

# Sheltered Housing Focus Group Minutes

Held at Southgate House on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2009

## Background

Philip explained that the reason for holding the focus group was to identify areas where the Gloucester City Homes' sheltered housing service can be improved. This will help GCH to provide an "excellent" service.

## Discussion feedback

### 1. Current standard

- The group were asked their opinion of the current standard of their sheltered scheme: poor, fair, good or excellent. All four attendees responded that their scheme was "fair".

### 2. Consultation

- At Badgervale a new communal kitchen was installed and residents were able to vote on the choice of colours. However, there was unsatisfactory consultation regarding the installation of a full or partial wall. It was felt the manager got "their own way" by not carrying out a fair and open consultation exercise.
- Other attendees felt there was very good consultation at their schemes with residents very much involved with decision making.
- **Suggestion for improvement:** scheme managers should ensure consultation with their residents is fair, open and accountable. This could be aided by involving residents in carrying out the consultation.

### 3. Building faults and improvements

- There are some building faults that GCH seem unwilling to take responsibility for e.g. Broom House: dip in pavement at the rear of Broom House which sometimes floods; faulty lounge lights. As these issues date back to pre-GCH, GCH is claiming not to have responsibility.
- The issue of electric storage heaters at Broom House was also raised: these are expensive and it is difficult to control the room temperature, especially when the weather is changeable.
- **Suggestions for improvement:** A way forward is needed for pre-GCH building faults. Is it GCH or the Council who is responsible? When will electric storage heaters be replaced with central heating?

### 4. Health and Safety

- At Badgervale, tables are partially blocking the corridors and access to hand rails. This was raised with the scheme manager who refused to remove them as they were "nice to look at".
- A similar issue was raised by another attendee who reported at their scheme, Sherborne House, a new frieze is obscuring fire safety signs.

- Another attendee raised the issue that there is a lack of an adequate fire escape strategy in Broom House and other schemes e.g. lack of muster points, no intercom system to inform residents of false alarms, existing strategy is based on 24 hour warden attendance.
- **Suggestion for improvement:** These health and safety issues must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

## 5. Social activities

- All attendees were very pleased with the opportunities to take part in social activities and the efforts made by their scheme managers to involve residents.
- A comment was made that the facilities at Badgervale were overused for staff meetings. This has a knock-on effect for social activities in communal areas.
- **Suggestion for improvement:** ensure a balance is achieved in the use of communal facilities by staff.

## 6. Support plans

- The attendees were generally happy with the support received from their managers. However, it was concurred that the support review meetings and the support plan forms could be improved. One attendee felt the meetings were a “tick box exercise” and a “school report” and involved little in the way of planning and achieving goals e.g. support issue, action, responsibility, timescale and review.
- **Suggestion for improvement:** Reform the support plan process and forms to help residents achieve goals and to include a review of progress made.

## 7. Notice boards

- All attendees felt there is too much in the way of GCH publicity in the entrance halls of the schemes. This makes the schemes appear institutional and un-homely.
- **Suggestion for improvement:** more consultation should take place with scheme residents regarding the display of GCH publicity and other aesthetic changes.

## 9. Service Standards

- Attendees were given a copy of the Sheltered Scheme Service Standards to review. No changes were proposed although attendees did take the copies away to review in more detail.

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**03/03/2009**