



RICHMONDSHIRE

HOUSING



**WELCOME
TO
SHELTERED
HOUSING
in
Richmondshire**

**1st May
2002**

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this booklet is to provide information about living in Sheltered Housing in Richmondshire.

The Council has 337 properties in 11 sheltered schemes, and each one has a resident warden. The facilities available within the schemes differ, depending upon the type of building, however, we pride ourselves on the level of service we provide regardless of the scheme location.

The accommodation within our Sheltered Schemes varies, there are bedsits, self contained bedsits, flats and bungalows.

All but one scheme has a communal lounge where residents can meet, take part in social activities or drop in for a coffee on the way to the shops.

Most schemes have a laundry, and if not the individual properties are plumbed for washing machines.

Sheltered Housing is not an old people's home, it is a collection of individual homes, each of which can be kept as private as the resident wishes. However, when companionship and social contact is needed, a ready made community of people of similar age and interests is there to be enjoyed.

In the event of illness or an accident, help is close at hand, in the form of a resident warden who acts as a link with the medical and social services and relatives. The warden's home is linked by a special intercom system to every resident's home, and the warden makes contact every day, either in person or via the intercom system, to check that all is well.

Wardens are only human of course, and therefore do not work 24 hours a day. Outside normal working hours, cover is provided either by a relief warden or by the Council's Lifeline Service which links Sheltered Housing to a call centre, from which help can be summoned at any hour of the day or night, and mobile wardens will respond as required.

It is a fact of life, however, that no warden, however kind or caring, can ever take the place of a family. Family support and assistance can play a vital part in helping relatives to settle in and maintain a normal routine.

Family and friends are always welcome to visit, and most schemes have accommodation for visitors to stay in if necessary.

THE AIMS OF OUR SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICE ARE:-

- To ensure sheltered housing continues to meet the needs of older people as part of a customer focused and cost effective housing service based on choice.
- To provide accommodation to aid independent living for older people for as long as they need it.
- To promote independence and mutual support in our residents.
- To encourage resident participation in social and leisure activities, and to respect their privacy and choice.
- To reassure, and provide help to our residents as and when needed.
- To encourage resident participation in the Council's decision making processes.

WHAT IS SHELTERED HOUSING?

Sheltered housing aims to provide convenient and comfortable unfurnished accommodation, specially designed or adapted with the needs of older people in mind. As a resident you can come and go as you please, and enjoy privacy or companionship according to your wishes. You will have ample opportunities to make friends and develop a wide social life with the help of the lounge and communal facilities which are provided in most schemes.

You also have the reassurance of knowing that help is available when you need it. Every Sheltered Housing Scheme has a resident warden whose home is linked to yours by an intercom system, so when you need it help can be provided.

When your warden is off duty, you are covered by the Council's Lifeline Service which provides Mobile Warden support for Sheltered Housing.

There are 4 types of Sheltered Housing Scheme in Richmondshire:

- 1) Purpose built schemes which provide a resident warden, a relief warden and communal facilities.
- 2) Groups of bungalows with a communal lounge and kitchen facilities, a resident warden on the premises, and a relief warden.
- 3) Groups of flats or bungalows without communal facilities but with a resident warden living there.
- 4) "Extra care" warden schemes where home and health care services are provided for those who need it.

WHAT DOES THE WARDEN DO?

The warden is not a doctor, nurse or a social worker, so can't be expected to do their jobs, however, what your warden can do is act as your link with these and other services.

In an emergency the warden will call upon any help which may be necessary and will advise your relatives. If you ever need health or home care support, the warden will help you arrange these where possible.

It is important to remember, however, that your warden has many residents to attend to. Everyday tasks such as shopping or collecting your pension are your own responsibility, not the warden's. The warden will of course help in an emergency, until other arrangements can be made.

Remember too, that wardens are people just like you, with families of their own, and busy lives to lead outside working hours. **They are not on duty 24 hours a day.**

Usually they work part time six days a week, from around 8.30 am to 12.30 pm, although these hours will vary from scheme to scheme depending upon the number of residents.

Relief wardens cover the duties of wardens when they are on holiday, or ill, and the Lifeline Services provides 24 hour cover every day, so there's always someone on hand to help you if you need it.

SO WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM UNWELL?

If you are ill or in difficulties the warden will help you by calling the right people to meet your needs. To help your warden act quickly in times of need we ask you for the names, addresses and contact numbers of your nearest relative or friend and your doctor. If any of this information changes, please let your warden know.

WHEN SHOULD THE INTERCOM/ALARM SYSTEM BE USED?

The intercom/alarm system is for use in emergencies. If you are unwell, or in difficulty, do not hesitate to use it to call the warden.

Don't worry about privacy. The intercom system cannot be used to listen in on your conversations. Please remember that the intercom system is the vital link between you and your warden, so do not tamper with the equipment or tie up the emergency cords.

If you are going out before you have been contacted, we advise you to use the intercom to let your warden know you are going out. If you do not, your warden will have to take a course of action which involves asking your neighbours and relatives if they know where you are, or gaining access to your home, which may cause unnecessary anxiety and worry.

DOES THE WARDEN HAVE ACCESS TO MY HOME?

Wardens will only enter your home at your invitation, or in an emergency, or with your permission when access is required while you are away. Some schemes have a master key system, in others we ask residents to let us hold a key to their door so access can be gained if needed. All such keys are kept in a locked key safe.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO GET HELP WITH MY RENT?

The first question to ask is are you paying more than you need to? If you are receiving state benefits or have a low income, you may be entitled to financial help. You can get an application form from the Housing Unit, where you can get advice and help on how to complete your form.

We cannot stress this enough - if you are having any difficulty paying your rent, contact the Housing Unit for help immediately. Housing Unit, Frenchgate House, Frenchgate, Richmond, North Yorkshire, DL10 7AF.

HOW DO I MAKE COMPLAINTS OR SUGGESTIONS?

If you are unhappy or dissatisfied with any aspect of our sheltered housing service, do not sit brooding on it. Talk to your warden or contact the Housing Unit. If you are still not satisfied with the response you receive you can make use of the Council's Formal Complaints Procedure, details of which are available from the Corporate Unit Swale House, Frenchgate, Richmond, North Yorkshire.

Should you have any ideas on improving life within your Sheltered Housing Scheme and making things easier for you and your neighbours, do not keep them to yourself. Talk it over with your warden or the Housing Unit and your idea just might be put into practice.

AM I RESPONSIBLE FOR REPAIRS AND DECORATING?

All necessary repairs to your home, inside and outside, will be handled by the Council. There is no charge, unless damage has been caused by misuse, in which case you will be asked to pay for the repairs.

To help us keep your home in good condition, we ask you to let us know whenever you notice anything broken or any leaks or other such faults.

The Council also handles all outside decoration work, but the decoration of the inside of your home is up to you.

To help us help you, we ask for your co-operation in allowing Council workmen into your home, even if it has not been possible to give advance notice of their call. Remember to ask any workmen for proof of their identify before allowing them into your home - **if in doubt, keep them out.**

IS MY HOME INSURED?

Your home is insured by the Council but the cover extends only to the property itself, not your possessions. We strongly advise you to arrange adequate insurance for the contents of your home.

CAN MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY VISIT ME?

We want you to be happy in your home and family and friends are welcome to visit you at any time. We actively encourage regular visits because no warden, however friendly and caring, can ever take the place of your own family.

ARE THERE FACILITIES FOR VISITORS TO STAY OVERNIGHT?

In most schemes there are guest rooms where relatives can stay for a short period while visiting. A small charge is made for this service.

If you want to make use of the guest room, please let your warden know as far in advance as possible, however, please note that priority will always be given to relatives of residents who are ill.

Visitors are asked to provide their own towels and to keep the guest room clean and tidy at all times.

WHAT IF I AM AWAY OVERNIGHT OR ON HOLIDAY?

If you intend to be away from your home overnight, please let your warden know when you are going and also when you return home again.

ARE LAUNDRY FACILITIES PROVIDED?

Some schemes have their own laundry on the premises and tenants have free use of washing machines and dryers. If you need help in using the machines, please let your warden know.

When using the laundry, please remember that some residents live nearby and out of consideration for those residents we ask you not to use the laundry before 8.00 am or after 8.00 pm.

Please remember also that laundry facilities are for the use of residents only.

WILL I GET A REDUCTION ON MY TV LICENCE FEE?

Most schemes are covered by the Concessionary TV Licence Scheme, which means all you have to pay is £5 a year, if you are between 60 and 74. For anyone 75 or over, the TV licence is free.

Your warden can advise you on TV licence matters, however, if you require further assistance please contact the Housing Unit.

WHO DOES THE CLEANING?

If your scheme has a lounge, guest room and other communal areas, cleaners will be employed to clean them. However, it is up to you to keep your own home clean and tidy and should you have any problems doing this, do not worry about it, talk to your warden, and if necessary, they will contact the Social Services to see if help can be arranged for you.

ARE THERE ADEQUATE FIRE PRECAUTIONS?

Great care is taken to ensure that all Sheltered Housing Schemes comply with the appropriate fire regulations. However, in the event of a fire, it is important that everyone knows exactly what to do. From time to time the warden will arrange a fire drill and/or discuss with you what to do in the event of a fire. We do ask you to co-operate and take part in these activities. If you are in any doubt as to what you should do in the event of a fire breaking out or an alarm ringing, please ask your warden. We also carry out regular fire alarm tests, which your warden will tell you about.

CAN I KEEP A PET?

While we appreciate the comfort that many people get from keeping dogs, cats or other animals as pets, we regret that, unless you live in a bungalow, no pets can be kept other than a small caged bird or tropical fish.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How Many Hours Does The Warden Work?

Between 3 and 4 hours in the morning, 6 days a week, they also have control of the warden call system at night.

What Happens If The Warden Is Away Or Not On Duty?

When the warden is on their day off, on holiday or off sick, a relief warden will carry out their duties. Whenever a warden is away, the Lifeline Service will provide emergency support for their scheme.

Can My Family Visit Me?

Yes, of course they can! Your family are welcome to visit you. Most schemes even have a room which can be booked for long distance relatives to sleep in if necessary.

Can I Have A Pet Living With Me?

This depends upon the type of scheme you wish to live in, if you live in a bungalow then you can have a dog or cat, however, if you live in a flat or bedsit, you cannot have any pet other than perhaps a small bird or keep a fish tank.

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Housing Unit (for Housing advice. Benefits or Repairs)	01748 829100
Emergency out of hours repairs number	01748 850165
Social Services Customer Relations	01609 779999