

Tenants' Guide to Sheltered Housing



Welcome

Welcome to your new home. Please take the time to read this Tenants' Guide as it is full of helpful information that will help you settle into your home quickly and provide you with information on what is available.

Lancaster City Council (LCC) provides sheltered housing services to tenants of approximately 575 properties, enabling them to maintain an independent lifestyle.

This guide has been designed to help you get the most out of the sheltered housing services that we provide and answers some of the questions most commonly asked by our tenants.



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1. What is Sheltered Housing?

Sheltered Housing Aims and Objectives

The Sheltered Housing service promotes independence and quality of life for older people and other vulnerable adults.

We have 16 sheltered housing schemes in the district offering 575 self-contained sheltered homes. Our sheltered housing consists of flats, bedsits and bungalows that are ideally suited to older people who can manage their own home but may have individual support needs.

Rights and responsibilities

You can expect us to: -

- Be courteous and treat you with respect at all times
- Ensure all personal information disclosed to us will be treated in confidence
- Respond to enquiries and complaints quickly
- Discuss and agree with you the content of your support plan
- Provide regular calls to monitor health and wellbeing
- Visit you in accordance with your support plan
- Encourage and facilitate social activities at your scheme
- Consult with you and involve you in decision making
- Respond to intercom calls quickly and effectively
- Assist you in liaising with health and social services agencies
- Mediate in minor neighbour disputes
- Ensure communal areas are kept clean, safe and tidy

Your responsibilities are to:

- Treat our staff with courtesy and respect
- Provide us with the information we request promptly
- Let us know of any changes in circumstances as soon as possible
- Let us know if you will be away from home
- Comply with the terms and conditions of your tenancy agreement

Equal Opportunities in Sheltered Housing

Health and Housing Services operates within Lancaster City Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. The council aims to be an equal opportunities organisation and has a legal and ethical responsibility to act fairly as an employer, and in the provision and delivery of its services and in its duty to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the communities in the district.

Health and Housing Services aims to ensure that all people attending its services, and staff, are treated with respect for their diversity and their rights as individuals.

Health and Housing Services aims to provide a secure environment for its tenants and a customer care orientated housing service for everyone regardless of race, colour, ethnic origin, disability, sexuality, gender, age and nationality.

Lifestyle and Social Activities

Everyone is different! Sheltered Housing offers you the choice of joining in with social activities in the communal areas of the scheme or on day trips out, and/or spend time privately in your own home.

Extra Care Sheltered Housing

Extra Care Sheltered Housing is a joint partnership between Lancaster City Council, Lancashire County Council, the Lancaster Priority Care Trust and private sector company, CareWatch (Lancaster and Morecambe).

The Extra Care Sheltered Housing Schemes offer care and support teams who aim to provide a person centred care approach, helping to ensure all residents within the sheltered housing community enjoy life to the full, don't feel isolated and are therefore able to benefit from all that goes on within the scheme and local community. This way older people with higher level needs can remain independent longer, with the help of a support and rehabilitation package that is tailored to suit the individual's needs, and is provided within their own home located within one of the designated sheltered housing schemes.

2. Services provided within Sheltered Housing

The Scheme Manager

The Scheme Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management and supervision of the sheltered scheme. S/he will liaise and communicate with you through regular visits, intercom checks, support plans and general social interaction.

For you as an individual, the Scheme Manager will:

- Provide daily support and contact as agreed in your support plan to ensure your continued well being*
- Update your Support Plan with you at least annually, but more frequently if required
- Contact you at least twice a week, Monday to Friday between 9.00am – 5.00pm to check on your welfare
- Visit you at least once a month depending on your support needs
- Encourage independence by helping you to remain in sheltered housing for as long as possible
- Liaise with other agencies on your behalf such as: your GP, Social Services, Community Mental Health Services and other Council services
- Signpost you to other services when you need them

** Please note that if you are due to have contact from your Scheme Manager but go out and do not advise them of this, they may enter your flat/bungalow to ensure that you are not at home and in difficulty. This would also be true of a visiting Scheme Manager who is providing cover when your Scheme Manager is on holiday.*

The Scheme Manager is also responsible for the day to day management of the schemes which includes:

- Checking the community alarm (intercom) system in the scheme and your flat/bungalow to ensure that it is working correctly
- Ensuring that the environment within the scheme is safe, following LCC health and safety policies and procedures
- Checking that the Fire Alarm system is working correctly (“all under one roof” flats only)
- Ensuring safe keeping of scheme keys

- Working closely with tenants to facilitate social activities
- Promoting opportunities for tenants to get involved with issues concerning their scheme and the wider community
- Reporting general scheme repairs
- Helping to resolve minor neighbour disputes
- Monitoring the work of contractors e.g. the cleaning contract for your scheme

Scheme Managers do not provide the following services:

- Personal care/home help type services
- Cooking meals for tenants
- Laundry services
- Collection of pensions, prescriptions or shopping for tenants, though they may be able to assist with the latter in an emergency
- Lifting or manual handling
- Administering medication

Scheme Manager's working hours

Your Scheme Manager works a 37 hour week, Monday to Friday. The council's normal business hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm, but the council operates a flexible working scheme. Your Scheme Manager will normally work *within* the normal business hours and should generally be on site every morning Monday to Friday, but their hours are flexible. When they are not on duty, the Emergency Call Centre monitors calls that come via the Tunstall Communicall alarm equipment.

Staff Cover

When your Scheme Manager is on holiday, or off sick, cover will be provided by another member of the team and the Emergency Call Centre. You will be advised of the contact arrangements.

Likewise, your Scheme Manager may be required to go off site to cover at another scheme on occasions to cover for staff absences elsewhere.

Staff Training

Scheme Managers are required to attend LCC's corporate training events including First Aid and Fire Warden (where appropriate) training within their normal working hours.

We also encourage staff to gain a wider understanding of the sheltered housing service by attending professional training courses to gain the National Diploma in Sheltered and Supported Housing (formerly the National Warden's Certificate).

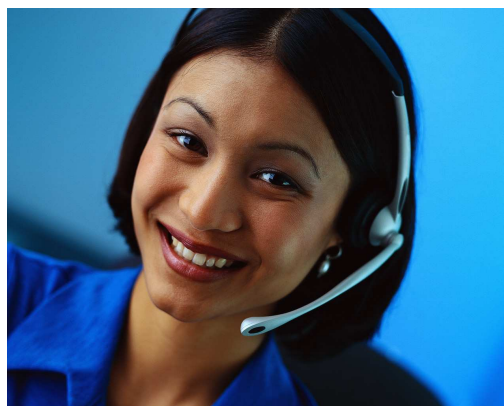
The Emergency Call Centre

Outside the Scheme Manager's normal 'office' hours, all sheltered housing properties are linked to the city council's Emergency Call Centre via the Tunstall Communicall (intercom) system. The Emergency Call Centre is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. Calls are automatically diverted to the call centre when the Scheme Manager is off duty or on holiday.

The information that you provide on your Support Plan regarding any medical conditions and details of your GP and emergency contacts will be shared with the Emergency Call Centre so that the operator can summon the correct help for you in an emergency.

The Emergency Call Centre also provides 24 hour support for people living in their own homes that have Lifeline community alarms.

The telephone number for the Emergency Call Centre is: (01524) 67099.



Other Staff roles and responsibilities:

The following members of staff are based at the Housing office at 38 Cable Street, Lancaster LA1 1HH. Telephone: (01524) 582929:

Supported Housing Manager – responsible for day to day management of all council owned sheltered housing schemes in the district, and has line management responsibility for your Scheme Manager.

Estate Manager – responsible for managing issues in your neighbourhood such as anti-social behaviour, grounds maintenance and other tenancy issues. Please ask your Scheme Manager for the name of your Estate Manager.

Customer Service Team – will deal with enquiries relating to the housing service, including repairs and allocations.

The following staff are based at Morecambe Town Hall (Tel: 582005):

Housing Options Team – responsible for allocation of council housing properties in the district.

Support Planning

Sheltered Housing is part funded by **Supporting People**. This is a Government programme. It aims to help vulnerable adults to get housing related support services so that they can live independent lives. More information can be found in the leaflet *'What is Supporting People?'*

Under Supporting People legislation we are required to record and monitor the services we provide to you and demonstrate that they are appropriate to your needs. The Support Plan forms part of this evidence.

When you have moved into your home, your Scheme Manager will complete a Support Plan with you. The Support Plan will highlight areas such as:

- whether you require any assistance with everyday activities such as washing and dressing, cooking, cleaning, shopping etc
- referrals to other agencies to assist with the above issues
- the level and type of contact you would like with your Scheme Manager
- whether you require help and advice regarding benefit entitlements
- referrals to Occupational Therapist for aids and adaptations to your home

The Support Plan is a confidential document stored on your personal file, which is kept securely in a locked filing cabinet by your Scheme Manager.

As mentioned earlier in the guide, the information is shared with the Emergency Call Centre to ensure that we can summon the correct help for you in an emergency when your Scheme Manager is absent from the scheme.

You will also receive a copy of your Support Plan if you would like one.

Data Protection

Under the Data Protection Act, Lancaster City Council must, upon your written request, make available a copy of any personal information that relates specifically to you. Certain information may be withheld if it was supplied by a third party in confidence, or if it relates to any legal action being taken against you.

If you wish to see this information, please write to us. To protect the information that we hold, you will have to produce proof of identity. There may also be a small administrative charge for this service. If the information supplied to you is incorrect, you are entitled to have it amended or deleted as appropriate.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Lancaster City Council will also ensure that all personal information it receives and holds about its customers, potential customers or others, who may be affected, will be treated with complete confidentiality. There are some circumstances when relevant information may be passed on, for example to assist in the prevention and detection of crime, if required to do so by law.

Keys

Living in sheltered housing, your privacy and independence will be respected. Your Scheme Manager will hold a key to your property, either in the form of a master key or a copy of the door key given to him/her by you.

The Scheme Manager will only enter your home using the key:

- in response to an emergency call made by you through pulling an alarm cord/pressing the button on your pendant
- if s/he does not get a response from you when they visit or intercom call you
- you, and/or other tenants are in danger

If this happens, the Scheme Manager will use the key to enter your property after first trying to contact you. If you are not there, they will leave a note to say that they have come into your property and why. When leaving the property, the Scheme Manager will leave the property secure.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Everyone receiving support from Health and Housing Services has a right to be protected from abuse. We will take all reasonable actions to protect clients from abuse, exploitation and/or mistreatment.

Abuse may include any of the following: physical, sexual, psychological, financial, neglect or discrimination.

The 'abuser' may be a family member, a friend, a voluntary or paid carer who is supposed to be visiting and helping you.

Please do not hesitate to speak to someone that you can trust. This may include any of the following people:

- Your Scheme Manager
- The Supported Housing Manager (Tel: 01524 586858)
- Your Estate Manager (Tel: 01524 582929)

Further information is available in the leaflet 'Safeguarding Adults' - see list of available leaflets at the back of this handbook.

Health and Safety

Health and Safety is a key consideration in sheltered housing. The council recognises the need and accepts responsibility for providing, so far as is reasonably practical, a safe and healthy environment for residents, its staff and any others affected by its service provision.

The council has a Health and Safety Policy to support this, and undertakes regular inspections and assessments to maintain a safe and healthy environment within its sheltered housing schemes.

For example Health and Housing Services arranges for:

- the regular testing and servicing of its gas appliances within your home
- the periodic inspection of the electrical system in your home,
- the maintenance of the water supply
- the maintenance of the structure and fabric of your home and of the common parts of schemes

- the inspection and maintenance of fire control systems with the scheme including the servicing of smoke detectors provided within your home.
- the inspection of the communal parts of schemes to identify and take action on any hazards found.

WATER SAFETY – Protection against Legionella

A contractor on behalf of Health and Housing Services carries out maintenance and monthly checks of the water supply.

In addition, on a weekly basis to prevent Legionella the Scheme Manager turns on taps to run water in the communal shower, the guest room and in the cleaner's cupboard. They will also do this in vacant properties. Once a property becomes occupied by a tenant/s, the responsibility for ensuring that taps are run at least once a week becomes the responsibility of the tenant. Therefore, if a tenant goes on holiday, or has a prolonged hospital stay, they should arrange for a family member or friend to check the water supply. Where a tenant does not have any family or friends in the local area, they should discuss the matter with their Scheme Manager. Scheme Managers will only be allowed to carry out these checks with the written permission of the tenant/s.

Gifts, Wills and Bequests

Occasionally tenants may wish to give a small gift to a member of staff as a sign of their gratitude. Small personal gifts such as a bottle of wine or a box of chocolates can be accepted but staff cannot accept gifts that exceed a value of £5.00. They **cannot** accept money or vouchers regardless of the amount.

We would strongly discourage proposals by residents (or their family or friends) to leave money or other forms of bequests in their Will to a staff member. We would also respectfully discourage residents from naming any staff member as an executor of a Will.

Your Scheme Manager will be able to explain these limitations to you in more depth should you need any further information on gifts.

Money

Under no circumstances is your Scheme Manager allowed to handle your money. Please do not ask them to look after your cash or undertake any banking on your behalf.

Social Funds

Most sheltered housing schemes have a social fund which is managed by residents themselves to pay for and fund social activities.

We advise residents to have effective financial systems in place to manage this money so that all monies collected are held in a bank account specifically set up for this purpose. Residents responsible for this money should provide regular statements to other residents who pay into the fund. The process should be transparent and accountable.

3. Your Sheltered Home – Living in your flat/bungalow

Facilities in sheltered housing

Medical Facilities

Tenants entering sheltered accommodation must make their own arrangements for choosing a doctor.

If a hospital admission is required, the tenant's doctor is responsible for making the necessary arrangements.

The Scheme Manager will maintain his/her own records of the nearest relatives and the tenant's doctor for use in case of illness or emergency.

Communal Facilities

Health and Housing Services will make arrangements for the furnishing and cleaning of communal areas and the Scheme Manager will be responsible for the general supervision of these rooms.

Tenants are requested to show consideration to their fellow tenants by using these facilities in a manner that is beneficial to all.

Guest Room

Some schemes have a guest room where, by arrangement with the Scheme Manager, tenants may have a relative or friend to visit them for a short period. Priority will be given where the application for the use of the room arises from a tenant's illness. A small charge is made for this facility which is payable to the council via the Scheme Manager.

It is the tenant's (or their visiting family member's) responsibility to launder the bed linen after use.

Common room

Where the scheme includes a common room or lounge, Scheme Managers will encourage social activities. Tenants are not, of course, obliged to attend any function, the choice is entirely their own. Tenants are free to organise their own activities in the lounge – please liaise with the Scheme Manager to check that the room is available.

You may find that there is a social committee in your scheme, which organises social activities and outings.

Laundry Facilities



Some schemes include a laundry and all tenants have use of the washing and drying machines for their own washing.

The Scheme Manager will show tenants how to use the machines.

Carers or relatives may use the machines only to do tenants' washing. Priority will be given to carers working to strict time limits.

For further information, speak to your Scheme Manager.

Door Entry

Some of the schemes have a main door entry system that allows you to let people in who are known to you. The system allows you to answer and open the door from your flat.

Only let people into the scheme that you know and trust. There are bogus callers around who will use various explanations to gain entry. Always ask for identification and official authorisation. If you are at all suspicious contact your Scheme Manager or the Police, and do not provide access.



Intercom system

All sheltered homes are fitted with communication equipment so you can contact the Scheme Manager or Emergency Call Centre in an emergency. If the Scheme Manager is not on duty, the call will be answered by the Emergency Call Centre. The system is activated by you pressing your pendant or pulling a pull cord in your home.

It is important that where you have pull cords in your home, they are not tied up or cut off as this would mean that you would not be able to reach the cord if you fell.

The pull cord or pendant can also be used for you to inform the Scheme Manager/Emergency Call Centre that you will not be in for the daily call or if you are going on holiday.

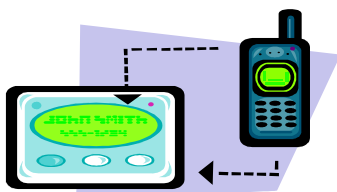
What happens when you press the emergency buttons or pull the pull cord in your home?

When you press the red button on your pendant, the speech module on the wall, or the pull cords in your home, a call is placed on the Lifeline system.



If you have a scheme manager and they are on duty the call will be sent directly to their handset. They will then speak to you via your speech module.

If your Scheme Manager is not on duty the Lifeline system will make a phone call out from your scheme to the emergency call centre.



When the call reaches the call centre the system will identify the address that the call has come from.

The duty operator will then be presented with the call on their computer and with the details that you have provided about yourself. They will then speak to you via your speech module to find out how they can help.





Why can't I always be heard?

All conversations on the Lifeline system are on what is known as half duplex speech. This is a bit like using a two way radio – we will not be able to hear you when we are talking and you will not be able to hear us when we are listening to you.

How will the emergency services be able to get in to help me?

In an emergency we will need to ensure that the help we send can get to you. This may be via a key safe or one of your own emergency contacts.

What if there is more than one call made from my scheme at the same time?

If there is more than one call made from the same scheme at anytime the calls will queue, so on occasions it can take a little longer for your call to be answered.

Don't worry, we will know that you are there and will always put Lifeline calls first.

Concessionary TV Licence

All tenants over 75 are entitled to a free TV licence. If you are under 75 your scheme may be covered by a Concessionary TV Licence. Further information can be obtained from your Scheme Manager.



Insurance

Lancaster City Council is responsible for insuring the building, but this does not cover the contents of your home. You are responsible for taking out a contents insurance policy.

Information is available from the housing office for a Pay as you Go Home Contents Insurance scheme – ‘Crystal Insurance Scheme’, which is underwritten by Allianz Insurance plc.

Pets

You may keep a small caged bird, or fish in an aquarium, but you must have written permission for anything else. Cats and dogs are not normally allowed in sheltered housing schemes with communal corridors and/or common rooms. If you have a pet of any kind, you must arrange for it to be looked after if you become ill.

For further information, speak to your Estate Manager.



Smoking Policy

Smoking is not allowed in any of the communal areas of the scheme. You are allowed to smoke in your own flat/bungalow, but we respectfully ask that you do not smoke when staff or other professionals are visiting.

Fire Precautions

Instructions relating to fire precautions must be observed at all times. On no account may fire appliances be moved or handled except in an emergency or on the instructions of a Fire Officer or Scheme Manager.

Your Scheme Manager will tell you which would be the quickest way for you to leave the building in case of fire.

In the sheltered housing blocks of flats (Category 2 sheltered housing) the fire alarms are tested on a weekly basis, and fire evacuation drills should be carried out every six months.

Grounds Maintenance

Communal gardens at sheltered housing schemes are provided for the enjoyment of residents. The council's grounds maintenance services are contracted to maintain the grounds.

Car Parking

There are limited car parking spaces available at some of the schemes. There are no reserved spaces.

Near the entrance to some of the schemes an area may be marked for use by the emergency services. This needs to be kept clear at all times for the use of ambulances or fire engines.

Aids and Adaptations

If you would find it easier to manage if you had some alterations or special equipment in your home, you may be referred to an Occupational Therapist. The Occupational Therapy department is part of Social Services. Adaptations to properties will not be carried out to your property without a recommendation from an Occupational Therapist.

Electric Wheelchairs and Mobility Scooters

If you are interested in purchasing a battery powered wheelchair or mobility scooter, you should ensure that there is sufficient space within your home to accommodate it.

Please note that wheelchairs and scooters cannot be parked on communal corridors and landings because they constitute a fire risk.



4. General Information

Complaints procedure

Although we aim to provide the highest standards of service, we know that problems do sometimes occur. Very often we can sort them out on the spot.

If you are unhappy with the service that you receive, please let us know. You can make a complaint in person, by telephone or in writing.

When making your complaint, we will be able to deal with it more quickly if you provide:

- Your full name and address
- The full name and address of the person, if you are complaining on behalf of someone else
- The names of any staff who have dealt with the situation
- As much detail as possible about the situation

We will write to you within 2 working days of receipt to let you know that we have received your complaint. We will send a full written reply within 5 working days. If we cannot send a full written reply

within 5 days, we will write to let you know the reason why this has not been done, and the date when a full reply will be given.

For more information regarding the complaints procedure, please see leaflet “Compliments, Comments, Complaints”.

Complaints regarding ‘Extra Care’

‘Extra Care’ is provided by an external agency on behalf of Social Services. If you are unhappy with the care that you receive, you should contact: Services for Older People, Social Services, Unit 6 Northgate, White Lund Industrial Estate, Morecambe. Tel: (01524) 512000.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Health and Housing Services Council Housing

Postal Address:

PO Box 4, Town Hall, Dalton Sq., Lancaster. LA1 1QR

Office:

38 Cable Street, Lancaster, LA1 1HH

Telephone:

01524 582929

E-mail:

councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk

Website:

www.lancaster.gov.uk

Office hours are 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday (10.00 am to 5.00 pm Wednesdays)

When the office is closed, in an emergency ring the council's Emergency Call Centre which is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The number to call is: 01524 67099

Calls may be recorded to help improve our standard of service and accuracy of information.



**LANCASTER
CITY COUNCIL**

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside