

Report to: Cabinet Member for Housing

Date: 30 July 2009

Report by: Owen Buckwell, Head of Housing Management

Written by: David Mearns, Assistant Housing Manager

**SHELTERED HOUSING – IMPROVEMENTS TO NIGHT SERVICE,
REDUCTIONS IN SUPPORTING PEOPLE GRANT &
IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL PAY REVIEW**

1. **Purpose of Report:**

To recommend improvements and changes to the night service in Category 2.5 Sheltered Housing schemes required as a result of implementing the European Working Time Directive (EUWTD). To set out the estimated increases in service charges for Category 1, 2 and 2.5 Sheltered Housing schemes in 2010/11 & the additional costs falling on the Housing Revenue Account as a result of reductions in Supporting People Grant and implementation of the Local Pay Review (LPR) and EUWTD.

2. **Recommended that (key decisions):**

- (i) The proposed improvements to the night service in Category 2.5 sheltered housing schemes be approved by the introduction of a mobile night service (**Option1**) on 1st November 2009
- (ii) That every Category 2.5 resident be contacted individually before 1st November 2009 and offered a personal explanation about the new service and associated costs and charges.
- (iii) The Supporting People Commissioning Body be asked to explain the rationale for the planned reductions in support for Portsmouth's most vulnerable older residents in PCC sheltered housing schemes and that a further report be submitted to the Cabinet.
- (iv) Sheltered Housing Service Charges and Supporting People Service Charges remain unchanged as shown in the attached financial appraisal and that the additional costs falling on the Housing Revenue Account for 2009/10 be met from within the HRA contingency provision.
- (v) Delegated authority be given to the Head of Housing Management in consultation with the Head of Financial Services to adjust existing HRA budgets where necessary to ensure smooth implementation of the changes.

- (vi) Local Ward Councillors and residents continue to be closely involved with the implementation of the new service
- (vii) The Head of Housing Management bring forward a report outlining the effects of continued reductions in Supporting People Grant and the options for meeting costs arising in 2010/11 and future years.

3. Background:

Sheltered Housing Schemes

The Housing Service has 39 sheltered housing schemes containing approximately 1500 properties. 32 of these are Category 1 or Category 2 schemes (approximately 1150 properties) where staff cover is provided Monday-Friday 0830-1700 and there is a 24 hour alarm service through a control centre at Southampton.

The 7 Category 2.5 sheltered housing schemes provide the highest level of sheltered support to 346 properties. Support is provided on a 24/7 basis by 60 staff, the majority of whom are Support Assistants working 18.5 hours per week, plus a fortnightly sleep duty. Currently staff provide a service from 0900 – 2200 seven days per week and a single staff member sleeps at the scheme and is available for emergency call out from 2200 – 0900. Residents who are in receipt of Housing Benefit receive considerable financial support towards the cost of the service from the Government's Supporting People programme, although a significant proportion of the costs are met from overall council housing rents.

4. Why charges are estimated to increase for all sheltered schemes next financial year 2010/11 and the Category 2.5 schemes night service must change

- (a) The European Union Working Time Directive (EUWTD) limits the hours that staff can work and requires that staff be paid the appropriate hourly rate for night work, not an allowance.
- (b) The Supporting People Commissioning Body, which decides how Government grant is spent on care in Portsmouth, has cut the grant to the sheltered housing service from January 2010 by £35k. They have also signalled that they will progressively reduce the funding for sheltered housing in future years.
- (c) The Local Pay Review, as agreed by Employment Committee on 3rd July 2009, has changed shift payments and deleted sleep-in allowances.

5. Category 2.5 night service required change

The whole sheltered housing service (approximately 1500 properties and tenants) is subject to an ongoing review to improve the service to residents. The review was working within Category 2.5 schemes when the Local Pay Review results were published together with the requirement to strictly

follow the EU Working Time Directive. The intervention team has learned that there is clear demand for 24/7 cover within the seven schemes, although there is significantly less demand at night (2% of total demand occurs between 2200-0700) – see Appendix 2. It was immediately apparent that current night time (and to a lesser extent, daytime) working arrangements within the Category 2.5 schemes could not continue without considerable change. The intervention team has therefore closely studied night time demand over a period of many months and has proposed changes that will improve the service to residents whilst keeping charges to residents as low as possible.

Four options have been considered as follows:

Option 1 - Mobile Night Team

This is the recommended option, the financial effects of which are shown on the attached financial appraisal. It has the following benefits for residents:

- (a) introduction of new service between 0700 – 0900 each day when demand suggests there is a need for that service. Currently the member of staff on sleep duty is prevailed upon to respond even though their sleep duty does not end until 0900, when day staff arrive.
- (b) Introduction of mobile night time service 2200 – 0700 each night.
- (c) Because the mobile night team will travel between and walk through each of the seven schemes throughout the night, this will provide an enhanced service and better security than having a member of staff asleep in each building.
- (d) The mobile night time service (two staff on duty) will:
 - Patrol all 7 schemes on a regular basis throughout the night, checking that doors and windows are locked and assisting any residents met in the corridors.
 - Make planned visits to particular residents as directed by scheme staff, for example, to those residents who are poorly or have recently been discharged from hospital
 - Respond immediately to calls received during the night

All of which will provide a more responsive service and better security than having a member of staff asleep in each building.

- (e) Scheme Managers and Assistant Managers will usually work standard hours Monday – Friday which will facilitate their advocacy role on behalf of residents
- (f) Staff will not be required to spend nights at the scheme and then work the following day. They will, therefore, be fresher and better able to perform their duties.

- (ii) Details of service improvements and cost advantages are set out in Appendix 1.

- (iii) Staffing changes - the hours of the 50 Support Assistants (currently working 18.5 hours per week plus typically one sleep duty) will increase to 22.5 hours per week to provide the enhanced service between 0700 – 0900 each day. As the Support Assistants will be working seven-day shifts between 0700 – 2200 their salary will attract a 17% shift enhancement. Estimates show that this will have a neutral effect on the remuneration of a typical Support Assistant currently on one sleep duty per fortnight.

The Manager and Assistant Manager of each scheme will no longer routinely work nights and weekends but will revert to standard hours Monday-Friday.

If approved the mobile team will be established over the next few months following discussion with Adult Social Care's Independent Living Service.

Option 2 – Continuing night sleep duty

To continue with the arrangements similar to those existing would require more staff resources because the EUWTD will not allow staff to work at night and then proceed to a work a day shift, as at present. Costs are considerably higher because in addition to more staff resources, staff will have to be paid their usual hourly rate for night work (not an allowance) and their working pattern would provide for a higher shift allowance in accordance with the new shift patterns introduced by the Local Pay Review. The financial effects of this option are also shown on the attached financial appraisal.

Option 3 – Waking Night Duty

This option was considered. The costs would be considerably more than Option 2 because dedicated waking night staff would need to be recruited and suitable cover provided. The staff would attract a higher shift allowance in accordance with the shift patterns introduced by the Local Pay Review. This option has not been developed in full because the additional cost (especially in view of current minimal demand) would be unacceptable to residents.

Option 4 – Do Nothing

It is not possible to continue as at present. The EUWTD does not allow our staff to continue to work current shift patterns and the Local Pay Review has abolished Weekend Enhancement and Sleep-in Allowance which are currently used to pay staff.

6. Resident Consultation

Letters were sent to each of our 346 Cat 2.5 residents informing them of the proposed changes to the service they currently receive.

8 consultation meetings were organised during the week commencing 13/07/09 across the 7 Cat 2.5 schemes. Residents, a friend, family member or carer were invited to attend any one of these meetings.

12 residents or relatives contacted the team by phone to discuss further. One resident at Arthur Dann Court wrote to oppose the changes. One relative of a resident at Hale Court wrote to oppose the changes.

180 residents attended the 7 meetings along with 10 guests and 3 ward councillors.

When explained and discussed, residents and their guests raised many questions and comments; the most frequently asked questions/comments were around :

- Speed of response/travelling time from scheme to scheme
- Cost of the proposed service verses current arrangements
- Reassurance of how the mobile night team will work
- Access and Fire/Health & Safety Issues

The proposed changes evoked a mixed response from meetings of residents and their guests. A summary of these, block by block, is shown below although it is also true to say that divergent views were expressed in each block.

- Hale Court attendees felt that the proposed changes could improve the service they receive. Hale Court residents have since sent a petition signed by approximately 60 residents opposing the changes.
- John Marshall Court attendees seemed satisfied with the proposed changes and how their questions were answered
- Nicholson Gardens & Bresler House attendees had many questions about response times but were satisfied with the answers given
- St Johns Court attendees had many questions but a few still had concerns regarding the proposed changes
- Ian Gibson Court attendees were neither happy with the proposed changes or the answers given to their questions.
- Arthur Dann Court attendees opposed strongly any form of change to the night-time response service within their scheme

Overall, residents that were happy or satisfied understood that the proposed service would meet demand and that the level of service would be improved by the response coming from an awake mobile night team. The residents that were not happy with the proposal primarily had

concerns about the loss of 'peace of mind' by not having a member of staff on site.

All questions and comments were recorded and are available on request.

Resident representatives were also consulted via the Residents' Consortium Link Group on 20th July 2009, which saw the advantages of a mobile team and understood the reasons for the proposed changes.

7. **Financial issues**

- (i) A financial appraisal is attached at Appendix 4. Note that the estimated increases in charges in 2010/11 for Category 2.5 schemes relates partly to losses of Supporting People Grant and increased costs following LPR, but the main factor is the change required to night services by the EUWTD. The estimated increases in charges for Category 1 & 2 schemes relate to losses of Supporting People Grant and increased costs following LPR. Details of the estimated effects on charges for 2010/11 are shown on the front page of the attached financial appraisal. It is recommended that the £58,200 additional costs in 2009/10 falling on the Housing Revenue Account be met from the Housing Revenue Account Contingency Provision. The £3,000 additional costs on the General Fund will be contained within existing Cash Limits.
- (ii) Approximately 20% of residents are self-funders and pay their own charges. Residents in receipt of Housing Benefit have the majority of their charge met by Supporting People. The total value of Supporting People funding for the whole sheltered housing service in 2009/10 is presently £942k. Supporting People is reducing funding for the sheltered housing service by an estimated £35k in 2009/10 and a further £143k in 2010/11.
- (iii) The effect of increasing reductions in Supporting People funding will, if the council's current subsidy arrangement continues, result in an increasing net cost falling on all tenants as set out in the financial appraisal. For that reason it is recommended that the Head of Housing Management bring forward a report to the Cabinet Member for Housing outlining the effects of continued reductions in Supporting People Grant and the options for meeting costs in 2010/11 onwards.

8. **Legal issues and City Solicitors comments**

- (i) It is within the powers of the Cabinet Member to approve the recommendations to this report.

9. **Corporate policies**

- (i) No change to corporate policy is planned.

10. Reasons for urgency

- (i) The LPR timescale required all PCC staff to be given three months' notice of the LPR changes in July 2009 for full implementation on 1st November 2009. New working arrangements for staff need to be in place by that date for which separate three months' statutory notice must be given.
- (i) The timescale for LPR implementation on 1st November 2009 leaves no scope for delay. If no change is agreed, there is high risk of large numbers of staff leaving because of the uncertainty about their future pay and working arrangements.
- (ii) The LPR does not provide weekend enhancement or sleep-in allowance to allow staff to continue to work the same pattern after 1st November 2009. New local pay arrangements would have to be agreed if staff are to continue to work at night after that date.

11. The views of other Directorates/Heads of Service

- (i) Adult Social Care has been consulted for views about the changes and supports the proposals.
- (ii) Discussions are ongoing with the Independent Living Service (ILS - part of Adult Social Care) about the best possible way of providing the new service in conjunction with ILS' own emergency night service. This could lead to reduced costs for the mobile team and reduced charges to residents.

12. Consultation Undertaken

- (i) Meetings with the trade unions have been held.
- (iii) Meetings with staff have taken place.
- (iv) A letter has been sent to every resident affected by the changes and meetings have been held with residents at each of the seven schemes. Private meetings have been held with any resident if they so requested.
- (v) Every Councillor was advised of the proposed changes through a bulletin on Members Information Service (3 July 2009).
- (vi) Ward Councillors were invited to attend the meetings arranged with residents in each scheme.
- (vii) The Residents' Consortium Link Group has been consulted.

13. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

- (i) It is good practice is to conduct equality impact assessments on all new policies, functions and processes. An assessment has taken place, which shows that the service changes will continue to provide a fair and accessible service to all our residents.

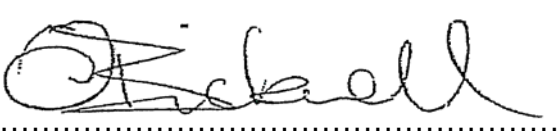
14. **Access to Information**

Background List of documents –
Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report –

<i>Title of document</i>	<i>Location</i>
Portsmouth Supporting People Strategic Review – Support with Care and Sheltered Clusters – Implementation Plan	Portsmouth Supporting People Team, Navigators Building

Signing off the report

Signed..........
Owen Buckwell - Head of Housing

Dated: 24th July 2009

Approval to the recommendations

The recommendations set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by the Housing Cabinet Member on

Signed:
Councillor Steven Wylie
Cabinet Member - Housing

List of Appendices

1. Preferred Option of a Mobile Night Team
2. Out of Hours Customer Demand Analysis
3. Response Times to Night-time Demand
4. Financial Appraisal

Preferred Option of a Mobile Night Team

The proposal is to have a dedicated mobile night team, with two staff on duty between the hours of 22.00 and 07.00. This team would respond to demand as received, but also visit each scheme on a regular basis throughout the night.

This is the preferred option for the following reasons:

- (1) Based on current knowledge, demand at night is insufficient to justify a staff presence in each scheme and could be met by a mobile team. The intervention team is collating the details of demand received between the hours of 22.00 and 07.00. This analysis has shown a low level of demand, being 2% of overall incoming demand, with the type of demand being predominantly of a domestic, non-urgent type.
- (2) Current research shows a demand of just 3 calls per night on average across all seven CAT 2.5 schemes. On average one of these three calls is satisfactorily dealt with remotely and no visit is needed – see Appendix 2.
- (3) This is projected to be the least costly of the options. This is because the 50 Support Assistants will only have a small increase in hours from 18.5 to 22.5 and this will attract a 17% shift enhancement to their salary.
- (4) A mobile night team would provide a more responsive service. Currently, staff are woken up and then respond. From analysis of demand, some responses do show that this does not provide the most effective service, as staff are not awake and ready to respond. In terms of speed, demand analysis shows that the average current response time is 5 minutes – see Appendix 3.
- (5) There are advantages in terms of the delivery of the service during the day:
 - Staff will not have had to work during the night. Managers and Support Assistants have fed back the fact that they are often tired, even exhausted, because of their work pattern.
 - Scheme Managers' management of resources will be more effective. They will not have to take Support Assistants out of the day rota to cover additional nights for sickness etc.
 - The above leads to a more improved and consistent service to our residents during the day, when demand is highest.
 - An improved level of service between 07.00 and 09.00 as staff in the schemes will be on duty. Demand analysis has shown that demand does increase from 07.00 and yet the sleep – in period does not end until 09.00.
- (6) Demand analysis indicates that a mobile team, in addition to responding to demand, will be able to carry out regular visits to the schemes throughout

the night, which could be in response to Scheme Managers' demand on behalf of their most vulnerable residents. The intervention team carried out a sample survey of residents and this revealed that personal safety and security was important to them. By having regular patrols throughout the night, we will meet this more appropriately than having a member of staff asleep in the scheme.

- (7) Provides the potential to expand this service to other sheltered schemes in the future. Knowledge at present indicates out of hours demand in Category 1 & 2 Schemes is not always responded to by the appropriate resource.