

Sheltered tenants



NEWSLETTER

Sheltered housing upgrades

We've been busy transforming our sheltered housing schemes to improve facilities, enhance safety and make these communities even better places to live.

New look for White Wings

White Wings House in Denmead has received a makeover with new paint, flooring, signage and fire doors. Framed prints of old Denmead on the walls help evoke memories of the village from days gone by.



Mobility storage at Makins Court

Mobility scooters can greatly improve quality of life and enable many sheltered tenants to get out and about. Residents at Makins Court in Alresford can now safely store and charge their mobility scooters in a new purpose-built facility in the grounds.



Transformation at Matilda Place

Spring has definitely sprung at Matilda Place, which has recently been redecorated in fresh colours and boasts new flooring and signage. The common room is to receive new curtains, bookcases and table lamps to make it even more inviting for residents to come together.



An award winning caring team!

Our Sheltered Housing team have received a well-deserved award from The Mayor, after being nominated by a tenant for all their work throughout the pandemic to keep everyone safe and supported.



Keep active, keep

Keeping active both physically and mentally is essential for a healthy lifestyle, particularly as we get older. Staying in shape improves your mobility and helps to reduce falls, as well as benefiting your mental health. Getting together with friends and neighbours can help you feel connected and reduce feelings of loneliness or anxiety.

And the good news is that living in one of our sheltered housing schemes means you've got lots of fun activities to join in right on your doorstep; from keep fit to coffee mornings, there is something to suit everyone!

We have recently appointed a Wellbeing and Inclusion Officer to work with residents and encourage more of you to get involved and enjoy the benefits of keeping busy. It's all part of how we're working to ensure our sheltered communities thrive – turn to page 7 to find out more.

Put your best foot forward

Enjoy the fresh air and beautiful local scenery at one of our gentle, wellbeing walks where you can meet new people and keep active. So put on your walking shoes and join in the fun! To join in a walk simply arrive at one of the start points listed below a few minutes early to complete a registration form.

- **Colden Common Community Centre** - Wednesday's 10.30am
- **Kings Walk** (opposite the Antiques Market) in the city centre - Wednesday's 9.15am
- **The Square**, Bishop's Waltham - Tuesday's 2.30pm and Thursday's 10.30am

For more details about the walks and other local activities please email sport@winchester.gov.uk

Stimulate your brain

As we get older it's just as important to keep our minds as well as our bodies active and enjoy interaction and companionship with others. That's why activities like bingo, quizzes and coffee mornings are so valued by our sheltered housing tenants.

Our contractor Osborne kindly provided biscuits,

chocolates and quiz prizes to sheltered schemes at Christmas, and the donations were greatly appreciated by our residents. To find out if there is a regular quiz, coffee morning or afternoon tea in your scheme talk to your Sheltered Housing Officer or check the notice board.



Listening to you

Osborne provide us with a range of services including repairs and maintenance. In order to ensure they continue to deliver a high quality service members of TACT (Tenants and Council Together) have recently been invited to give their feedback to help shape and develop its customer service strategy.

smiling!

Chesil Chums

The care teams at all our Extra Care schemes provide regular activities to bring people together, and at Chesil Lodge residents also organise their own events. The Chesil Chums group coordinate regular activities for their community including monthly take away banquets, quizzes, race nights, dominos and beetle drives. Their Christmas party (which included a visit from Mr and Mrs Santa Claus) even provided an opportunity for two residents to celebrate 59 years of wedded bliss – congratulations to Mr and Mrs Guiver, pictured!

If you and your neighbours would like to form a residents group in your scheme talk to your Sheltered Housing Officer to find out how we can help you set this up.



Jubilee cream tea

Do you fondly remember the Queen's Coronation? Well, 70 years later, we are planning to mark her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee with special street party celebration events in our sheltered schemes this May and June.



Look out for details in your scheme and join in the fun to commemorate this historic event.

Need a friend?



If you (or someone you know) is feeling lonely or apprehensive about joining in social events, you might benefit from the Hand in Hand service run by local charity St John's Winchester. It offers friendly support and advice about social activities, groups and organisations who are best placed to help, and a befriending service to match volunteers with older people who would benefit from companionship. For more details visit <https://stjohnswinchester.co.uk/hand-in-hand/> or call **01962 827795**.



Looking after communal grounds

Communal grounds at sheltered schemes are there for everyone to enjoy so it's essential these areas are kept clean and safe.

Remember to remove your own garden furniture at the end of each day and ask our permission before putting out pots or permanent furniture. Soon we will be inspecting these areas to check they are safe, and we will have to remove items which haven't been authorised – simply because they can become a trip hazard for other residents and get in the way when we're making sure we upkeep your outside spaces!

If you're a keen gardener enter our competition – see below for details.



Win gardening vouchers!

If you are proud of your gardening skills, or would like to say well done to a green fingered neighbour, please enter our gardening competition.

Simply send us a photo of your garden, vegetable patch, pots, containers or window boxes and include your name, address and contact number. Email tenantvoice@winchester.gov.uk before the closing date of 3 August 2022.

Here comes the sun!

Good luck to everyone at Hyde Gate who is competing to grow the tallest sunflower.

The contest has been launched in memory of a tenant from Hyde Gate who enjoyed growing sunflowers before he sadly passed away last year. Our contractor Osborne provided pots, compost and seeds, and the competition kicked off with a fun planting event at Hyde Gate in April. All the sunflowers will be judged in August and we hope to publish photos of the winning blooms in our next issue.

If you don't live at Hyde Gate but still want to have a go at growing sunflowers just ask your Sheltered Housing Officer for seeds and a pot!



Supporting you

Since April you will have seen your Sheltered Housing Officer out and about more often, as staff are now spending more time in sheltered communities. Please say hello and let them know if there is anything we can do to improve life for you and your neighbours.

A day in the life of a Sheltered Housing Officer



Anna Woloska

tells us more about her role:



“ My job is all about ensuring sheltered residents are safe and happy and that the scheme is well run.

I visit regularly to meet residents in the communal lounge and listen to any concerns or issues. People can enjoy a cuppa and chat to me, and sometimes I combine this with a regular activity like bingo, a quiz or guest speaker.

Safety is a top priority so I check each resident's emergency alarm system every six months (see page 6) and I also monitor the condition of properties and report and chase repairs when needed. I look after the bookings and cleaning of the guest bedroom – which is available for visiting friends or family to book.

Some of our residents need a little extra support to live independently so I help with things like claiming benefits, filling in forms, making referrals to other support services, and I also pop in to check on tenants where concerns have been raised.

As well as looking after existing residents, I show empty flats to potential newcomers, and then I'll visit new tenants to ensure they're settling in well.

It's a busy and varied job and no two days are ever the same, but I love it! It's definitely a 'feel good' occupation and I really enjoy knowing that what I do makes a big difference to the lives of older people. ”

Access our services at the touch of a button



Your Housing Officer is on hand to help with any queries you may have, but did you know you can access our services any time day or night simply by going online and visiting My Winchester Tenancy?



Check your account balance



Make payments



View and print rent statements



Update your personal information



Report a non-urgent repair



Send and receive messages



Check repair appointments

Visit <https://mywinchestertenancy.winchester.gov.uk/>

Keeping you safe

Fire safety

Knowing what to do in the event of a fire and understanding how to reduce fire risks at home will keep you and your neighbours safe, and potentially save your life. Fire & Rescue Officers are visiting all our sheltered schemes to conduct presentations on fire safety. The first event took place at White Wings House in Denmead last November. Talk to your Sheltered Housing Officer to find out when the fire safety presentation will take place in your scheme.

Please report any concerns about fire safety in your home or scheme:

- Visit www.winchester.gov.uk/fire-concern
(if you don't have an account simply use the guest option)
- Phone Housing on **01962 848 400**
- Email housing@winchester.gov.uk
- Talk to a tenant representative from TACT – call the Tenant Involvement Team on Freephone **0800 716 987**

Need to report a repair?

Please let us know if you need a repair at home, or if you've spotted something that needs fixing in a communal area.

Remember to give as much detail as possible so we can send the right tools and tradestaff to get the job sorted.

- Telephone Customer Services on **01962 848 400** (if it's out of office hours please call **01962 865 405**)
- Visit <https://mywinchestertenancy.winchester.gov.uk/>
- Email: housing@winchester.gov.uk

Help at the touch of a button

Your home is fitted with emergency alarm equipment in case you ever need to summon help in an emergency.

Your Sheltered Housing Officer will inspect the equipment once a year and then telephone you six months later to ask you to pull your alarm cords or press your pendants to make sure they connect to the alarm monitoring centre correctly.

We will also confirm we have your up to date health information and emergency contact details. Please help us to keep you safe by allowing us access for the annual safety check.



Support for you when you need it

Our Tenancy Sustainment Team offers a range of support for tenants – from promoting health and wellbeing to offering advice on money and benefits. We have recently strengthened the team with two new members of staff.

Sarah Nesbitt, our new Financial Inclusion Officer, provides expert advice on all money and benefit issues. She works closely with other housing staff, and organisations such as Citizens Advice, to ensure tenants receive support on accessing grants, applying for benefits and tackling debt. Check out her article on the back cover to see if you're missing out on any payments.

Charlotte Bailey took up the post of Wellbeing and Inclusion Officer last month to help get more tenants more active. Charlotte will be visiting sheltered schemes to find out what you enjoy



Charlotte Bailey, Wellbeing and Inclusion Officer



doing and offer her help in empowering residents to get together to organise their own projects and activities. It's all part of how we're working to promote wellbeing; to help more of you to stay connected and enjoy happy, healthy lives. See pages 2 and 3 for details on the range of activities on offer in sheltered housing.

For more details visit **www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/council-housing-tenants/tenancy-sustainment-service** or email **tenancysustainment@winchester.gov.uk**

Extra Care can be extra fun!

Our three Extra Care schemes in the city centre are perfect for anyone aged 55 or over who has ongoing care needs but wants to remain living independently.

You have your own flat with your own front door, but with the reassurance of knowing on-site support is available 24/7. Living in Extra Care provides a safe and supportive environment and the chance to be part of a thriving community. Communal lounges and dining rooms provide opportunities to meet neighbours and enjoy a range of activities so no one has to ever feel lonely.

If you (or someone you know) are currently living in housing which is no longer suitable and need help with personal care, Extra Care could be the answer. Visit **www.winchester.gov.uk/extra-care** for more details.



Are you missing out on extra benefits?

With rising utility bills and the cost of living increasing, every penny really does count.

So it's worth checking to see if you're entitled to any extra payments or benefits such as:

- State pension benefits including Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction
- Free eye tests and dental care
- A free TV licence (if you are age 75 or over and on Pension Credit)
- Discounts on public transport
- Help with heating your home such as the Warm Home Discount (worth £140 a year)
- If you provide care or you are disabled you may be entitled to other benefits such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Attendance Allowance (for over 65s)

It's quick and easy to check your benefit entitlement online at www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators or you can email us for advice and support at tenancysustainment@winchester.gov.uk or talk to your Sheltered Housing Officer.



Cap on service charge

Escalating energy costs have had a big impact on this year's service charges for heat and utilities, and as a business customer, we are

not subject to the government price cap. However we have made the decision to cap any service charge increases to a maximum of £5 a week to limit the burden on you; our residents.

Got a grumble?

We strive to deliver the best service and we hope you will never have reason to complain about Sheltered Housing. But if you do, there is a process in place to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly and effectively and that we learn from what our customers say. For details on how to make a complaint or find out more about our complaints policy visit www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/complaints or talk to a member of staff.

As a council, we are members of The Housing Ombudsman – an independent public body that looks impartially at complaints within the social housing sector to ensure correct procedures are followed. You can also contact The Housing Ombudsman directly for assistance on making a complaint, or if you're not happy with the way we are handling your complaint. Visit www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/ for more details and advice.



During 2021/22 we received a total of 191 complaints about the housing service, 8 of these concerned sheltered housing.

Get in touch

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

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



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