

Winter edition 2021

Sheltered tenants



NEWSLETTER

Happy new year to all our residents in Sheltered housing

New year is a time we traditionally reflect on the past 12 months and make resolutions for a better, brighter future. This January those customs are more poignant than ever before as we all hope for a sense of normality and safety to be restored in 2021.

The last few months have been challenging for everyone but our staff have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to ensure our sheltered tenants received essential supplies and regular calls, and that the most vulnerable people were fully supported.

Before the Covid pandemic we had made changes to our way of working. Responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of our Sheltered housing buildings passed to our Neighbourhood Services team. This means that our Housing Officers can now concentrate on looking after your wellbeing. This change was the result of a suggestion by tenants in our Older Persons Performance Review Group. They suggested that Sheltered housing staff focus on people rather than buildings to ensure that you receive the support you need.



As part of this new way of working, and to cement our commitment to helping older tenants to live as independently at home for as long as possible, we launched a new Wellbeing service in 2020. We're here to help you with anything that you might be struggling with at home such as claiming benefits, managing your money and paying bills, organising cleaning or care at home, memory problems, health issues, ordering shopping, dealing with bereavement, neighbour nuisance, hoarding or loneliness. And if we can't help, we'll make sure we refer you to another agency or service who can! Just ask your Housing Officer for more details.

Do you want to receive regular services updates and news from Winchester City Council?



Sign up for our district residents' e-newsletter at www.winchester.gov.uk/no-listing/sign-up

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What your Service Charge includes

Ever wondered what your service charge pays for in Sheltered housing? Here is a list of what is covered by your weekly charge:

- Cleaning of communal areas
- Grounds maintenance
- Electricity and water in communal areas
- Fire and smoke alarms and fire safety
- Door entry systems
- TV aerial
- Emergency lighting and electricity
- Lift maintenance (for those schemes with a lift)
- Pest control
- Furniture, fittings and appliances in common rooms
- Decoration of common rooms
- Alarm service
- Management of the overall housing service including your Housing Officer



What to expect from your Housing Officer

All our Sheltered housing schemes have a dedicated team of housing staff who are on hand to keep everyone safe and well.

This is what you can expect from your Housing Officer:

- A fortnightly surgery when you can chat about any issues, concerns or queries you may have around your tenancy and your home. To book an appointment get in touch or use the surgery booking sheet available in all common rooms.
- An annual check of your alarm equipment (see page opposite for more details about how to care for the alarm in your home).
- The Wellbeing service providing assistance for vulnerable residents (see front cover for details).
- Regular phone calls and visits for vulnerable tenants and those who are socially isolated.
- Regular social activities and events (which we hope to reinstate as soon as social distancing guidelines will allow). We will shortly be sending a survey to all residents to find out what kind of activities you would like us to organise and how often they should take place.
- Accompanying prospective Sheltered tenants to view properties so we can offer advice on the suitability of the home, identify any needs prior to moving in and ensure the move goes as smoothly as possible.

Guest bedrooms

As a Sheltered housing tenant you can book a guest room if friends or family would like to visit. If there isn't a guest room in your sheltered scheme you can book the nearest one to your home. A stay in one of our guest rooms costs just £15.45 per night plus a one-off cleaning charge of £35. We have had to introduce an additional cleaning charge to cover the extra time and resources needed to ensure guest rooms meet stringent Covid-safe standards. Please note that guest room bookings are dependent on current Covid restrictions for the area.



Guest bedroom at Chesil Lodge

Book one of our communal lounges

Did you know you can book the common room in your Sheltered housing scheme for just £25.75 to host your own private party or event? If you are planning an event please talk to your Housing Officer to discuss current Covid-safe restrictions. Events that are open to all residents do not incur a hire charge.

TV licences

In June 2020 the rules around eligibility for a free TV licence changed, meaning only over 75s who are in receipt of Pension Credit are now entitled to a free licence. Talk to your Housing Officer for more details and to find out if your home is covered by a concessionary TV licence that covers the whole scheme.

New look at Eastacre

The latest scheme to benefit from our refresh of common rooms is Eastacre.

The improvements were carried out during lockdown. New soft furnishings, carpets and lighting has transformed the communal room to provide a more modern and enticing space for residents to relax, get together and enjoy social activities. Although all our regular events and activities have had to be suspended because of Covid-19 we hope to reinstate these as soon as restrictions allow.



Emergency alarms

If you have an emergency alarm connection at home we will carry out a free safety check once a year to ensure the equipment is working properly. We will write to you with the date and time of the annual safety check (please make sure you are at home at the specified time). It's a good idea to check your alarm equipment and pull cord every six months to ensure everything is still in safe working order. Talk to your Housing Officer for help and advice on how to carry out the test.

Join the online revolution

All of our Sheltered housing schemes include Wi-Fi for residents meaning you don't have to organise your own broadband connection at home. If you need any help or support logging on to the Wi-Fi in your scheme talk to your Housing Officer who can help get you started and assist with cancelling your current broadband provider.



Why go online?

If you aren't using the internet yet you're missing out!

Going online offers countless benefits such as learning new things, connecting with other people, watching movies and finding the best deals on anything from groceries to insurance and utility bills. The internet can help you feel less isolated and it's all available at the touch of a button 24/7 from the comfort of your own home.

During the pandemic and periods of lockdown the internet has proved an invaluable lifeline for many people. Residents who are unable to leave home have been able to order shopping, manage their finances and keep in touch with friends and family thanks to regular video calls.

No device? No problem

If you would like to get online and enjoy the benefits of the internet but you don't have a smart phone, tablet or computer at home, we can help! We have a number of tablets that are available for you to borrow to use at home. You can keep the tablet for a month while you get to grips with the technology. Just talk to your Sheltered Housing Officer if you're interested in borrowing a tablet device.

Need a hand to get started?

If you don't know your monitor from your mouse don't panic there is lots of support available to help build your skills and your confidence using new technology. Talk to your Sheltered Housing Officer or visit www.learnmyway.com to discover lots of free digital courses to stay safe and connected online.

Useful contact numbers

- Age UK **0800 169 2081**
- Citizen Advice Bureau **03444 111 306**
- Independent Age **0800 319 6789**
- Home Energy Advice **01962 217 844**
- Andover Mind for Advocacy **01264 332 297**
- Hampshire County Council advice and assistance with care and support needs **0300 555 1386** or **0300 555 1373** (out of hours)
- Hampshire Fire & Rescue home safety advice **023 8062 6809**
- The Silver Line information, friendship and advice for later life **0800 470 8090**

Get in touch

Freephone: **01962 855 335** Email: shelteredhousing@winchester.gov.uk

Web: winchester.gov.uk/housing/older-persons-services/sheltered-and-extra-care-housing



WinchesterTenants



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