

Customer Access Review – Full Assessment

Assessment details		
Assessment area	Supported Housing Service	
Date of assessment	April 2017	
Directorate and Service	External – Housing Services	
Manager	Peter Dosad	
Officer conducting assessment	Alison Haines	
Step 1: Scoping the assessment		
1	What are the aims and objectives of the activity or proposal?	<p>The Supported Housing Service aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide needs led, value for money, high quality housing related support services for vulnerable people • Ensure that the service is accessible to those that need it • Promote independence and well being • Enable people to take control of their lives • Encourage participation in community activities • Complement services delivered by statutory and non-statutory agencies • Support service users who have little or no recourse to statutory or non statutory services • Provide suitable accommodation for disabled, frail and those with limited mobility
2	Who will be affected?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable tenants • Elderly tenants • Statutory and voluntary agencies who work in partnership with the Council in the provision of support services
3	How does the activity or proposal contribute to: a) any key performance indicators? b) policies, values or objectives of Dartford Borough Council?	<p>a) The housing related support service which is attached to the accommodation provided in the Council's sheltered housing schemes has been assessed as A Grade quality by KCC Supporting People. It must continue to achieve the Core Standard Objectives as set out in the</p>

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		<p>Quality Assessment Framework issued by Supporting People.</p> <p>b) The responsibility for providing sheltered accommodation meets the Council’s Corporate Plan strategic aims of ‘facilitating quality, choice and diversity in the housing market, creating strong and self-reliant communities and delivering high quality services to service users’. Provision of the housing related support service meets the Council’s Corporate Plan strategic aims of ‘providing high quality services that reflect public aspirations and demonstrate improvement’. Both aspects of this service also contribute to the Corporate Plan strategic objectives of ‘working towards meeting the housing needs of the borough’ and ‘delivering high quality services, offering value for money and demonstrating a culture of continuous improvement’.</p>
4	<p>Which aspects of the activity or proposal are dictated by legislation/regulation and where do we have discretion in how they are delivered?</p>	<p>The Housing Related Support service is partly funded by Kent County Council Supporting People Grant. The Council’s responsibility for the provision of sheltered accommodation with its housing related support service for older, more vulnerable residents is set out in the Kent Eligibility Policy which differentiates between those services which are eligible for funding by Supporting People and those which are not. The service forms part of the Council’s wider responsibilities for the provision of accommodation suitable for occupation by the elderly. The support element of the SHO’s duties are funded by KCC Supporting People and the intensive housing management function, which is required to efficiently manage large buildings with communal areas for vulnerable people to use, is funded fully by the HRA.</p>
<p>Step 2: Information collection</p>		
<p>Note: Equality and Diversity information for Dartford can be found at http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/Facts-and-figures-about-Kent/equality-and-diversity-data</p>		
5	<p>What do you know about the groups of people who will be affected? i.e. demographic information in relation to the protected characteristic groups (age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment)</p>	<p>Sheltered accommodation is available for anyone over the age of 55 who has a demonstrable housing support need and meets the eligibility criteria. The Council currently has 11 sheltered housing schemes, supporting 493 tenants. There is currently no demographic data available in respect of the tenants living in supported accommodation. There are a further 3 schemes being de-designated into general needs accommodation as and when the tenants move out; the Housing Options team allocates these properties as ‘sensitive’ lets, which fosters good relations and promotes understanding between the</p>

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		different client groups living in the same locality and minimises the risk of neighbour disputes escalating. The decision to de-designate these 3 schemes was taken in 2012 due to an over-abundance of supported accommodation being available which resulted in a high level of voids. The remaining 11 schemes are now in demand with low void levels. This de-designation programme has helped house many disadvantaged older single homeless applicants who did not qualify for supported accommodation.
6	What consultation has taken place with affected groups? Please describe who was consulted and the key findings	Most recent consultation was carried out during the period January to March 2016 when supported tenants were invited to air their views on the housing related support service and the sheltered scheme buildings. The service itself was rated highly satisfactory, with the main criticism being the state of the carpets in communal areas of the schemes. This has highlighted a need for investment in the buildings in order to future proof them.
7	Are there any gaps in information? If so, what additional research and/or consultation is needed to ensure that affected groups needs and views are taken into account?	The Council employs a dedicated team of supported housing officers (SHO's) who are directly involved in the day to day lives of all supported tenants. The SHO's are available during working hours to discuss needs or gaps in service delivery with tenants. Further consultation is required in 2017 and 2018 in respect of the Government's decision to cap the rent for sheltered accommodation to LHA level and its current plans to reshape the funding of support services from 2019.
Step 3: Assessing the equality impact		
8	<p>Consider whether the activity or proposal has or will have any positive or negative equality impacts on the protected characteristic groups in relation to the following aims of the General Equality Duty:</p> <p>a) tackling unlawful discrimination b) promoting equality of opportunity c) promoting good relations</p> <p><u>NOTES:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Initial Screening will have identified which aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty are relevant to the activity or proposal for consideration. • For existing activities, consider how they are working in practice for each protected group 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For new proposals, consider whether there is anything that could give rise to positive and negative equality impacts for each protected group • If there is no identified equality impact, please tick the 'No Impact' box and explain why in question 9 <p>If the equality impact is unclear, please tick the 'Unknown' box and explain why in question 9</p>					
		POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
a	Age	<p>The provision of sheltered accommodation enables our older, more vulnerable tenants to stay independent for much longer than they would if they stayed within the wider community. It acts as the first line of defence in preventing an escalation of health issues in our ageing population, and helps to support both social services and the NHS budgets by a) keeping people in their own homes for longer; b) ensuring there are fewer admissions to hospital; and c) minimising the necessity for residential or nursing care placements. It also releases larger properties for applicants on the waiting list for housing when tenants move to sheltered accommodation under the Downsize for Cash scheme.</p> <p>Information about the housing related support service can be provided in alternative formats such as braille, audio tape or large print on request.</p>	<p>The sheltered scheme buildings themselves are showing signs of age and will need to be modernised and refitted if we want to future proof the service.</p> <p>There is no specific accommodation available for vulnerable or disabled under 55's with housing related support needs.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	Disability	<p>The provision of accommodation including a housing related support service enables older, more disabled tenants to live more independently than they would be able to on their own within the wider community. The preventative nature of the service provides tenants with an additional layer of security; it includes a care navigation service which supports them to sustain their tenancies, thus requiring fewer interventions from social services</p>	<p>The sheltered housing schemes are not currently wheelchair or mobility scooter friendly.</p> <p>Most schemes are over 40 years old and were not built to today's standards.</p> <p>Tenants' expectations are higher; they look for properties which are easier to access as</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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		<p>or the NHS.</p> <p>SHO's act as care navigators to assist tenants to access disabled adaptations to their properties ensuring they can remain in their own homes for longer.</p> <p>SHO's are trained in dementia awareness and ensure a tenants lack of mental capacity is highlighted to statutory services whenever appropriate.</p> <p>Information about the housing related support service can be provided in alternative formats such as braille, audio tape or large print on request.</p>	<p>their health and physical condition deteriorates.</p> <p>There are now significantly fewer alternatives re: housing with the reduction in nursing and residential care home availability.</p>		
c	Gender (including reassignment)	Not applicable	None identified	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d	Race	Information in other languages and translation services can be provided on request if the service user's first language is not English. All of the Council's webpages, including the supported housing page, can be translated via 'Google Translate' into 90 languages. Housing Managers also have access to Language Shop which can provide translation services on request.	None identified	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e	Religion/Belief	Not applicable	None identified	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f	Sexual Orientation	Not applicable	None identified	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g	Pregnancy/Maternity	Not applicable	None identified	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	If 'no impact' or 'unknown' was selected, please explain	The provision of supported accommodation is available to all older, vulnerable applicants on the housing register who meet the eligibility criteria for the housing related support service. The service will be provided regardless of any other protected characteristic.			

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10	If Dartford Borough Council works with partners to deliver the activity or proposal, please describe any circumstances that could give rise to positive or negative equality impacts between different groups	<p>The Council works closely with Kent County Council and statutory services such as Adult Social Services, Mental Health Services, Police, Fire & Rescue services and voluntary services such as Age UK, Ellenor Nurses, care providers and floating support providers in the provision of its supported accommodation.</p> <p>The service manager attends quarterly EROSH (Essential Role of Sheltered Housing) meetings, which group considers how to improve the visibility of the service and the importance of providing sheltered housing for our older, more vulnerable customers across the County. The group shares best practice and liaises with partner organisations that are linked to the outcomes of these services.</p> <p>The service manager also liaises with the Supporting People team at KCC, linking in with all required reporting activities as well as monitoring outcomes for the Council’s tenants in accordance with the KCC grant funding contracts for both the housing related support service provision and the alarm monitoring service.</p>
11	Any further comments	The service has a positive effect on the tenants who move into sheltered accommodation. The background low level nature of the support being provided ensures tenants are better able to maintain their independence for longer. The care navigation provided by the SHO’s increases tenant confidence and minimises the need for early interventions by statutory services.

Step 4: Action plan					
12. Based on the information in Steps 1 to 3, please list the actions that will be taken to address:					
a) any gaps in information and consultation					
b) how any negative impacts on equality will be mitigated or eradicated					
a) If additional information and/or consultation is required or the impact is still unclear, what actions will you put in place to gather the information you need?					
Information needs	Action	Intended outcome	Date for completion	How this will be monitored	Responsible officer
Understand the customers experience of accessing the housing related	Ensure that systems are in place to record customer satisfaction levels and where there	Provide a comprehensive summary of the needs of existing tenants and	31/03/2019	Internally	Alison Haines

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support service	are any gaps in service provision	inform a round table discussion about the future proofing of the service in accordance with potential future funding arrangements			
b) If any negative impacts on equality were found, what actions will you put in place to mitigate or eradicate these impacts?					
Identified impacts (and who is affected)	Action	Intended outcome	Date for completion	How this will be monitored	Responsible officer
Disability – wheelchair users and accessibility of accommodation	Raise awareness of the need for investment and consider this in conjunction with the future direction of the service	To future proof the buildings and service	31/03/2019	Internally	Peter Dosad
Age – vulnerable and disabled under 55's	Consider developing accommodation for this client group; Consider lowering the age restriction on sheltered accommodation for vulnerable or disabled under-55's with housing related support needs.	To provide supported accommodation for vulnerable or disabled under 55's with a demonstrable housing related support need	31/03/2019	Internally	Peter Dosad

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Step 5: Decision making and future monitoring		
13	Which decision making process does this Customer Access Review need to go through? i.e. who does this need to be approved by?	Strategic Director (External Services)
14	How will you continue to monitor the impact of the activity or proposal on the equality groups?	Through the actions recorded in service users support plans, complaints and feedback from KCC Supporting People.
15	When will you review this Customer Access Review?	New assessments will be undertaken whenever there is a significant change to the service but at least bi-annually
Step 6: Final steps		
16	Once this Customer Access Review has been approved, send this assessment to the Policy & Corporate Support Team	
17	If the subject of the Customer Access Review is going to committee, summarise your findings in the committee report	
18	Implement the actions identified from this Customer Access Review and ensure progress is monitored and recorded	