



Shaping Sheltered Housing for the Future

Our Approach to 'decommissioning'



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We aim to ensure that older and vulnerable people living in our properties are well housed.

We want them to enjoy a good quality of life and be able to take an active part in their local community.

The Council's Housing Strategy 2008-2011 contains a section on the specific housing and support needs of older and vulnerable people.

Our support services are paid for by the government body known as 'Supporting People'. To get funding we have to follow their guidelines. All our sheltered properties have to meet their standards and be suitable for residents with support needs. They assess each Scheme on several different areas including:

- Suitable access
- Walk in showers
- Reasonable parking
- Suitable surrounding areas
- Local facilities.

The Housing Stock Options Appraisal in 2006 identified a need for us to look closely at our sheltered stock. We found that too many of our sheltered properties failed to reach the supporting people standards, but we also found a number of people living in sheltered properties who did not require support needs. These people do not wish to have visits from our Mobile Support Officers and do not want the Home Safeguard Alarm facilities.

About Supporting People

Supporting People funding does not cover properties occupied by people who do not have support needs, so some schemes will be 'decommissioned' meaning they will no longer be classed as sheltered accommodation.

Supporting People provides funding to East Devon District Council to help pay towards the sheltered housing services. They will not pay for housing related support to be provided for clients with no support needs.

What we are doing

We are moving away from providing support services in properties labelled as 'sheltered'. We are aiming in the future to provide support to individuals in their own home even within our general housing stock.

We are about to undertake a project to identify, agree and decide on a method for reducing the number of sheltered properties we offer.

This will mean that we will be able to let our housing in a more flexible way. People who have a housing need but who currently are not able to access sheltered accommodation would be able to live there. The 'decommissioned' properties could be used for older people who do not require support, or for younger people who have disabilities. Some properties, such as ground floor flats or those with adaptations, will be particularly suited for these groups. It is important that each scheme is looked at carefully taking into account the needs of current tenants, the demand for housing there, and the design of the properties.

We estimate that up to a quarter of our current sheltered housing may need to be decommissioned. Those properties which remain as 'sheltered' after the decommissioning exercise may require work to bring them up to a standard which will meet future expectations. We have set aside £4.3 million to pay for this work.

What is housing related support?

- Housing related support is the service you receive directly from the Home Safeguard Alarm Services connected to your home, or the visits or calls from your Scheme Manager or Mobile Support Officer.
- It covers all the things you can ask the Scheme Manager, Mobile Support Officer or Home Safeguard Operator to do for you such as help you complete forms, contact your relatives for you, and help with emergencies.

What does decommissioning mean?

- Changing the status of the property from sheltered to non-sheltered or general needs housing.
- Ensuring our sheltered stock is up to the standard expected by supporting people and identifying unsuitable stock.
- Residents may notice a few new people moving on to the scheme who are under pensionable age but will not necessarily have children living with them or be young people.

What decommissioning does not mean!

- No one will be expected to move out of their home.
- Scheme managers will not be made redundant or have to move out of their accommodation if the scheme is no longer labelled as sheltered.
- Residents who remain living on schemes which are no longer 'sheltered' will still have full support services provided. They will be able to have the alarm system linked to Home Safeguard and have visits from the mobile support officers.

If your scheme is identified as having potential for decommissioning, what will happen next?

- You will receive a letter and a questionnaire in the post to complete and send back to the council with your comments and views.
- Your scheme manager or mobile support officer will speak with you in your own home about any concerns you may have about the decommissioning process.
- You will be invited to come along to meetings in your area to discuss your views and concerns.
- You will be contacted by your mobile support officer or scheme manager about your requirements regarding your support needs, and a further review of your support plan will be undertaken.

Who will be making the decisions?

- A Task and Finish Forum has been formed to look at the future of our sheltered stock and this group is made up of councillors, tenants and officers.
- The Forum are following the supporting people guidelines which can be found at www.supportpeopledevon.com (TBC).
- The Forum will consult widely with tenants.
- Your views are important. Please complete and return the enclosed questionnaire.
- When the Forum has finished its review and consultation process it will make recommendations to the Housing Review Board.
- The Housing Review Board will make the final decision as to which properties will be decommissioned.

Don't forget!

Please complete and return your questionnaire.



Please ask your scheme manager or mobile support officer if you would like some help with this.

How to get in touch

Feel free to get in touch about anything in this booklet or for any information or advice.



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