

Projects News.

Winter Edition 2017

Future funding of supported housing - good news / bad news?

In our summer newsletter, we informed providers of the Government's intention to restrict social housing rents to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates from April 2019. It was excellent news when the announcement was made that this is no longer to be the case, particularly for specialist supported housing where rents are typically higher than general needs.

However, and as ever, the devil is in the detail and we are now in a period of consultation until 23 January 2018. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have produced the consultation document. The consultation document identifies three models of supported housing:

- **Sheltered and Extra Care supported housing:** housing (usually) designated for older people with support needs.
- **Long-term support:** defined as 'housing for people with learning or physical disabilities or mental health, with little expectation for tenants to move on into unsupported accommodation.

- **Short-term and transitional support:** examples are homeless people with support needs; those fleeing domestic abuse; vulnerable young people; offenders; people with substance misuse problems.

For sheltered and Extra Care supported housing, the proposal is to apply a 'Sheltered Rent' - a type of social rent which will keep sheltered and Extra Care housing in the welfare system.

The good news for long-term support is that 100% of housing costs will continue to be funded via the welfare system. However, the key statement in the consultation document is that, 'The Government will work with the sector to develop and deliver improvements to cost control, quality and outcomes'. There is no doubt that eligible service charges are going to come under scrutiny.

The proposal for short-term and transitional supported housing has raised the most concerns. It is proposed that housing costs will be met by a Local Grant Fund - a ring-fenced grant commissioned at a local level. Experience has shown that ring fences don't last and that grants get cut, therefore this

model doesn't provide assurances regarding rental income. Housing providers will be wary of investing large sums of money in new build schemes such as domestic abuse refuges.

It's proposed that the new arrangements will come into force from April 2020. We are responding to the DCLG / DWP consultation document and taking part in events such as the National Housing Federation roadshows.

Now is the time to make your views known:
www.housing.org.uk/topics/supported-housing/future-funding-of-supported-housing/



Garden makeover at Gifford House

This year, the staff at Gifford House led by manager Tom Bowmer, decided the rear yard area at the property could do with a makeover. The staff secured a small grant from Gateshead Council to get started and approached other businesses where they were successful in receiving material donations.

A volunteer offers their services twice a week at the property and works with some of the men who live here with all aspects of gardening. They have created a vegetable patch where they grow a variety of fruit and vegetables to use when cooking at the house. They also have a small grass patch with a number of potted plants, herbs and flowers.

Since the garden makeover, tenants and staff have been spending more time outside socially and are continuing to learn new skills.



Race for Life

Shona Mack who lives in one of our independent supported living properties in Northumberland and her support workers from Equal Partnerships decided they were going to take part in the Race for Life this year at Exhibition Park, Newcastle.

They entered under the team name 'Swiftdale Sweeties'. Shona and her support staff trained very hard beforehand and Shona even joined a gym and went regularly to get in shape for the big day. The team raised £163.00 for the charity and had a lot of fun in the process. Well done Shona and the team!!!

Twisting Ducks get the message across

During Customer Service Week in October, we held our annual drama based learning event with the Twisting Ducks at their studio in Westgate College.

This year the theme was radicalisation, hate crime and mate crime. Over recent years, there has been a marked increase in cases of radicalisation, hate and mate crime and there have been a number of high profile cases reported where vulnerable people have been specifically targeted.

We have a responsibility to ensure that our tenants, particularly those with a vulnerability, know how to recognise the signs of radicalisation, hate and mate crime and know where to go for help and support.

Radicalisation and extremism can put a vulnerable person at risk of being drawn into violence and criminal activity and has the potential to cause significant harm.

Hate crime is any criminal offence which is motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's actual or perceived race, religion, sexual orientation or disability. Feeling and being unsafe due to violence, harassment or negative stereotyping has a significant impact on a vulnerable person's sense of security and wellbeing.

Mate crime is a form of crime in which the perpetrator befriends a vulnerable person with the intention of then exploiting them financially, physically or sexually. It's perhaps the most insidious of the three issues, as the harm being done to a person is masked by the pretence of friendship.

We commissioned the Twisting Ducks to produce a piece of drama which would raise awareness of these serious issues. It was an excellent piece of work, followed up by a workshop session which provided

the opportunity for further discussion. The event was very well attended by tenants and support staff and received excellent feedback.

We realise that not everyone was able to attend on the day, so this year, we asked the Twisting Ducks to film the play. Once it has been produced, we will be posting the film on our website so please keep an eye on our website and Facebook page.



Safeguarding - the Karbon approach

Staff working in supported housing have long understood the importance of ensuring that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and neglect. The Care Act 2014 came into force from April 2015, and stipulated that all housing providers must have safeguarding policies and procedures in place which ensure that:

- Staff are familiar with the six principles of adult safeguarding
- Staff are familiarised with the possible symptoms of abuse and the safeguarding policy and procedure is part of the induction process for new staff
- Housing providers have a senior manager with responsibility for adult safeguarding.

We reviewed our policy and procedure at the time and have recently carried out a further review. We thought it would be useful to inform you of the Karbon procedure.

Confidentiality is key and we have set up a secure electronic reporting system for staff with restricted access at all stages of the alert. There is a rota for the safeguarding advisors so that one advisor is on duty at a time. In order to ensure that alerts are actioned without delay, when an alert is logged it is automatically emailed to the on-duty advisor. If an alert is not actioned within three hours of being logged, it is escalated to the safeguarding champion and two advisors. This ensures that alerts cannot be missed.

Advisors are responsible for updating the cases they are dealing with and the system is set up to prompt for an update if none have been logged for a month. Advisors liaise with staff involved in the safeguarding case (and external agencies where necessary) in order to update the log.

If you have concerns regarding any Karbon tenant supported by your organisation, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



Maritime Court residential trip

A group of Karbon Homes tenants attended a three day residential in October, accompanied by staff from support provider Depaul UK.

The residents from Maritime Court, a supported accommodation project for young people, had the chance to step out of their comfort zones with activities including rock climbing, river walking and bush-craft skills. Don't worry - the staff didn't get away without joining in too!

The trip was a great success. Residents had lots of fun and commented on how being active and outdoors had a brilliant effect on their emotional and mental health, as well as building their confidence and boosting their self-esteem. Now, who's up for cliff-diving next time?



Graeme moves on – farewell

My name is Jan Blair and I first met Graeme who has a learning disability in June 2010. He was living in temporary accommodation and we had identified a shared property for him in Wallsend. Graeme was very excited about moving in to a home where he could have more independence.

Two weeks later, he moved into his new home and was very happy until he started having problems with getting up and down the stairs. We looked for another property that would better suit his needs and found a two bedroom ground floor flat in Howdon.

Graeme made friends with a neighbour who made his dinner for him every Sunday and they will always be friends.

Recently, Graeme's health deteriorated further and with the help of the enablement team at North Tyneside, an older person's bedsit was secured with Anchor Housing for Graeme still in the Howdon area. He moved in on 13th November and I visited him in his new home. He appeared to be very comfortable as the bedsit is more suited to his needs and he finds it easier to move around.

He still has space for his collection of tractors on his shelves and still enjoys colouring in. He had to downsize considerably before his move and did this with the help of his support and the enablement team. He donated some of his crayons to a refuge in the area and they were very grateful for them. His former neighbour is still taking Sunday dinner to him in his new home and he is

very pleased about this. The library bus comes every week and he enjoys picking out books that he is interested in and talking to the people on the bus. He told me that everyone is friendly and that he is attending coffee mornings and other events in the communal lounge.

Graeme said he was very happy in the properties given to him by Karbon Homes and that everybody did their best to ensure that he was happy and comfortable. He said that he really looked forward to my visits and would miss me. I wished him well and asked him to keep in touch.



Managing Agent - Quarterly returns

As part of the Performance Framework, housing associations are required to monitor the housing management performance of managing agents. To allow us to complete this work, we request that you submit management information on a quarterly basis. Outlined below is the timetable for 2017/18. We will send you an email requesting the data and give a deadline of two weeks. Please contact Elayne Bristow on **0300 300 1505** with any queries regarding returns.

Keeping us informed

To help us keep in touch with you, we'd be really grateful if you could let one of our team know as soon as possible if there are any changes to your contact details i.e. email address or telephone number. It would also be helpful to let us know if you have any new starters or leavers in your organisation so we can update our records. This will help save time if we need to contact your organisation in the future. You can email Elayne, Jan or Vicki anytime.

Christmas and New Year opening

Over the festive period, all offices will be closed from 12:30pm on Friday 22nd December 2017 and will re-open on Tuesday 2nd January 2018.

For emergency repairs, please contact us on 0300 300 1505 and you will be transferred to our out of hours service who will be happy to help.

The Supported Housing Projects Team at Karbon Homes would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Quarterly performance returns (QPR)

	Sent out by	Returned by
Oct - Dec 2017	08.01.18	22.01.18
Jan - Mar 2018	09.04.18	23.04.18

Do you have...

...any good news stories from your organisation that you would like to see in the next edition of this newsletter? Perhaps your organisation has won an award or has received recognition for their work? If so, please email elayne.bristow@isoshousing.co.uk

Agent's service charge monitoring timetable

This relates to the service charge monitoring spreadsheets from providers who manage a service charge in the shared houses.

We should already have received returns for April to June and July to September 2017. If you have not yet completed and returned yours, please do so as soon as possible.

Please contact Elayne Bristow if you need any help.

Timetable:

October to December 2017	to be returned by end of Jan 2018
January to March 2018	to be returned by end of April 2018

Please note, we must be in a position to monitor service charge income and expenditure. It is therefore imperative that you have provided us with your balances as at the end of March 2017 and continue to provide quarterly returns detailing all expenditure.

General Contacts

Customer Services: **0300 300 1505**
Email: **info@karbonhomes.co.uk**
Office opening hours: **Mon - Thurs 9am-5pm**
Fri 9am-4.30pm

Team Contacts

Jan Blair Housing Officer Projects: **0191 223 8634**
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