

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Health and Housing Policy Development Review Panel

Date **18 July 2013**

Report of: **Director of Community**

Subject: **FLOATING SUPPORT SERVICE FOR OLDER PERSONS**

SUMMARY

This report outlines a proposal to extend the housing support service currently provided to sheltered housing tenants to older persons living in the borough regardless of their tenure.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Panel notes the proposal to extend the housing support service to older persons living in the borough regardless of their tenure.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Council's sheltered housing team currently provide a support service to tenants living in the Council's sheltered accommodation. In recent years we have expanded the support service to include a small number of older persons living in the Council's general purpose housing and older persons living in either private rented or owner occupied accommodation in the borough.
2. A client's support needs are identified from an initial needs and risk assessment. If there is an identified need or risk then this is translated into a support plan agreed with the client. As a result individual clients' support plans are personalised.
3. Historically the level of support provided to tenants living in sheltered accommodation has been governed to an extent by the availability of sheltered housing staff. This varies from scheme to scheme depending on whether there is a member of staff on site or not.
4. Tenants living in sheltered accommodation and older persons in general purpose housing are charged for the provision of a support service by way of a service charge in addition to their rent. The charge varies depending on the level of support that is available. This charge is not eligible for housing benefit.
5. Older persons living in private rented accommodation or in their own home are invoiced for the support charge on a quarterly basis.

SUPPORT FUNDING

6. The support charge is either funded by the tenant (self funder) or in cases where the tenant is on a low income and eligible for assistance with their rent or council tax payments, support funding is provided through Hampshire County Council's Supporting People programme. Fareham Borough Council (FBC) is commissioned and funded to provide such support under contract to the County Council.
7. At present all clients living in private rented accommodation or their own home and receiving the support service are self funders.
8. The Council are currently in year two of a three year contract with Hampshire County Council to provide a support service to older persons living in the borough. The funding received pays for the support charge of approximately 480 clients; equivalent to almost 75% of sheltered housing tenants, with the remainder being self funders.
9. Recently the County Council have stated that they intend to withdraw funding for those tenants living in sheltered housing who do not have a support need. In future, the County Council expect service providers to use this capacity to provide floating support to older persons living within the wider community.
10. At present the Council's sheltered housing team are busy carrying out needs and risk assessments to identify and review our sheltered housing tenants support needs. This work will help us identify those tenants that we receive support funding for who will not be eligible for this funding in the future.
11. As panel members will be aware, earlier this year a new housing allocations policy was approved. Under this policy the requirement for sheltered accommodation is no longer based purely on age but also that applicants must have an identified support need.

This change will help ensure that all future tenants of sheltered housing have a support need.

12. With the potential withdrawal of support funding from the County Council for a number of tenants living in sheltered accommodation, an opportunity presents itself to offer a support service to older persons living in council rented general purpose accommodation, private rented accommodation or owner occupied accommodation i.e. regardless of tenure. This will help to prevent the withdrawal of support funding by the County, ensuring that FBC is able to comply with the County's requirement that FBC, and other providers of support to older people under the Supporting People programme, are able to deliver a Community Support service (regardless of tenure) with effect from April 2015.

PROVISION OF A FLOATING SUPPORT SERVICE REGARDLESS OF TENURE

13. In recognition of the fact that there are many older persons living in the borough, either in council accommodation, private rented or their own accommodation that may have a need for support, colleagues in Hampshire's Supporting People Team will (effective from April 2015) be commissioning service providers such as Fareham Borough Council to make available a support service to older persons regardless of tenure rather than restrict this to clients on the basis that they reside in sheltered accommodation.
14. It is hoped that the provision of across tenure floating support service to older persons living in the borough of Fareham will help vulnerable older Fareham residents to maintain independent living for longer, whatever the tenure of their accommodation. However it is acknowledged that the sheltered housing officer team will not be able to provide a support service which meets the needs of all clients. Where this is the case the team will play a key role in signposting or referring clients to other support agencies and organisations.
15. As indicated earlier in this report at the present time the sheltered housing officer team already provide a support service to a number of older persons living in the Council's general purpose housing accommodation and to some older persons in private rented accommodation or their own home. In addition to these clients more recently the sheltered housing officer team has taken on a small number of clients that were previously supported by a floating support organisation.
16. In designing a floating support service for older persons in the borough it is proposed to develop a menu of support options which is tailored to meet individual clients support needs. At the time of writing, this menu of support options together with charges is being developed.
17. In developing a menu of support options there is a requirement from the County that one of the options will include a support service for up to 12 weeks free of charge to self funders in order to carry out an assessment of need or to provide support on a short term, crisis intervention basis. This however will be reviewed on an ongoing basis with the client and if it is agreed to provide support after this initial period a charge in accordance with any menu option will be made.

18. The provision of a floating support service highlights the need for flexibility in terms of service provision. It also highlights the need for accurate client record keeping and effective monitoring of staff workloads, capacity and support funding.

RISK ASSESSMENT

19. Despite there being no significant risk considerations in regard to this report. The proposed changes do raise some concerns in terms of financial viability and sustainability that need to be considered in more detail by management in consultation with the staff and their Union.

20. The provision of a floating support service for older persons regardless of tenure will also highlight issues regarding staffing resources, policies, procedures, workload capacity, skills and training.

CONCLUSION

21. This report has provided panel members with the background to a proposal to provide a floating support service to older persons living in the borough regardless of tenure.

Background Papers: None

Reference Papers: None

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Jon Shore. (Ext 4540)