills or signing legal documents.
- Undertaking furniture removal.
- Doing odd jobs.
- Providing transportation of any kind.
- Dealing with any hospital or GP appointments.

The Service Information Document and Personal Information that we will need:

We will be completing a Support Plan with you and will be asking you for some personal details to share with Forest Care, our out-of-hours service, in case there is an emergency. This is to assist the emergency services in case the information is required by them.

Some of the information we will need is listed below and will be held by the Independent Living Officer and the Forest Care Control Centre:

- Your name and telephone number.
- The name and address of your doctor.
- Your date of birth.
- Your NHS number.
- The name, address, and telephone number of any close relatives or friends you give us permission to make emergency contact with.
- The name address and telephone number of a key holder (if different from above).
- Any medical or social information.

These details will not be disclosed to any unauthorised person and are always kept in a secure place. We will use them only to provide a service to you, for example: in an emergency, if you ask us to call the GP, or when referring you to another service.

It is very important that we have up to date contact details for your next of kin, which we will use in case of an emergency or if you need us to contact them.

When you move in:

Once you have signed your tenancy agreement, we will complete a form for Forest Care which will include your basic information. You will also be offered a pendant in case of emergencies.

The Independent Living Officer will arrange to visit you in your home to complete a Service Information Document, which will cover several topics including:

- Making and managing health care appointments.
- Any personal care you may need.
- Shopping for food, clothes, and so on.
- Getting about generally.
- How you feel (especially following the upheaval of a move) and any other emotional or mental health issues you may have.
- Social activity and keeping in contact with people you care about.
- Your NHS number. This is required in case of an emergency.

The information discussed may determine whether we need to signpost you to other agencies. This may include asking for an assessment for personal care needs.

It is important that you also have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have to ensure that, if you need any support, we can contact the right services for you.

We will review the Service Information Document annually, or as your circumstances change, and can provide you with a copy for your records if you would like one.

If you have anything else you wish to talk with us about, please raise it with your Independent Living Officer during the assessment. If there is anything they are unable to deal with directly, they will signpost you to the relevant department.

What happens when the Independent Living Officer is not on the scheme?

When the Independent Living Officer is not on duty or on the scheme, help is available using the call system which will be diverted to Forest Care. This is a control centre staffed twenty-four hours a day, every day of the year, by trained operators who will direct your call appropriately if they are unable to help you themselves. You can contact them by pressing your pendant or pulling one of the red cords in your flat.

If you are unable to respond the emergency services will be called by Forest Care, who have details for your next of kin and/or key holder and will contact them accordingly. If you are unsure about any of the above, please talk to your Independent Living Officer.

Daily services provided by the Independent Living Officer:

The Independent Living Officer will check the 'I'm Okay' button every Monday to Friday. Residents are asked to press the 'I'm Okay' button, which is the green button on the speech unit in your flat, every day before 11am.

If you are not well or something is wrong and you do not press the 'I'm Okay' button, the Independent Living Officer will knock at your door. If you do not, or are unable to, answer the door, the Independent Living Officer will try to contact you via the intercom in your flat.

If you do not, or are unable to, answer the intercom, your next of kin will be contacted. If there is still a problem or we are worried, the Independent Living Officer and a colleague will use the master key to open your door and check to see that you are OK.

We may also use the master key if:

You are away and we need to get into your flat to carry out an emergency repair, for example if there is a flood or a gas leak.

It is therefore important that you don't fit any additional locks, chains, or bolts to your front door as these will mean that we can no longer gain access in an emergency. Master keys are kept secure and are only used by staff in an emergency.

When the Independent Living Officer is on leave or off sick, visits will still be completed by another member of staff covering the scheme to ensure support is always available.

GETTING INVOLVED

Activities on the scheme:

All tenants are welcome to get involved in activities that take place on the scheme. If an activity you enjoy isn't currently available on the scheme, please talk to the Independent Living Officer. Together you may find that other people are equally interested. Nobody is obligated to join in, but we like to give choices that the majority of people will enjoy.

Some schemes have social clubs which collect funds for trips, special events (like Christmas lunches out), and may fundraise for events or for scheme improvements (like garden furniture). Your Independent Living Officer will tell you how things work on the scheme and how you can get involved if you would like to.

All schemes have a coffee morning every six to seven weeks. These are an opportunity to meet other tenants and staff in an informal atmosphere. Some schemes also hold their own coffee mornings once a week.

If a specific activity isn't held at your scheme but is available at another, you are always welcome to attend that activity elsewhere.

Tenants' meetings on the scheme:

Tenant meetings may be arranged on an ad-hoc basis for the purpose of consultation, or to provide information that could be useful to you.

KEEPING SAFE IN YOUR OWN HOME AND AROUND THE SCHEME

Getting into the Scheme and your home:

Door Entry System on Flats:

Flats have a door entry system for added security. Each flat has a handset that allows you to talk to anyone who rings your number from the main entrance door and give them access remotely (should you wish to do so). This means you don't have to go to the main front door yourself.

Please do not give access into the building to anyone you don't know. If you do not recognise the caller's voice, or are not expecting a visit, please do not let them in. This is important for your own safety and the safety of other tenants.

If you have concerns about anyone who tries to gain access to the building, or you are unsure of their identity, pull the cord on your alarm system and ask the Independent Living Officer to check the person's identity. If the Independent Living Officer is not on the scheme, Forest Care control centre will answer your call.

When you are coming in and out of the scheme, please don't let other people in with you. A favourite way for intruders to get into buildings is to wait for someone else to politely hold the door open for them. Please also ensure that the main door closes properly behind you so they can't slip in without you realising.

Using the call system in personal emergencies:

Every home on the scheme is provided with a call system via a wall unit. If your scheme has communal areas, there may also be call points in these areas.

In your home there are pull cords in individual rooms and we can provide you with a pendant that you wear around your neck.

The call system is operated using the pull cords, the button on the pendant, or the wall unit itself. Whichever method you use, the call will go through to the handset carried by your Independent Living Officer. If they are off-site, it will go through to the Forest Care control centre.

When you make a call, the wall unit beeps until it is answered. It may feel like a long time between making a call and hearing an answer, but we aim to answer these calls promptly. The Independent Living Officer or control operator will answer the call and speak to you.

The person answering the call may come straight to see you or send someone else depending on the nature of the problem. If you need emergency help, it is quickest for us to arrange that instead of sending someone else to see you first. So, if you can be clear what response you think you need, it will help us to ensure that the correct service is provided. If you need an ambulance or the GP, or another emergency service, you will need to give enough details for that call to be made on your behalf.

We may ask one of your emergency contacts (or key holders) to come to see you if that seems the best response. Your key holders must tell us if they cannot attend.

Once we have finished talking to you, we will close the call and arrange the response. If appropriate, we will keep the call open and check on you whilst we organise the right response and are waiting for it to arrive.

If you pull one of the cords or press the pendant by accident, this is not an issue. In fact, this gives us an extra opportunity to check that all is well with you and allows us to check that the system is working properly.

SAFETY IN THE SCHEMES

Electrical Safety:

Putting lots of extension leads into plug sockets can lead to a fire.

Please follow this advice if using an extension lead:

- Only plug one into a socket and don't plug extra adaptors into the extension lead.
- Make sure you keep it to the edge of the room as otherwise it may become a trip hazard
- All plugs should be safely wired, with the lead properly covered by the insulating plug cover.
- If plugs or sockets spark as you plug or unplug them, please get the appliance checked for safe wiring.
- If the lead of an appliance is damaged, replace it. It could short out and start a fire or give you an electric shock.
- Don't leave electric heaters on when you aren't in and don't stand them next to or under flammable materials like curtains.

Gas Safety (if applicable):

- Don't put flammable materials near your gas cooker.
- Don't use your cooker to provide extra heat for your home. This produces condensation which can make the floor slippery and wastes lots of energy as it is inefficient.
- See the emergency section below for details of what you should do if you smell gas.

Gas leaks:

- Different schemes have different gas fittings. Some have communal boilers that supply heating and hot water to every flat on the scheme. In other schemes, you will have your own boiler in your home.
- We check all the landlord's gas appliances (boiler, gas, fire, etc.) every year and ask that you co-operate with this to make sure that all appliances are safe.

If you smell gas:

DO NOT use light switches to turn lights on or off.

DO NOT light any flame such as lighters, matches, or the oven.

DO NOT smoke.

DO check that all gas appliances are turned off and open windows to disperse the gas.

RING Transco on **0800 111999** or use a call system unit so that the Independent Living Officer or Forest Care can do this for you. It is best to leave your home and wait for Transco at a neighbour's or in the community lounge. Use a call system unit outside your property to let your Independent Living Officer or Forest Care know what is happening, so we can attend to support you and to make sure that nobody is in danger.

Fire safety:

Fire alarm systems are fitted on all schemes with internal communal areas. All homes in these schemes have heat and/or smoke detectors that are linked to the main fire system. Detectors are also fitted around communal areas. Any fire or smoke detected will set off the fire alarm for the whole building.

If you are not in your own home, **DO NOT RETURN** to it, but leave the building via the nearest fire exit which will be clearly marked with the standard 'running man' sign. You should only leave your home if the fire is in **YOUR** flat or you can see you are at risk if you stay. If the fire is not in your flat, only leave the building if you are in a communal area or are sure that there is no fire impeding your exit route.

If you are in your own home, the fire brigade has advised us that you should stay inside with your front door shut firmly but not locked. They will evacuate you from there. A fire procedure notice is displayed on the back of your front door. Please read this and find out where your nearest fire exit is located. The Independent Living Officer will tell you about any specific fire procedures on your scheme, including fire system tests and fire practices. The system is tested regularly to ensure it is always in full working order.

If you discover a fire, use the closest break glass unit to set the alarm off and leave the vicinity. You should alert the emergency services by dialling **999** and speaking to the fire brigade.

Slips and trips:

It is easy trip over rugs and furniture when you aren't used to your new home yet. Loose floor coverings can be dangerous so please consider securing them down properly at the edges and use anti-slip matting underneath.

Repairs:

Any repairs can be phoned through to the repair's helpdesk on **0800 515 287**. If a repair is outstanding and you need any help chasing it, please speak to the Independent Living Officer. If there are any urgent problems outside normal office hours, pull the cord for assistance.

COMMUNAL FACILITIES

Guest Room:

Most of our schemes have a guest bedroom, which can be booked through the Independent Living Officer for a fee if relatives or friends want to stay. Your Independent Living Officer can show you the room and will tell you what the arrangements are on your scheme.

Lounge and Kitchen:

Most schemes have a communal lounge. This can be used for social activities, recreational activities or simply as a place to meet and talk with friends. You cannot bring other furniture or electrical items into the communal areas because of potential fire risks. The scheme cleaning company will clean the communal areas, but we do ask that tenants keep it tidy and wash and put away crockery etc.

Toilets:

Most schemes have at least one toilet in the lounge area. These are cleaned every day.

Gardens:

There are communal gardens at most schemes. These are maintained by our contractors and paid for through your service charge. If you wish to carry out some gardening, you will need to speak to the Independent Living Officer.

Residents must not cut the grass or hedges at any schemes due to health and safety risks but are encouraged to work with other residents to maintain flowerbeds.

The specification of the gardening contract is available to see on scheme notice boards.

Notice Boards

You are welcome to use the notice boards that are designated for residents, although we would like to have sight of the notices first. This is just to ensure that notices are valid and will not cause offence or misunderstanding. Please contact your Independent Living Officer if you would like something put on the notice board.

Laundry:

Most schemes have communal laundry facilities with washing machines and tumble dryers. The charge for these services is included in your housing service charge.

Please keep these facilities clean and tidy and mop up any water yourself to minimise the risk of slips. Please ensure that, if you put washing or drying in, you monitor it and do not leave it a machine for a long time as this causes inconvenience to others.

Tenants are asked not to put the machines on at anti-social times between the hours of 11pm – 7am.

We ask that soiled clothing or bedding is rinsed thoroughly before putting into the machines to prevent inconvenience to other users.

We also ask that you avoid putting on small loads of washing or drying as this is wasteful. Instead, please help us to conserve energy and water by washing or drying full loads at once.

These facilities are for your personal use, not for anyone who doesn't live on the scheme.

Cleaning:

We have contractors who clean communal areas on each scheme, which includes corridors, stairs, communal rooms etc. The cleaner cannot clean your own home, so if you cannot manage this yourself, please ask the Independent Living Officer for advice.

Window Cleaning:

The housing department arranges for the cleaning of the outside of windows in the communal areas. You are responsible for cleaning the windows of your own home.

CHARGES FOR LIVING IN SHELTERED HOUSING

Your service charge covers:

- The cost of maintaining, cleaning, and repairing communal facilities and replacing items of furniture, carpets, etc.
- The cost of maintaining door entry systems, fire alarm systems, and other more specialist equipment.
- The cost of cleaning communal facilities, such as laundry, corridors, communal toilets, etc.
- The cost of running laundries, communal kitchens, communal bathrooms, and showers.
- The cost of maintaining the communal garden areas.
- The charges for gas, electricity, water, and sewerage in the communal areas only.

Your support charge covers:

- A contribution to costs of running the office.
- The costs of Forest Care, who monitor and respond to any calls when the Independent Living Officer isn't on duty.

Your rent covers:

- The costs of providing, repairing, and maintaining your home.
- The costs of managing your home and your tenancy (i.e., part of the costs of the Independent Living Officer).

Your rent does not cover:

- Payment of your personal utility bills and/or council tax.

YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) gives you specific legal rights to see the information that is kept about you on our computer systems and in any paper files. You have a legal right to see what is recorded about you, although some information may not be available to you where a third party is involved.

The Sheltered Housing Service holds records about your personal details and your situation and keeps notes about any contact members of staff make with you. The Forest Care computer system also holds your personal details and some key information about the type of care you receive. It is important for us to hold this information so that we can deliver your support to a high standard. These records are confidential, which means that information will only be passed to people who need to know about you. If we need to share any of your personal information with a third party, you will be asked before we do so. We only share information without your permission if there is a serious risk to you or to staff.

The Neighbourhood and Communities team holds information about your rent account and your tenancy.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Can I have a pet?

We will not unreasonably refuse permission to keep a dog but will look at individual circumstances. Dogs must be kept on a lead in communal areas including gardens at all times. Permission to keep a cat will be granted to tenants who live in a ground floor flat or have a self-contained garden. Dogs and cats must not roam around in internal communal areas. Please ask a member of the Sheltered Housing staff about which schemes allow these pets.

Small animals that are normally kept in cages, bowls, tanks, etc. are welcome on all schemes but must stay inside your home. If you have any pets, the Independent Living Officer will need to know who has agreed to care for it in the event of you being unable to do so yourself.

How do I get a Television Licence?

You apply for a TV licence in the normal way. If you, or anyone in your household, are over 75 and claim pension credit the licence is now free. You should contact TV Licencing directly if you have any questions.

Do I need insurance?

Yes, you are responsible for insuring the contents of your home. The Council's insurance covers the building itself. Your contents insurance should cover items such as water damage to carpets caused by leaking pipes etc. as the Council would only be responsible for such items if they had failed to repair something they already knew about.

Wokingham Borough Council holds full employer's liability and public liability cover to cover all its legal liabilities. A copy of this document will be displayed on the scheme noticeboard.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How are the charges for my home made up?

Your scheme charges are made up of the following:

- **Rent:** This covers repairs, maintenance and improvements, and housing management functions. These charges are eligible for Housing Benefit purposes.
- **Service Charge:** This covers communal aspects of the scheme and ILO services. These charges are eligible for Housing Benefit purposes.
- **Heating Charge:** This covers heating to individual properties. These charges are not eligible for Housing Benefit and so, even if you are entitled to Housing Benefit, you will not receive it to help with this charge.
- **Water Charge:** This covers water to individual properties. This charge is not eligible for Housing Benefit and so, even if you are entitled to Housing Benefit, you will not receive it to help with this charge.

Do I have to pay Council Tax?

Yes, but when you make a claim for Housing Benefit you can also make a claim for Council Tax Reduction. If you are not entitled you must make payment to the Council – if you live alone you will be entitled to a 25% discount on the amount, which you must claim.

How do I get extra keys and door fobs?

You can have extra keys cut but you will need to contact your ILO to obtain these. There will be a charge for extra keys and fobs.

Can I put my own carpet in my flat?

Yes, we do not supply this.

Can I make alterations to my property?

Alterations to your property can be made but you need to obtain consent to do this. You must first inform the Housing Service if you wish to make an alteration to your property.

Where am I allowed to smoke in my scheme?

Smoking and Vaping is prohibited in all communal areas including the entrances. However, residents are allowed to smoke within their flats as per our policy and procedure for Fire Safety.

