



Intensive Housing Management

Consultation **March – April 2020**

Stoke-on-Trent City Council



Support Service for Older People

Introduction



This leaflet is intended to inform you of a proposed housing support service for residents living in City Council bungalows. Before we decide whether to introduce this service, we want to hear your views. We are required by the Housing Act 1985 to consult with you and this booklet will form part of the information you need to help you during the consultation process.

We want to make sure that the City Council's housing services for older residents living in bungalows, gives residents the opportunity to access the most appropriate support at the right time.

Support services have been found to help keep people healthy and independent in their own homes for longer, so the City Council is proposing to introduce a new support service called Enhanced Housing Management.

It is intended that all bungalows, suitable for older residents, will be classed as Supported Housing. The support service will be available to anyone with support needs living in a City Council Supported Housing bungalow. The cost of this service will be applied as a service charge across all of these bungalows.

These proposals will affect residents in different ways depending on how you pay your rent. This consultation is to ask for your thoughts on your current and future support needs, and to understand how the changes would affect you. We will use your replies to work with you and to plan any changes in a way that will cause you the least possible disruption.

It is proposed, if agreed, that the new service would be on offer from April 2021 to all City Council Supported Housing bungalows.

Intensive Housing Management Support Service

Support services can take a lot of the stress and worry out of managing your tenancy and dealing with other agencies. The service aims to help you deal with the practical aspects of living well in your home and promoting your wellbeing. You will be able to contact a dedicated Support Officer to reassure you and who will help you with:

- Housing issues and tenancy management,,
- Finance, rent arrears and debt,
- Welfare benefits and maximising income,
- Aids and adaptations for the home,
- Getting involved in social and community activities,
- Accessing other specialist support, local support groups and resources,
- Accessing Health and Social Care services.

In addition to the practical aspects of the support service we will also help residents with improving their health and wellbeing. Loneliness and isolation is a significant feature of life for many residents in our city. Research shows that this can be as harmful to our health as smoking. It is important we engage with residents to find out what interests them and how they can feel connected.

The Service aims to:-

- Encourage residents to have social interactions in the local community, to reduce social isolation and loneliness.
- Offer advice on where to find information about things such as smoking, exercise, healthy eating alcohol intake, or indeed a combination of these.
- Help residents to access health services and to monitor their own health and wellbeing.
- Help residents to think about how to avoid trips and falls.
- Listen to residents' health and wellbeing concerns and help find appropriate support.

Benefits of the Service

- Direct contact with experienced Housing Support staff to assist you with Housing, Health and Wellbeing issues.
- Help you manage your tenancy well and remain independent in your home.
- Focusing on your health and wellbeing, both face-to-face and via the telephone
- Enhanced and personalised support for you, helping you to stay in your own home for as long as possible.
- Issues relating to isolation, loneliness and risk of falls are eased through the support provided and the better access to advice.
- Benefits for your families, friends and loved ones, knowing that your health and wellbeing is at the heart of this service.

Service Levels and Costs

You will be able to access regular support by telephone or home visits. Experienced Housing Support staff will offer advice with maintaining your tenancy, claiming benefits, or accessing other services.

This type of support service would be paid for by a weekly service charge, in addition to your rent. If you claim Housing Benefit or Universal Credit housing costs, this service is currently eligible.

Everybody's circumstances are different and the support we will provide will depend on your own individual needs. But the minimum charge would be £5 a week (low level) rising to £10 a week (medium level), if and when your support needs increase.

Low level – Telephone support or limited home visits over a short period of time such as following bereavement or moving home.

Medium Level – Telephone and regular home visits for people who are struggling to maintain their tenancy or health and wellbeing over a longer period of time.