

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Housing Directorate Service Strategy relates to the Council's approach to the provision of Housing Services for Older People. The Strategy sets out how this element of the service is delivered by the Housing Directorate, including links with other services both internally and externally.
- 1.2 Housing Services for Older People is delivered by the Older Peoples Services Section and is an important front-line service which covers a wide-range of activities. It includes services delivered by Scheme Managers, sheltered housing, the Council's twenty-four hour emergency alarm Careline Service, and the Housing Directorate's involvement with the Sheltered Housing Forum.
- 1.3 Comprehensive systems are in place and are detailed later in the Strategy. The efficiency of these systems are confirmed by Housing being accredited with both the international quality standard of ISO 9001:2008 and the Customer Service Excellence award, for all of its services including Older People's Services.
- 1.4 Following a rigorous audit process undertaken by an external Assessor, in July 2011, Careline was awarded the coveted Telecare Services Association's Accreditation, being a Quality Award for services provided in the emergency alarm industry.
- 1.5 This Older People's Service Strategy has been formulated in consultation with representatives of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, the Sheltered Forum and includes information contained in the Housing Directorate's policies and procedures. The Strategy was considered by the Housing Scrutiny Panel and approved by the Housing Portfolio Holder in April 2012.

2. Background to Housing Services for Older People

- 2.1 Housing Services for Older People are managed from the Careline Centre in Loughton, which is not open to the general public. The Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) who is responsible for the service is based in offices above the Centre. The Assistant Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) deputises for the Housing Manager in all aspects of the Section. In addition, the Senior Scheme Manager is responsible for overseeing and supervising the work of all Scheme Managers.
- 2.2 To ensure communication on policy, procedural and performance matters, quarterly meetings with Scheme Managers take place, chaired by the Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services). In addition, meetings are held for Careline staff. The Director of Housing and the Assistant Director of Housing (Operations) attend periodically.

3. Coverage

- 3.1 This Housing Service Strategy covers the Council's;
- a) Older People's Housing Related Support Services;
 - b) Sheltered housing;
 - c) Designated dwellings for older people on housing estates;
 - d) The Careline Service including;
 - (i) grouped schemes;
 - (ii) dispersed alarms; and
 - (iii) Telecare
 - (iv) Lone Work
 - e) Assessments of sheltered housing applicants;
 - f) Supporting People
 - g) Care in the Community; and
 - h) Ordering and distribution of cleaning supplies.

4. Relationships with Other Documents

- 4.1 Housing Services for Older People forms part of the Council's overall landlord function which is set out in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.
- 4.2 The Council has adopted its Housing Charter which sets out, in simple, clear and precise terms, the Council's general approach to all its Housing Services.
- 4.3 The Housing Directorate has detailed policies and procedures for most of its functions, including Housing Services for Older People that give important guidance to staff.
- 4.4 Housing related support services provided by the Older Peoples Services Section are funded by Supporting People. There is a contract in place between Essex County Council as the Administering Authority and the Council for the provision of these services. The Council continues to meet the standards required to retain funding.
- 4.5 Important statistical performance information is collected and is monitored at quarterly Customer Improvement Meetings chaired by the Director of Housing.
- 4.6 Information on Housing Services for Older People is contained within the Tenants Handbook. Certain Conditions of Tenancy relating solely to tenants in sheltered accommodation are contained within the latest Tenancy Agreement, which came into effect in January 2002.
- 4.7 Leaflets on Services to Older People and sheltered accommodation have been distributed to around 1,100 tenants living in both sheltered accommodation and designated dwellings for the older people on housing estates who receive the Service. These are also available for those who are considering moving to sheltered accommodation. Incorporated within these leaflets is a clear explanation of the Scheme Manager's role. These have been distributed to staff from outside agencies to enable them to understand the responsibilities of the Scheme Manager. All new tenants are given a "Welcome Pack" when they sign up for their new sheltered housing tenancy. In addition, tenants in sheltered accommodation have been given a leaflet on health and safety advice.

4.8 Information packs on the Careline Service are sent to all residents within the District, who are considering applying for a dispersed alarm. These are also sent to the Social Care Department, Hospitals, Day Centres etc. in order to further promote the service.

5. Aims and Objectives

5.1 The aim of the Council's Housing Service Strategy on Older People's Housing Services is:

"To ensure that the well-being of all older tenants living in sheltered accommodation and designated dwellings for older people is carefully monitored, and that all users of the Careline Service receive an efficient and effective response to their calls giving them an increased sense of security and peace of mind".

5.2 The following Section explains how the aim will be met, under four headings:

5.3 Sheltered Accommodation

a) Scheme Managers in sheltered accommodation will visit, or account for all tenants, on every duty day, completing the visit declaration form;

b) When Scheme Managers at sheltered accommodation are absent for less than a week the Careline Centre will call, each day, all those tenants previously nominated by the Scheme Manager as being "at risk";

c) If any Scheme Manager at sheltered accommodation is absent for one week or more, the Housing Assistant (Older Peoples Services) or a Careline Operator will visit the scheme three times each week and undertake a full round, accounting for all residents;

d) Scheme Managers will assist residents to live independently, offering housing related support and encouraging communal social activities;

e) Scheme Managers will liaise with outside agencies on behalf of residents;

f) Scheme Managers will contact the tenant's relatives in the event of illness or accident; and

g) Tenants living in sheltered accommodation will be encouraged to use the Careline alarm service in emergency situations. The equipment will be tested by the Scheme Manager on a regular basis, with all tests being recorded.

5.4 Area Schemes for Older People

a) Through the call category system (set out in Paragraph 8.2.3) Scheme Managers who cover designated dwellings for older people will ensure that all older tenants are visited in accordance with their need;

b) Those living on area schemes will be provided with housing related support, assisted to live independently, with their health and general well-being monitored;

c) Scheme Managers will contact the tenant's relatives in the event of their illness or accident;

d) All Tenants will be encouraged to use the Careline alarm service in emergency situations, which will be tested and recorded by Scheme Managers on a regular basis; and

e) Scheme Managers will encourage all their tenants to support one another, act as a community, and promote social activities.

5.5 Epping Forest Careline

a) Careline staff will endeavour to ensure that all calls received by the Careline Centre are responded to within target times, and that all urgent dispersed alarms are installed within two-days of the application being received. These targets are monitored under the Housing Directorate's quarterly Customer Improvement Meetings regime;

b) All calls received over the alarm system, and telephone conversations, will be tape recorded as a safeguard to both service users and the Council; and

c) Careline will promote the service and manage the installation of dispersed alarms and Telecare products which are referred to later in this strategy.

5.6 Other Housing Services for Older People

a) The Older Peoples' Services Section will visit potential tenants who have applied for sheltered accommodation and have been referred by the Housing Options Section for assessment;

b) The Housing Manager (Older Peoples' Services) will contact Adult Social Care to initiate an assessment and possibly attend a case conference, when the Council is concerned that a greater level of care is required for one of its older tenants; and

c) The Older Peoples' Services Section will work closely with the Sheltered Forum which is a consultative group of tenant representatives for each sheltered scheme. Their views will be sought and taken into account when shaping services to older people.

6. Statutory Requirements

6.1 The relevant key statutory requirements for older people's services are as follows:

- a) Housing Act 1985;
- b) Health and Safety at Work Act 1974;
- c) Environmental Protection Act 1974;
- d) Human Rights Act 1998;
- e) Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- f) Noise Act 1996;
- g) Public Health Act 1936;
- h) Equality Act 2010 and
- i) Data Protection Act

7. Client Consultation, Information & Involvement (Statutory Requirement)

7.1 The way in which tenants will be consulted, informed and involved with regard to the Council's policy on housing services for older people is as follows:

a) Consultation with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation;

- b) Consultation with the Sheltered Forum
- c) Consultation with Residents Associations;
- d) Encourage the setting up of Tenants Associations in sheltered housing schemes;
- e) Information to tenants in publications e.g. Housing News, Annual Report;
- f) Posters on the Careline Service displayed throughout the District;
- g) Distribution of leaflets on Older Peoples Services and Careline;
- h) Providing a Welcome Pack to all sheltered housing tenants
- i) Liaison with the Citizens Advice Bureau;
- j) One to one consultation with tenants;
- k) Consultation with tenants at various meetings at the schemes; and
- l) Changes in policy;

8. General Principles

8.1 Section 5 of this Housing Service Strategy sets out the aims and objectives of Older People's Housing Services. This Section details the general approach taken on the delivery of the service under the following headings:

8.2 Services Provided by Scheme Managers

8.2.1 The Council currently employs 11 full time Scheme Managers at sheltered and grouped schemes for older people and 3 Scheme Managers who visit older tenants living in designated dwellings for older people on general needs housing estates (e.g. Ninefields, Waltham Abbey; Oakwood Hill, Loughton etc.).

8.2.2 In March 2004, the Cabinet agreed that due to many difficulties associated with Scheme Managers living on-site, in the future, newly appointed Scheme Managers will be non-resident. In addition, all existing staff have been given the opportunity to move off site into secure Council accommodation. As a result, the Council now has only 2 resident Scheme Managers.

8.2.3 The service assists older tenants to live as independently as possible. Tenants living in sheltered housing are visited by the Scheme Manager on every duty day. When they are absent the Careline Service monitors calls from tenants and calls each day those who are designated by the Scheme Manager as being "at risk". Tenants living in designated properties for older people on estates are monitored by a Scheme Manager who visits in accordance with the documented call category system. In accordance with this procedure the Scheme Manager undertakes a risk assessment of tenants to assess if they are either "high" "medium" or "low" risk. "High" risk tenants are visited approximately twice weekly, "medium" risk tenants visited once each fortnight, with "low" risk tenants being visited once every four weeks. All area scheme properties are linked to the Careline Service.

8.2.4 Records of residents are maintained detailing those who are absent. All Scheme Managers complete a visit declaration form on a monthly basis detailing all visits made to residents during the period. This is submitted to the Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) who undertakes "spot checks." To ensure visits were actually carried out

8.2.5 Scheme Managers do all that is possible to encourage tenants to support each other, act as a community, and promote social activities.

8.2.6 The Council has 11 sheltered housing schemes which are for people who are over the age of 60 years, capable of living on their own, but feel more secure with support from the Scheme Manager. The level of support depends upon the needs of the residents; advice is offered when needed and communal activities encouraged. All sheltered housing properties are linked to the Careline Service.

8.2.7 One-bedroom flats are the most common type of accommodation, although there are some studio flats. All sheltered housing schemes have door entry systems installed and reception areas are covered by CCTV. Communal facilities generally include a laundry room, guest room for visiting friends or relatives, communal lounge and kitchen for social activities and special events.

8.2.8 Scheme Managers are normally on duty during normal working hours between Monday and Friday. When off duty the scheme is linked into the Careline Centre.

8.3 Designated Dwellings for Older People on Housing Estates

8.3.1 Around 525 properties on general needs estates are designated as suitable for occupation by an older person. Three Scheme Managers are dedicated to visiting 265 of these properties on a full-time basis. Scheme Managers in sheltered accommodation visit the remaining 260 designated properties which are located near to their schemes with the residents often being invited to social activities in the complex.

8.3.2 All properties covered by the Scheme Manager are linked directly into the Careline Service. All staff are provided with mobile phones, personal attack alarms for their own safety and have access to the Council's Precautionary Visit list.

8.4 Supporting People Scheme Reviews

8.4.1 "Supporting People" is a major Government initiative, which introduced a new policy, and funding framework for supported housing and ancillary welfare services from April 2003. These services include housing related support delivered by Scheme Managers and the Careline Service.

8.4.2 A "Block" contract is in place between the Council and Essex County Council for the provision of its support services.

8.4.3 Scheme reviews are undertaken periodically, although the Quality Assessment Framework, which is a detailed service analysis, must be submitted on a regular basis and currently assesses five core objectives as follows:

- Assessment and support planning
- Security, Health and Safety
- Safeguarding and Protection from abuse
- Fair access diversity and inclusion
- Client Involvement and Empowerment

8.4.4 The Council's support services continually meet at least the minimum requirements under each core objective to ensure continued funding.

8.5 Tenants and Leaseholder's Federation and the Sheltered Forum

- 8.5.1 The way in which the Housing Directorate involves, consults and provides information to tenants is set out in the Housing Service Strategy on Information under Client Consultation, Information and Involvement. The District-wide Tenant Participation Agreement explains the Council's commitment to tenant participation and how it will enable its tenants to participate in the delivery of their housing service.
- 8.5.2 The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation comprises two members of each recognised tenants associations in the District, and the Leaseholders Association. Regular meetings are held with the Federation to consult on housing policy matters and to seek their views. The outcomes are reported back to the local associations and Members take them into account when making decisions.
- 8.5.3 The Council is committed to consulting with tenants on housing issues that are important to them. Over recent years, attempts were made to set up tenants associations within the sheltered schemes, but there were only a few residents at each scheme who were willing to become involved.
- 8.5.4 It was therefore decided to set up a Sheltered Forum comprising of a small number of residents from each scheme who could put forward their views on behalf of all residents on housing services offered to older people. The Forum was established in 2004; meetings take place on a bi-monthly basis and are well attended.

8.6 Epping Forest Careline

- 8.6.1 The Careline Centre based at Parsonage Court, Loughton was set up in June 1984 and had around 2,400 properties linked into the service as at 1 March 2012. Connections include all the Council's sheltered housing schemes and designated dwellings for older people. Around 1,200 dispersed alarms are also included, which are one-off installations for those living in the private sector for which they pay an annual rental, which is agreed annually by the Council. In addition, a monitoring service is provided to housing associations. Careline also monitor fire alarms in sheltered housing schemes.
- 8.6.2 Careline is a twenty-four hour, 365-day service dealing with around 60,000 calls each year and offers valuable support to Scheme Managers. The Centre is equipped with PNC 5 technology, with the latest "Communicall" two-way speech system installed in sheltered and grouped housing schemes. In addition, there is a Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan which covers the Centre, should it not be able to function for any reason. In these rare circumstances all call handling will be undertaken by the alarm system manufacturer at their own control centre in Doncaster.

8.7 Review of the Careline Service

- 8.7.1 At its meeting on 1 September 2008, the Cabinet undertook a Review of the Careline Service. It was agreed that the Careline premises be extended into the vacant adjacent former Scheme Manager's three bedroom house. This project has now been successfully completed and the new re-furbished centre was opened in September 2011.

8.7.2 The Council will also, when the opportunity arises, submit tenders to monitor alarms for other authorities and/or housing associations. Consideration is also being given to extending the routine repairs reporting service for tenants from 5pm to 8pm on each working day from the Careline Centre, although other options for this service are also being explored. The Careline Centre will in the near future, periodically monitor existing Council-owned CCTV systems at sheltered housing schemes through website access. In addition, a pilot scheme has been introduced to monitor the whereabouts of the Council's lone workers on a 24-hour basis, which is currently being rolled out to all staff in the Housing Directorate with a view to being extended Corporately.

8.8 Telecare in the Community

8.8.1 The range of equipment available to Careline service users is increasing due to developments in technology. Although those linked to the service are able to summon help in an emergency via a pendant radio-trigger by using a pull cord, services users can now benefit from smoke detectors, bogus caller buttons, fall detectors and inactivity detectors etc. A leaflet is available setting out details of all the additional equipment.

8.8.2 Sensors are installed at the property, which meet with the particular user's need, giving extra protection. Users activate the alarm system in any emergency, placing a call to Careline where help will be summoned.

8.8.3 Careline staff work in partnership with Adult Social Care, Health, Police and Fire Services to promote the service. A number of staff are trained assessors who survey each property ensuring users receive the correct equipment.

8.9 Assessment of Applicants for Sheltered Accommodation

8.9.1 All applicants who apply to live in sheltered accommodation are visited and assessed by the Older Peoples Services Section prior to an offer being made. A copy of the assessment is included in the new tenant's Tenant Support Plan, which is a detailed record of the housing related support provided.

8.10 Care in the Community

8.10.1 The Council works in partnership with other agencies in order to achieve a multi agency approach to Care in the Community. The Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) attends the Older Peoples Joint Management Team which consists of a representative from all agencies meeting on a quarterly basis in order to work with service users, carers, to ensure that services for older people are accessible and meet most people's needs.

8.11 Ordering and Distribution of Cleaning Materials

8.11.1 The Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) manages the ordering and distribution of cleaning supplies for the Council's sheltered housing schemes. These supplies are stored in a garage at Parsonage Court, Loughton. An audit of the supplies is undertaken annually.

9. Action Plan

9.1 The actions in the table below will be undertaken in the future by the Housing Directorate in order to enhance Older People's Housing Services.

Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Resource Implications
Encourage the setting up of Tenants' Associations at sheltered housing schemes in accordance with the Tenant Participation Strategy and District Tenant Participation Agreement to promote and implement Tenant Participation	Tenant Participation Officer	On-going	Within existing resources
Update the Customer Impact Assessment for Sheltered Housing	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	September 2013	Within existing Resources
Update the Customer Impact Assessment for Epping Forest Careline	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	September 2013	Within existing Resources
Continue to maintain Telecare Services Association (TSA) Accreditation	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	On-going	Within existing Resources
Consider Introducing repairs reporting service out of hours at the Careline Centre, if other options are not viable	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	January 2013	Within existing resources
Introduce periodic CCTV monitoring of all older peoples premises from the Careline Centre	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	January 2013	Within existing resources
Monitor all of the Council's lone workers through Careline	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	January 2013	Within existing resources

Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Resource Implications
Introduce Computers for Scheme Managers	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	January 2013	Within existing resources
Installation of Key Safes at Sheltered Housing Schemes	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	January 2013	Within existing resources
Continually improve Supporting People performance scores	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	On-going	Within existing resources
Promote the provision of Careline monitoring to other providers	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	On-going	Within existing resources
Promote Sheltered Housing to older people under-occupying Council Housing	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	On-going	Possibility of appointing an Under-Occupation Officer under the list of Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements

10. Future Developments

10.1 The “SWOT” analysis on the next page identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the areas covered by the Service Strategy.

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TSA Accreditation • Knowledgeable and committed staff • Robust policies and procedures • Integrated housing system • Customer Service Excellence accreditation • ISO 9001:2008 accreditation • Good relationships with tenants • Good tenant consultation framework • Comprehensive performance monitoring • Council-owned Careline Centre • Multi-agency approach • Healthy Housing Revenue Account • Comprehensive disaster recovery plan for the Careline service 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A proportion of Careline funding being provided by Supporting People, who may review alarm services County-wide reducing the number of centres, which could lead to Careline’s closure
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved repairs reporting service to customers out-of-hours through the Careline Centre • Increased security for older residents through periodic monitoring of CCTV systems by Careline • Additional income from dispersed alarm peripherals • More older people remaining in their own home and therefore privately renting dispersed alarms • Working towards Improving Supporting People Scheme Review Scores • Converting sheltered housing bedsits into flats when appropriate • Greater Corporate use of Careline by monitoring of lone workers • Provision of Careline service to other providers • Possibility of Supporting People reviewing alarm services County-wide thereby reducing the numbers of centres which would create an opportunity to monitor for other providers • Improved business continuity 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of demand for properties set aside for occupation by older people which as a result are being de-designated • More older people being cared for at home and therefore not requiring sheltered accommodation • Costs of Careline exceed income • Possible loss of Supporting People funding

11. Resourcing the Strategy

11.1 Staff delivering this Strategy in 2010/11 was 26 FTE. This includes the Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services), Assistant Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services), Senior Scheme Manager, Quality and Performance Co-ordinator, 11 sheltered Scheme Managers 3 estate based Scheme Managers 2.5 FTE Housing Assistants (Older Peoples Services) and 5.5 FTE Careline Operators and a proportion of other Manager's time.

11.2 The projection for the number of staff required to deliver the Strategy for 2012/13 and the following three years is detailed in the following table:

Staff Resource Projections			
Posts	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Older Peoples Services Staff	26.25	26.25	26.25

11.3 The following table details the estimated proportion of staff time within the Housing Directorate spent on Older Peoples Housing Services for 2010/2011:

Posts	FTE
Director of Housing	0.05
Assistant Director of Housing (Operations)	0.2
Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	1.0
Assistant Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	1.0
Senior Scheme Manager	1.0
Quality and Performance Co-ordinator	1.0
Scheme Managers (Estate Based)	3.0
Scheme Managers (Sheltered Housing)	11.0
Careline Operators	5.5

Posts	FTE
Housing Assistant (Older Peoples Services)	2.5
Total	26.25

12. Key Targets & Performance Monitoring

12.1 The Council will monitor performance and compliance with this Strategy through quarterly Customer Improvement Meetings chaired by the Director of Housing with the Assistant Director of Housing (Operations) and the Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) ensuring the following target times are met:

Task	Actual 2010/11	Target
% of calls responded to within 30 seconds (including routine calls from Scheme Managers and test calls)	99.8%	97%
Average (seconds) to respond to calls	6.4 seconds	10 Seconds
Installation of dispersed alarms	100%	Within 5 Working Days
Installation of Telecare Sensors including client assessment	100%	20 days
Number of dispersed alarms installed	417	360 per annum

Task	Actual 2010/11	Target
Contractors repairs response in accordance with service agreement targets	93.9%	90%

13. Reviewing the Strategy

- 13.1 The Strategy for Older Peoples Services will be reviewed by the Housing Scrutiny Panel and agreed by the Housing Portfolio Holder in consultation with the Tenants' and Leaseholders Federation before April 2015.