

Task Group:	Sheltered Housing/Lifeline Task Group	Agenda Item
Date:	6 January 2010	4
Title:	OUT OF HOUR AND WEEKEND SERVICE	
Author:	Elizabeth Petrie, Housing Management Manager	Item for decision

Summary

- 1 Further to the last meeting, this report outlines the findings of the recent consultation that officers have carried out with sheltered tenants and their families and carers about how the Council could provide a much improved service by providing a more personalised service, rather than the current “one size fits all”. (Daily visit whether one wants it or not).
It also outlines the work that officers have carried out with regards to providing a full out of hours and weekend response service.

Recommendations

- 2 The Task Group agree and recommend to the Community & Housing Committee on the 21 January 2010 the following:
- 3 Implement a more personalised level of Housing Support to service users (Three levels of support) including the provision of a ‘Handy Person’
- 4 The implementation of a full out of hours and weekend response service to all Sheltered Housing Tenants and Lifeline subscribers by Carecall, on a trial basis for one year.

Background Papers

- 5 All background papers are available on request from the author of this report. Previous Task Group minutes and Committee reports are available on the Council’s web site.

Impact

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Communication/Consultation	The task group promotes consultation with service users, partner agencies, staff and the wider community.
Community Safety	Lifeline and Sheltered Housing provides security and peace of mind to them and their families. Additional Telecare solutions can always be added to help maintain an independent life as possible for vulnerable residents of our community.

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Equalities	The Sheltered and Lifeline Service must be applied without discrimination of any kind.
Finance	Officers have been working closely with finance and by implementing this new service; it is possible that some financial savings can be made.
Health & Safety	By providing a full out of our response service, this will eliminate officers who have already been working a full day having to respond and attend emergency call outs, often in the early hours of the morning.
Legal implications/ Human Rights	With the way the current service is provided, it conflicts with the European Time Working Directive.
Sustainability	The service has reached a critical point and cannot be sustained in its current format for much longer. To recruit weekend staff is becoming virtually impossible, because of having to be "on call" for the out of hours. Weekday staff have been covering the weekends and now Senior and Principal Officers have been working weekends as well to try and keep the service running.
Ward-specific impacts	Covers the whole of the Uttlesford District
Workforce/Workplace	Consultation is continuing with staff, Unison and the HR partnership as this will impact on both the two remaining weekend Sheltered Housing Officers and the weekday staff.

Situation

- 7 At the last meeting of the Task Group it was agreed that Officers continue with the consultation with users to discuss the way forward to providing a much improved service, by offering service users a range of different levels of service, to meet their individual needs. Also to continue investigating providing a full response service for the out of hour and weekend service with a different Control Centre.
- 8 Officers have completed the initial round of consultation with service users, to which their family/friends and carers were invited to attend if they wished. It became apparent that not everybody felt they wanted/needed the same level of service. Most people felt they would like to see a 'handy person' who could attend the sheltered schemes on a regular basis, who could carry out minor repairs, carry out health and safety checks, one off jobs, such as clearing conkers from outside a particular sheltered scheme where it becomes quite

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hazardous for residents and visitors to the scheme etc. This in turn would free up much valuable time for the sheltered housing officers who currently spend a lot of time reporting and chasing up repair issues. The Sheltered Housing Officers (SHO) would be able to spend more time with the people who need/want the support, which through no fault of their own has become an issue for quite a number of service users, who feel that they would like more support than they currently receive. Some people are still working when they come into sheltered housing and a lot of people are far more active in their sixties, seventies and beyond than they were, say twenty years ago and have said to us that they do not require the level of service that we currently provide but may need a higher level of support at a later date.

- 9 Officers will carry out one to one consultation with service users very early in the New Year to finalise exactly what level of support they would like to receive. At present we have the equivalent of six full time Sheltered Housing Officers (Monday to Friday) although four of them job share. There should be five weekend Sheltered Housing Officers, but we only have two. (We have recently taken on two agency workers to try and help cover the weekend service). Full consultation is continuing to take place with staff, Unison and the HR partnership over any potential job losses and changes to current working practices.
- 10 It is very clear that the current sheltered housing service has reached a critical point whereby we cannot recruit weekend staff because of the fact that people are expected to cover the out of hours, when they have already worked a full day. This is not only going against the European Working Time Directive by the amount of hours they are expected to work but also this has serious health and safety implications. For example driving when tired, and not being able to function properly the next day, which in turn is not fair to the service user. For a long time the amount of sick leave amongst the SHO's has been very high compared to other service areas, hence it has put a tremendous strain on the remaining staff, who are then expected to cover up to six sheltered housing sites a day across the district. Some weekday staff have also been trying to help out at weekends, which has resulted in some staff working seven days a week, which is clearly unacceptable, which is why Senior and Principal officers have also been working at weekends to try and take the pressure off the SHO's, so then they have also been working seven days a week.
- 11 It is important to improve the service we provide to our most vulnerable client group. However, it is as equally important that we look after our Sheltered Housing Staff by providing better working conditions, which is vital for the future recruitment and retention of staff.
- 12 Based on the initial consultation, it is anticipated that to run the service efficiently and effectively, we would need seven full time Sheltered Housing Officers to provide the following levels of service.
 - Daily visit from a Sheltered Housing Officer, including full access to pull cords/pendants and any additional telecare solutions.

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- Weekly visit by a Sheltered Housing Officer, including full access to pull cords/pendants and any additional telecare solutions.
- No visits by a Sheltered Housing Officer but must have full access to pull cords/pendants and any additional telecare solutions. **NB there would still need to be some checks built in to ensure the service users circumstances have not changed.**

- 13 It is clear, so far, that the majority of service users will still wish to receive a daily visit and by implementing the above choices for services users, this will ensure that support is targeted where it is needed most. SHOs will be responsible for two sheltered schemes a day, Monday – Friday (there will always be exceptions, covering annual leave etc). They will then have the time to be able to encourage and help residents in organising their own activities/social events that are clearly lacking in some schemes.
- 14 When Officers discussed the weekend service with service users, it is fair to say there were some mixed views and opinions. Some people felt that it wasn't necessary for a visit as they have family available during the weekend they could call upon in an emergency. Others said they would miss the personal contact but would be happy with the arrangement as long as the weekday service improved and that they still had access to pull cords etc. It was acknowledged that certain things have to be left until the Monday for the weekday team to pick up as many services are not available for the SHO's to contact during the weekend.
- 15 There will obviously be different charges against the three service level options. These costs will be presented at the meeting of this Task Group. It must be emphasised that anyone who comes into Sheltered Housing cannot completely, opt out of the service, as a minimum they must have access to Careline. As peoples circumstances change they will be able to move up and down through the above levels of service. Clear service standards will need to be written to ensure that service users understand and know exactly what they should expect to receive for whatever level of service they have.
- 16 If a service user needs to pull their cord or press their pendant, it goes through to the Control Centre at North Herts based in Hitchin. The operator will assess the situation and immediately summons an ambulance if necessary or contact their family and/or a Sheltered Housing Officer (SHO).
- 17 Officers have been looking at other Careline and Security Companies that said they could provide a comparable service but most didn't have equipment that would be compatible with our systems. Our current Careline provider, North Herts, provide a monitoring only service for our lifeline and Sheltered service users. The current contract that we have with North Herts is due to expire at the end of March 2010. Officers as a matter of good practice are looking at all other options to see if we are getting the best possible service and value for money, which North Herts are fully aware of, before deciding whether to renew our contract with them or move to a different service

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provider. It should be noted that Supporting People are also currently carrying out a review of Control Centres across Essex.

- 18 Carecall in Braintree has been operating for 28 years and has a proven track record of providing high quality services to their service users. Carecall is a community alarm service which provide a 24 hour monitoring and response service for approximately 2,000 clients in Sheltered Housing schemes and to people within their own homes. In 2003 Carecall became part of Witham, Braintree and Halstead Care Trust (WBHCT). In 2006 WBHCT merged with Maldon and Chelmsford Primary Care Trusts to become Mid Essex PCT which is the only PCT with an in-house Careline.
- 19 Carecall has also been accredited with the Telecare Services Association (TSA) since May 2006, which involves maintaining strict adherence to Code of Practice standards. In June 2009 they were audited and gained the new TSA Codes of Practice accreditation for: Monitoring, Installing, Responding and Service Tailoring.
- 20 Carecall can provide a full out of hour and weekend response service. They will employ staff who live in the Uttlesford District, whose job is purely to be ready and respond immediately if a Call goes through to the North Herts Control Centre, who would contact Carecall responders direct. They would have training on all our sheltered sites and meet the residents, to ensure not only they would be familiar with our sheltered schemes but equally important, that services users get to know who might be attending their home if there is an emergency. Carecall strictly adhere to Mid Essex PCT Policies and procedures including Lone Working, Data Protection and Confidentiality. All their staff receive PCT mandatory training including Manual Handling, Conflict Resolution, Clinical governance and Risk Assessment, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, Fire Training and Equality and Diversity.
- 21 This would be trialled for a year and would be closely monitored. Regular updates will be given to this Task Group.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Service users do not feel that they have been listened to or their views taken on board	3	3	Members agree that Officers can offer service users more choice as to the level of service they receive, including the out of hour and weekend service

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

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