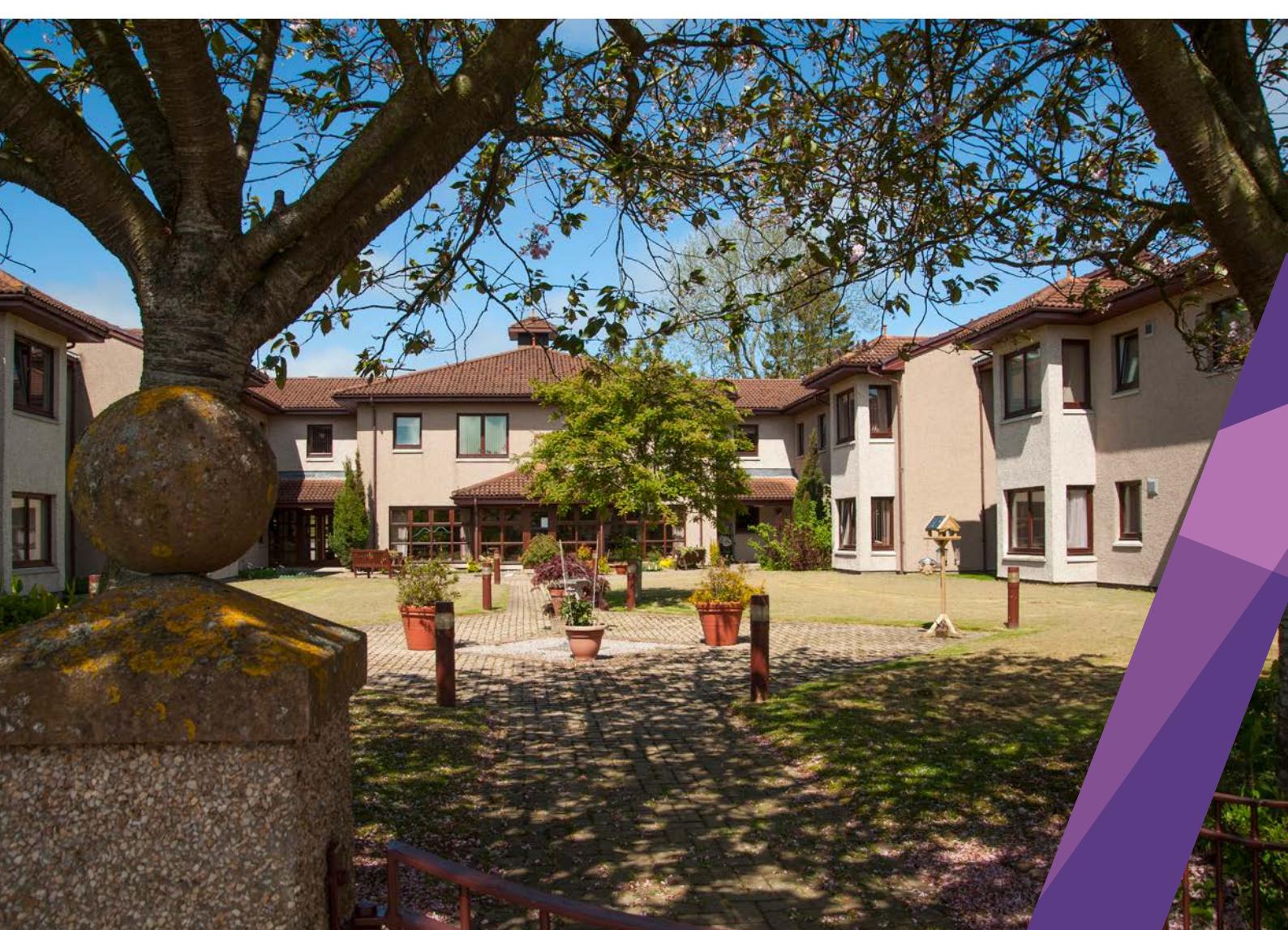


From mountain to sea

Sheltered Housing Tenants' Handbook

July 2017



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Introduction

This Sheltered Housing Tenants' handbook has been compiled in conjunction with the Sheltered Housing Tenants' Forum.

The aim of this Sheltered Housing Tenants' handbook is to provide information to aid and assist existing and prospective tenants of sheltered housing, and also for agencies and individuals with an interest in sheltered housing in Aberdeenshire.

This booklet should contain all you need to know about sheltered housing. However, if you require further information, your local Aberdeenshire Council office will be happy to assist.

Further information is also available on the Aberdeenshire Council website:

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/housing/housing-options/renting/our-sheltered-housing-schemes/

The Role Of Sheltered Housing

Sheltered housing schemes within Aberdeenshire allows older people and people with particular needs to live independently, with the right support, in a comfortable and secure environment. It also gives the opportunity for social contact and companionship, if desired, and equally respects an individual's right to privacy.

Security and peace of mind are offered through an alarm system and a dedicated mobile team of Sheltered Housing Officers.

Sheltered Housing Officers provide support to tenants in a professional and confidential manner and they are there to give low level housing support to tenants to enable them to live as independently as possible.

Daily access to the Sheltered Housing Officers are;

Monday to Friday - 8:45am to 5:00pm
and

Saturday and Sunday - 9:00am to 1:00pm

Aberdeenshire Responders for Care at Home (ARCH) deliver an out of hours and day time responder service to support tenants with any unplanned care needs.

Tenants may also have access to a range of extra support from other health and care professionals if they need it.

Tenants of Sheltered Housing have most of the same legal rights and responsibilities as other Aberdeenshire Council Tenants.

Specific issues relating to sheltered housing tenants are as follows:

The Role of the Sheltered Housing Officer

Sheltered Housing Officers work with tenants to carry out visits or daily calls, for example;

- Provide general advice and assistance
- Assist with home security, maintenance and repairs issues
- Help support you with official correspondence, including assistance with completing forms
- Encourage and promote social contact and social activities
- Assist in arranging social activities
- Assist tenants in accessing other services, such as the Doctor, Nurse, Occupational Therapists and accessing Planned Care

Completion of necessary records and safeguard your general health and well-being.

Sheltered Housing Officers will work with tenants to develop a personal Housing Support Plan. The aim of the plan is to help you maintain your health and wellbeing. The plans are completed approximately every 6 months and can also be updated according to changing individual needs or any changes in personal circumstances.

The Sheltered Housing service is required to keep appropriate records for each tenant. The details kept are necessary in the event of an emergency for contact with families, doctors and hospitals. This information is kept confidential at all times and would only be shared with essential services if appropriate.

The Role of the Housing Officer

In addition to the Sheltered Housing Officer(s) at the schemes you will also have an allocated Housing Officer. The Housing Officer will make periodic visits to the scheme and will be involved with the management of your tenancy.

Their duties may include;

- Providing advice to help on all aspects to sustain your tenancy
- Attend tenants meetings if required
- Visits to arrange for work to be carried out in your property and any communal garden areas associated with the scheme

You will also have an allocated Housing Officer who will be able to assist with the financial aspects of your tenancy.

Their duties include;

- Setting up direct debits / standing orders for rent payments
- Taking rent payments over the phone
- Providing advice if you have difficulty paying your rent

If you wish to discuss an issue relating to your tenancy then you can contact your local housing office. You can arrange to meet with the Housing Officer at the local housing office, or they can visit you at home.

Community Alarm System

A community alarm system is installed in all sheltered housing flats, linked cottages and communal areas. You can use these to call for help in an emergency or for general assistance. Each tenant is provided with a

MyAimee pendant which allows them to call for help at any time. You should wear or keep this with you at all times. The Sheltered Housing Officer on duty, or an operator at the Regional Communications Centre (RCC) operates when the sheltered housing staff are off duty or away from the scheme, and will answer your call. The system identifies where you have made the call from. The alarm system lets you talk to the Sheltered Housing Officer or an operator at RCC if the Sheltered Housing Officer is off duty or away from the scheme.

You can activate the alarm by;

- Pressing the button on MyAimee pendant which you can wear around your neck or your wrist or carry with you
- Pulling the cord or pushing the red button on the modules located in some of the rooms in your home or communal areas
- Pressing the button on the intercom
- Please ensure that you look after all your pendants and return them to your Sheltered Housing Officer after terminating your tenancy or you may be charged for the cost of replacing it.

Defined Services and Charges

Sheltered Housing Rent

Charges for Sheltered Housing are broken down into rent and a number of service charges which will be detailed in your Scottish Secure Tenancy agreement. You will pay all of these service charges together with your rent. The rent covers the cost of providing and managing your property including repairs, maintenance and housing improvements.



Sheltered Housing Service Charges

The service charges cover the costs of the additional services provided in Sheltered Housing. This includes the heating and lighting in your home and the communal facilities. The Sheltered Housing Officer's duties managing the scheme are also included in the service charges.

Some specific examples of what the service charges cover are the cost of fuel, lift maintenance, fire alarms, provision of furniture and equipment and the cleaning of communal areas.

The rent and service charges (apart from the charge for heating and lighting your home) are eligible for Housing Benefit. All tenants are eligible to apply for Housing Benefit. Advice can also be sought from the Benefits Section staff at your local housing office. The Sheltered Housing Officers can assist you in accessing help from these staff.

Sheltered Housing Support Charges

As well as managing the scheme the Sheltered Housing Officers also provide housing support services to assist you to live as independently as possible. The charge for housing support is invoiced to you by the council separately from your rent and other service charges. If you feel that you may have difficulty in paying the contribution and have savings or assets in excess of the eligible limit you can request a Financial Assessment. You can do this when you move into your new home or by contacting the Sheltered Housing Officer at any time in the future or if your savings falls below this limit.

All enquiries with regard to financial matters are dealt with in the strictest of confidence.

For any benefits queries please contact the Aberdeenshire Contact Centre on 03456 08 12 00.

Housing Repairs and Upgrades

For all repairs (including Emergencies) please contact our repairs number on 03456 08 12 03. Your Sheltered Housing Officer can assist you with this if necessary.

The Sheltered Housing Officer Team can also support you to arrange repairs.

When requesting a repair you should;

- Arrange a time when it is convenient for you to be at home
- Provide a contact telephone number in case we need to contact you
- Let us know of any disability or impairment you may have that may affect our ability to gain access to your home

Once we have made arrangements for your repair, there are a number of things you should do to make sure we can carry out our job as quickly, effectively and safely as possible, and to minimise inconvenience to you.

As a Sheltered Housing tenant you are responsible for;

- Making sure there is a responsible person (i.e. you or a relative or friend) present to allow the council representative access to carry out the repair. It is recommended that this person stays for the duration of the repair
- Clearing the area around the repair before the council representative arrives to carry out the work. The Sheltered Housing Officer can offer support in finding help for this if required
- It is recommended that pets are kept away from the area of the repair whilst work is in progress



You will receive a repairs confirmation slip after you have reported the repair and this will advise you of the target completion date. Should the repair not have been carried out on time please contact the Sheltered Housing Officer who can assist you. The repairs confirmation slip is also a comment slip, please complete this and return it after your repair has been completed.

Planned And Cyclical Maintenance

The Council is responsible for undertaking regular checks of services within Sheltered Housing schemes including water, heating systems, fire alarms, emergency lighting and lifts.

Access to your home may be required in order to complete some of these checks and you should ensure that access is provided on request. In the event of your absence, arrangements with Sheltered Housing Officers can be made to ensure access to your property so that any essential checks can be carried out.

Housing Improvements

The process for upgrading Sheltered Housing schemes is the same as for all other council houses and flats. Therefore, you may receive upgrades to your property for example, kitchen, bathroom, windows, doors and heating renewal. This is based upon the age and condition of the property. If you live in a flat within a main scheme building then there may also be other works to the communal areas such as fire alarm, emergency lighting and sprinkler system upgrades.

If any upgrades are due to your home you will receive a letter from the council at least three months before the works are planned to commence.

Housing staff and contractors will meet with tenants to give detailed explanation of the type of work to be carried out. It is very important that you allow Council staff or our appointed contractor access to your property so that we can plan and then undertake the work. Before any works are started in your home or within the common areas, Housing and Property Service staff and the contractor will hold a general meeting in your scheme to which the tenants will be invited. This again is to explain in more detail the works to be carried out and to allow you the opportunity to raise any queries or concerns you may have.

The Council will give assistance and advice to help you to prepare your home prior to the work starting.

Sheltered Housing Services and Facilities

Concessionary Television Licence

A TV Licence is free if you are over 75. Some Sheltered Housing schemes may not be covered by the concessionary television licence regulations and tenants will be required to meet the full television licence fee. If this is the case you will be advised accordingly.

Communal Facilities

Various communal facilities such as lounge, guest bedrooms, laundry room and bin rooms are available in Sheltered Housing schemes. These are provided for the use of all tenants including anyone living in properties linked to the main block.

The tenants' lounge is an extension of your home and is for the use of tenants, their families and friends



and invited guests. The lounge can be used for group activities such as games, crafts, classes, coffee mornings, concerts and special or informal social events. Please notify the Sheltered Housing Officer if you wish to use this facility for a special event so it can be agreed and recorded in the scheme calendar.

Social and Community Activities

Sheltered Housing is a very special environment that offers tenants the opportunity to have access to a number of social situations.

Some of the groups and activities that our tenants currently enjoy are;

- Informal social gatherings such as afternoon cup of tea and catch up
- More formal activities such as concerts / external entertainers
- Interest / Hobby groups such as Crafts, exercises & games

Programmes of activities are reviewed with the Sheltered Housing Officer at least once every 6 months to ensure all tenants are enjoying their current arrangements and provides the opportunity to discuss any new ideas.

Laundry Facilities

All laundries have washing machines and tumble dryers available for the use of tenants within the scheme or linked properties. The Sheltered Housing Officer will also use the laundry for communal scheme housekeeping.

Guest Accommodation

Guest accommodation is provided at most Sheltered Housing schemes. This enables friends or relatives of tenants to visit for limited periods. Priority is given to relatives or friends of a tenant who is ill or requires additional support. Please contact the Sheltered Housing Officer to get more information as to how this accommodation can be booked and paid for.

Car Parking

Car parking is available at most Sheltered Housing schemes. "Emergency Access" areas should always be kept free of any vehicles. Please ask your visitors to be considerate when parking near the scheme.

Communal Gardens

The external gardens surrounding Sheltered Housing schemes are maintained by the Council's Landscape Services department. Some tenants may have cultivated or planted areas and provided these are well maintained and do not cause any major management issues then this is permissible. If you want to put up a garden shed or greenhouse in a communal garden, you need to obtain the Council's permission first. Public footpaths and roads are swept periodically by the Council to remove any litter (tree leaves, seeds and fallen blossom are not regarded as litter).



Tenant Participation

What is Tenant Participation?

Tenant Participation is the way you as a tenant can help to improve the housing service. It is a two-way process of tenants working in partnership with the council to share ideas and information and to have input to decisions with regard to the improvement of the housing service. The opportunities are there for you to get involved and it can and does make a difference.

How can I get involved?

There are a variety of different ways that you can get involved, in a manner and at a level that suits your own circumstances. You do not need any prior knowledge or understanding to take part, just your own experience of being a tenant, of homelessness, or as a housing applicant. Some opportunities for involvement are very local, looking at issues in your own scheme or neighbourhood, while others look at wider issues across Aberdeenshire.

All council tenants receive a copy of the quarterly Tenants Newsletter, edited by the tenants on the Tenant Participation Promotion Team (TPPT). The newsletter regularly has news of involvement opportunities, feedback from tenant groups, contact details of staff and tenant representatives and information on Aberdeenshire wide housing issues.

Sheltered Housing Tenant Forum

This Forum gives Sheltered Housing tenants a voice about their housing concerns and is comprised of representatives from schemes across Aberdeenshire. It meets three times a year to discuss issues relating specifically to Sheltered Housing. The Forum also produces a Newsletter three times a year, reporting on the discussions of the Forum. It also contains the contact details of all the tenants involved with the Forum.

Locally, your own scheme may have its own Tenant group that meets on a regular basis to discuss issues within the scheme. Check with your Sheltered Housing Officer.

Further Information

Details of all tenant participation opportunities, local tenant groups, local tenant voices, TPPT members and tenant participation staff are available as follows;

- From your Sheltered Housing Officer, who can help you to get involved
- On the Aberdeenshire Council website: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/housing/tenant/tenantparticipation
- From your local Housing Office (each area also has a local Tenant Participation Officer)



Security of the Scheme

All tenants have a responsibility to contribute to the security of the scheme.

You can help by taking the following suggested precautions;

- Do not let anyone into the scheme or your home unless you know who they are and why they are calling. Ask for identification
- Make sure all doors are locked and all windows closed when you are away from your home. Lock your door at night
- If you have a key safe please change the code on a regular basis

Keys and Door Fobs

All new tenants are provided with two keys and two fobs to access the property and the main access door of the sheltered housing scheme. In the interests of security it is advised that you do not give the key / fob for the main scheme door to anyone else. All visitors to your own property should use the door entry system. If you have any difficulties using this system then you should contact the Sheltered Housing Officer.

Sheltered Housing Officers hold a master key to provide access throughout the scheme. Under no circumstances will staff use the key to enter a property without consent,

unless we cannot contact you or in an emergency situation such as fire or flood.

Health and Safety

Aberdeenshire Council places a high priority on maintaining the health and welfare of everyone within our Sheltered Housing scheme. You can help by being safety conscious at all times.

Please see the following examples;

- When cooking, ensure pans (particularly frying pans) are not left unattended
- Avoid cooking if you are tired or under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which would impair your ability to do this safely
- Make sure electrical flexes are not led across the floor, even if covered by a carpet
- Make sure plugs are correctly wired and fused and do not over load sockets
- If you smoke, please ensure that any smoking items are completely extinguished and disposed of safely

Fire procedures and precautions

All Sheltered Housing schemes have appropriate detection systems in place. These detectors must not be tampered with, altered or covered at any time. These detectors are also linked to the communication call system.



Fire and evacuation procedures are displayed in all sheltered housing scheme. Everyone accessing the complex should be aware of these and be able to respond appropriately during a fire alarm. Sheltered Housing Officers will carry out weekly fire alarm checks and regular fire drills. Fire exit doors should only be used in the event of a fire and not obstructed in any way.

Tenants should always inform the Sheltered Housing Officer when they intend to be away from the scheme. This will allow the Sheltered Housing Officer to account for all tenants in the event of a fire alarm.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service can offer free and independent advice and information. This can include a home fire safety visit. This can be arranged by the Sheltered Housing Officer.

Data Protection

All Aberdeenshire Council staff comply with the objectives and principles of the Data Protection Act 1998. No personal data is obtained without your knowledge or permission. Any information which is obtained will be kept safe and secure and any appropriate sharing of information will be in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you have any queries concerning your personal data at Aberdeenshire Council please email dataprotection@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or write to:

Data Protection Officer
Aberdeenshire Council
St Leonard's
Sandyhill Road
Banff AB45 1BH

Pets

Tenants in all sheltered housing schemes must apply in writing to the local Housing office for permission to keep a pet(s). If you or any of your visitors take a pet into the scheme then you are responsible for the pet and its behaviour.

Mobility Scooters And Electric Wheelchairs

Before you consider purchasing a mobility scooter or an electric wheelchair it is recommended that you contact your local Housing office for further advice. Physical constraints within a scheme, for example the size of a lift and width of corridors, could mean that it is not possible for you to use a scooter or be granted permission for one. These types of equipment should not be charged or stored in the communal areas of the scheme.

It is recommended that if a tenant has any mobility concerns then they should seek the advice of a health professional, the Sheltered Housing Officer can also assist you with these matters.



Recycling and Refuse Collection

All schemes offer facilities to encourage tenants to recycle.

Tenants are responsible for putting out refuse into the communal bin areas in the main schemes or in a wheelie bin provided in the case of individual properties. The Sheltered Housing Officer will be able to advise you about refuse collection days.

Compliments, Comments and Complaints

The Sheltered Housing Service vision is;

"To deliver the best Housing Support service, in order to promote the independence of our tenants and realise their potential in a flourishing environment. *To make a difference no matter how big or small*"

Aberdeenshire Council values customer feedback GOOD OR BAD in helping to make sure all services are easy to use, that problems are resolved and that all of the people who work for the council are polite and helpful. All feedback is welcomed whether it is compliment, comment or complaint and helps us shape the way the council provides its service for now and in the future.

To offer any compliment, comment or complaint please contact our Feedback Team on 03456 08 12 03 or via our website -

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Sheltered Housing- Moving On

Alternative Accommodation

Tenants can apply for a move to alternative council or housing association by completing an on-line application at ; www.apply4homes.org.uk

If however, you require assistance in completing an on-line housing application you can call the Contact Centre on 03456 08 12 03.

When you have been identified as a possible candidate for a Sheltered Housing vacancy, the Local Area Coordinator will make contact with you to complete a Sheltered Housing Eligibility Assessment form. In this assessment the Local Area Coordinator will then identify any support requirements you may have ensuring that Sheltered Housing is the most suitable place for you to live. The Local Area Coordinator will then give you information on how the Sheltered Housing model works and what to expect.

Mutual Exchanges

You may also apply to swap homes with another tenant through our Mutual Exchange procedure. You can register for a mutual exchange by visiting: www.apply4homes.houseexchange.org.uk/

The contact centre will be able to assist you with this too.

You should not move without written consent from landlords involved."

Helpful Contacts

Web page and direction to noticeboard.
www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

