

# Sheltered Housing Tenants Handbook



Building a bigger, better, brighter Corby...

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## Your service

Corby Borough Council is responsible for the management, repairs and maintenance of sheltered housing. The aim of sheltered housing is to provide a safe and secure environment for people, generally over the age of 55 to live independently.

All sheltered housing are connected to Corby Borough Council contact centre and emergency alarm. The contact centre is manned 24 hours 365 days a year. The contact centre will respond to your alarm call in an emergency and send the appropriate service or support; they can also offer you the option of receiving a daily telephone call if you would like one.

A daily visiting support service is also available if required; this service is delivered by 5 part time elderly support assistants (ESAs) and 5 mobile support workers (MSWs). The support workers are employed by Corby Borough Council as part of the sheltered housing service.

All support workers are highly trained to offer you the support you need when you need it.

A Support Worker will visit you once you have received the keys to your tenancy from the housing officer to introduce the service, discuss your support needs and test that all the equipment in your property is working correctly.

## Getting the Best from your Service

In an emergency, you can activate the alarm in your property by pressing your pendant or the red button on the alarm unit. The contact centre operator will react to your alarm and while talking with you determine the correct course of action, this could be contacting a family member, support worker or emergency services. The contact centre team are highly trained and will deal with your query in a prompt, confidential, sensitive and professional way.

## Contacting a support worker

For non emergencies you can contact your support worker direct on **(01536) 464289/4204/3180**. They will arrange to visit you as soon as possible.

## Tenancy Agreement

After you have signed your tenancy agreement with a Housing Officer (HO) and received the keys to your new home, your tenancy has begun.

If this is your first tenancy with the council it will be an “introductory tenancy” for the first year. This is a probationary tenancy which will automatically become a secure tenancy after 12 months provided you have not broken your tenancy conditions.

As a sheltered housing tenant you do not have the right to buy your home.

If you have any questions regarding your tenancy when you move in or at any other time please contact your Housing Officer.



## Sheltered Housing Aims and Objectives

- To provide a safe and secure environment for people to live independently by providing a team of staff trained to identify and reduce elements of risk.
- To offer choice and flexibility to tenants in the service they receive.
- To establish social networks through leisure activities and educational services.
- To promote fair access and diversity in all aspects of the service provided by the council and its staff.
- To invite the community to take part in as well as to provide activities and services within the schemes.
- To provide the appropriate support to enable tenants to remain living independently in their homes.
- To reduce hospital admissions through regular contact and identification of extra support needs.
- To empower tenants to have a direct say in the way that their homes and the services are managed and to play an active role in the improvement and development of the systems and services.



## The Welcome Pack

Your support worker will complete a support determination with you during their visit to welcome you to your new home. This will include how many visits or phone calls you may need per week (if any) and what form of support you require.

## Moving In

Once you have moved in to ensure you remain safe and independent at home your support worker will require some general information. This information includes some personal details, such as your doctors contact details, next of kin details, any illnesses, or any medication you may have. You are not required to disclose this information, but it will help us to assist you in an emergency. Your support worker will complete this paperwork with you.

If you would like a family member or friend with you while this is completed an appointment will be made for a mutually convenient time.



## Emergency Cover

In your home, you will notice an orange cord hanging from the ceiling in some rooms, and generally located in the living area or the hall there is a white box on the wall. This is the alarm system that connects you to Corby Borough Councils contact centre. It is important that you do not try to disconnect or interfere with this equipment. This is the means of contact for you in an emergency.

If you think you might struggle to reach one of the orange cords, or you would like to have the means to raise an alarm with you at all times, we can supply a pendant you can wear around your neck, wrist or attached to a belt. All pull-cords and pendants are tested annually.

Corby Borough Council provides emergency cover 24 hours, 365 days a year. We have a team of experienced staff who will personally answer your alarm call if you pull your cord or press your pendant. They will talk to you via the white box on the wall and assess the situation, providing the necessary assistance.

The smoke alarm in your home is also connected to the contact centre. Smoke alarms are serviced annually by a contractor. In addition there is a fire alarm system serving part of, or the entire building this system is tested every week on the same day. To find out the times of testing please speak to your support worker when you move in, or check the notice board in the communal hall.

## Sheltered Housing Leaflet

An information leaflet is available for new and existing residents within your building. This leaflet gives details about the communal facilities, transport information, local clubs churches and societies. It also includes useful information such as how to report repairs, make a complaint, give a compliment, or prevent and report abuse or discrimination. Your support worker will provide you with this leaflet when they attend to welcome you to your property.

## Other Facilities

In all Sheltered Housing you will have your own front door, in some there is also a door entry system at the front of the main building. The door entry system will allow you to open the main front door without leaving your property. Your support worker will show you how to do this.

A Communal laundry is provided at some sheltered housing. Communal laundry facilities are for personal laundry only, in busy times there may be a rota and you will be allocated a designated time-slot by your support worker. Communal lounges in sheltered accommodation are for your use, all social events will be advertised on the notice boards which are in each scheme, we would encourage new residents to make use of this facility as this is where you will meet other residents. The communal lounge policy will be located on the notice board in the communal lounge.

Most sheltered housing have a guest bedroom; this is available for family and friends wishing to visit you overnight. This room can be booked through the contact centre for a small charge. The guest room policy and booking procedure will be located on the notice board in the communal lounge.

Your sheltered housing leaflet will highlight all the facilities provided in your sheltered housing and the surrounding area.



## Support Team Duties

The support service team includes mobile support workers (MSW) and elderly support assistants (ESA) contact centre operatives (CSO) they provide support to tenants between 8.00am and 8.00pm, 7 days per week including bank holidays. Outside of the "normal working hours" 8.00pm-8.00am the support team provide a key holder service only this can be accessed by using the emergency alarm provided.

Their duties are to provide support services to sheltered housing tenants. Staff may not be in the building all day but they can be contacted through the contact centre and will respond if necessary. Staff work in teams to cover designated areas, when they visit you they will be wearing a Corby Borough Council uniform and carry identification so that they can be easily recognised.

Support workers, as the name suggests, are there to support you, it is their job to enable tenants to live independently. They do not carry out tasks like shopping and collecting prescriptions, (unless in an emergency) or domestic chores like cleaning, or personal and medical care, but they may assist residents in arranging for these things to be done and they can put you in touch with private care agencies who offer these services.

Support workers can also help and advise tenants to claim benefits which are applicable encourage tenants to take part in any social events in the scheme, and provide any further information which may be required for you to settle into your new home.

## Keys

Your home may be on a 'master' suite of keys and if it is, you will be informed. These keys enable staff to enter your home if you give permission, but they will normally only enter in the event of an emergency and you will be asked to sign a document to say you are happy for this to happen. If your home has an independent lock then you are advised to have a key safe fitted to the outside of your home and to keep a spare key.

A key safe can be arranged through the council's handy person service ([01536 464248](tel:01536464248)), although there is a charge involved. Each key safe will have a personal number which is chosen by you, this will be given to the contact centre to allow access to your home in an emergency. If you lock yourself out and there is no key safe, then you may be liable for the cost of a locksmith as staff would not be able to let you in.

## Cleaning

The communal areas of sheltered housing are maintained and cleaned by members of Corby Borough Council staff team. If you have any complaints (or compliments) regarding the maintenance or cleaning, please contact your support worker in the first instance.



## Oxygen

If you need to use oxygen in your home, it is important that you inform staff as the Fire Brigade must be informed that an oxygen cylinder is on the property.

## Home Contents Insurance

Corby Borough Council can offer home contents insurance policy at a reasonable rate that can be paid in with your rent. The contents of your home are your responsibility and so contents insurance is advisable. You can get further details on the council's contents insurance scheme by phoning ([01536 463183](tel:01536463183)).

## Communal Gardens

The communal gardens in sheltered housing are for the use of tenants. They are maintained by contractors on behalf of Corby Borough Council.



## Security

All tenants are encouraged to be responsible for the security of their own property, and the communal areas. If there is someone at the main door entry residents are advised to not let that person into the building unless you are sure of their identity.

## Social Activities

One of the best features about sheltered housing is that you are always close to friends and neighbours. We would encourage tenants to take part in social activities. Tenants are always welcome to organise their own activities, with support staff offering support and advice when it's needed. There is currently a range of activities throughout sheltered housing including coffee mornings, exercise classes, gardening clubs, day centres, music, darts, and bingo. If you have an interest that you think other tenants would share you could make use of the communal lounge and organise something yourself.

## Repairs

You are responsible for reporting your own repairs using the details provided in your welcome pack, however if you would like some help and support to do this you can talk to your support worker or telephone the contact centre who will do this on your behalf.



## Communication

Communication is encouraged between tenants and the council. That communication can take several forms, such as person to person, discussions with your visiting staff, or at one of the regularly held Service Improvement Group forum meetings. These meetings are usually held in the communal halls. If you would like your concerns addressed at the Supported Housing Service Improvement Group please ask your Support worker to introduce you to the group's representative for your scheme.



## Confidentiality

The council has strict rules about confidentiality which are covered in its policy. Information given, for example in agreeing your support needs, will be shared only in strictly controlled circumstances with professionals from other agencies, if they need the information to assist in your support. Steps are taken to keep the information secure and confidential when it is stored and any breach of confidentiality is treated as a serious matter.

## Privacy

You have a right to privacy and staff should only enter your home if they have been invited or it has been agreed with your support worker. Similarly your post will be for you to open, unless you specifically ask for assistance.

## Supported Housing Service Improvement Group

There is an active Supported Housing Service Improvement Group (SIG) which is made up of tenant representatives from sheltered housing. This group meets every four weeks and will discuss issues which the representatives introduce for discussion. The representative will then report back to the tenant. If you would like to know more about the SIG you can get further details from your support worker. Copies of the minutes of the SIG meetings are displayed on the notice boards.

## Professional Boundaries

The council has a clear policy for staff covering general, financial, verbal and physical boundaries and these issues are covered in staff training. For example there are strict rules regarding confidentiality, the handling of money, tenants' wills, and receiving gifts, appropriate appearance and behaviour. Further details of these boundaries are available upon request.

## Abuse

This issue is taken very seriously and there is a separate document on preventing abuse which you will receive with your welcome pack. All staff are trained on this issue. If you have experienced or witnessed any form of abuse it should be reported immediately to your support worker or other council staff. Independent advice is also available from organisations like the Police or the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

## Responsibilities

We ask that tenants keep to the conditions of their tenancy regarding issues such as caring for their homes and not causing nuisance to neighbours. In particular the council will not tolerate abusive or aggressive behaviour towards staff. We want sheltered housing to be happy places in which to live and work and this is best achieved if there is mutual respect shown at all times. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.



## Policies and Procedures

There are policies and procedures to cover nearly every aspect of Sheltered housing. These are for the guidance of staff; however they are available to tenants to view on request. When these policies are updated we consult with tenants' representatives. The policies cover areas such as:

## Equal Opportunities

We are firmly committed to the principles of equality and diversity in the delivery of our service and as an employer. This means making our services accessible to all and treating people fairly regardless of their colour, race, ethnic or national origin, language, religion or belief, gender or gender reassignment, marital status, sexuality, disability, age and any illnesses or infections. The council takes any allegations of discrimination or harassment very seriously and this should be reported to your support worker or housing officer for them to investigate and address this under the council's policies and procedures.



## Complaints and Compliments

We very much hope you enjoy living in sheltered housing. If you wish to make any complaints or compliments a copy of the complaints procedure is on every scheme notice board and on the council's website: [www.corby.gov.uk](http://www.corby.gov.uk)

It is intended that minor issues should be reported first to your housing officer or repairs department and the complaints procedure should be used only when something has been reported and a service is not delivered after a reasonable time has elapsed from the request, or for serious matters. If you have to use the formal complaints system, your complaint will first be considered by a senior manager.

If this still does not resolve your complaint you have the right to contact the Ombudsman who offers an independent review of the matter, but will expect you to have used the council's own complaints system first

## Conclusion

We welcome you to Sheltered housing and hope this handbook will answer any queries you may have. If there is any more help we can provide, then please do not hesitate to ask.



## Fire Procedure

### On hearing the fire alarm:

#### If you are in your home and the fire is not in your own home

- Stay inside and make sure the door is closed
- Wait to be evacuated or informed by the Fire Service that it is safe.

#### If you are in a communal area, laundry, lounge or corridor

- Leave by the nearest fire exit and wait at the main fire assembly point.
- Do not hinder the access of the Fire Service.
- Do not attempt to return to your flat until told to by a Fire Officer (s) or responsible person.

## Mobility Scooters

In recent years there has been a considerable growth in the number of elderly and disabled people using mobility scooters, unfortunately not all Supported schemes will be accessible or provide suitable parking for mobility scooters please check with your Housing Officer prior to purchasing a mobility scooter

to ensure compliance with your tenancy agreement section 8.8.....*Mobility scooters and motorised wheelchairs must be stored safely and away from any flammable materials (including carpets and other floor covering, wooden floors and soft furnishings) and must not be stored in communal areas without prior permission.*



## Useful Contacts

Contact Centre	Grosvenor House	01536 464248
Jackie Martin Housing Support Intervention and Involvement Manager	Grosvenor House Deene House	01536 463179
Maggie McCall Supported Housing Team Leader	Grosvenor House	01536 463176
Maureen Watson Mobile Support Worker	Grosvenor House	01536 464204
Sonia McAulay Mobile Support Worker	Grosvenor House	01536 464289
Nuala Paige Mobile Support Worker	Grosvenor House	01536 463180
Alison Pearce Mobile Support Worker	Grosvenor House	01536 464204
Rachel Hibbs Mobile Support Worker	Grosvenor House	01536 464289
CBC Main Switchboard	Cube	01536 464000
Landlord Services (housing)	Deene House	01536 464087
Repairs	Cube	01536 464000
Emergency Repairs (after 17.00)	Grosvenor House	01536 400088
Housing Benefits	Deene House	01536 464000
Housing Options	Cube	01536 464631
Community Safety	Deene House	01536 464603
Housing Finance	Deene House	01536 463189
Neighbourhood Wardens	Deene House	01536 463177
Adult Care Team	Northampton (N.C.C)	0300 126 1000
Occupational Therapy	Northampton (N.C.C)	01604 366000
Northants Police	Northamptonshire	03000 111222
Citizens Advice Bureau	Cube	01536 265501
Falls Prevention Service	Northampton (N.C.C)	01933 235870





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