

Sheltered Housing Tenant Handbook



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Introduction

About this Handbook

This handbook is produced by the Sheltered Housing Team and is given to all new tenants.

The purpose of the handbook is to provide you with information you may find useful during your tenancy and to advise you of the various policies relating to the day-to-day running of the scheme.

The handbook is meant to supplement the information contained in your tenancy agreement and the 'Tenancy Details, My Home, My Tenancy' booklet, which you would have received when you signed your tenancy agreement.

If a situation arises which is not covered in any of these documents please speak to your Scheme Manager.

If you have any suggestions about additional information you would like to be included in this Handbook, please let us know.

Sheltered Housing

Sheltered Housing is designed for older people or those who are vulnerable for other reasons to help them live independently for as long as possible.

Your tenancy is owned by Blackpool Council and managed by Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH).

There is a Scheme Manager who will provide support. Each property also has an emergency call system which is connected to a central control service (Vitaline) when your Scheme Manager is not on duty.

Charter for Tenants in Sheltered Housing

This charter affirms the commitment of Blackpool Coastal Housing to provide a high quality service for all our tenants in Sheltered Housing.

Blackpool Coastal Housing Sheltered Housing Service will strive to ensure that all tenants receive a support service which meets their needs.

What you can expect from us

You have the right:

- to be consulted on all significant proposals which may effect your lives or comfort and for your views to be taken into account
- to be supported to live an independent and purposeful life
- to be treated equally and enabled to live in an environment which is free from bullying, harassment and discrimination
- to be treated with dignity and respect at all times and to have things politely explained in a way that you can understand
- to privacy and to be free from intrusion as long as it is safe for you and everyone else
- to achieve all you can, be given the opportunity to make the most of your life and be enabled to make full use of all the resources available to you
- to feel secure and safe in all aspects of your life and to enjoy safety without over protection
- to make informed choices while recognising the rights of others to do the same
- to have family members, friends or an independent advocate, help you make choices if you wish
- to have an individual Support Plan to identify specific needs and choices
- to have your needs assessed even if we cannot directly provide the service you require
- to be informed if there are any changes to the service provided by BCH Sheltered Housing Service
- to have information provided in the format or language you need e.g. audio tape, Braille, large print
- to be valued and respected for your ethnic background, language, culture and faith
- to have services provided without discrimination on grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability.

What we expect from you

We expect you:

- to communicate your needs and preferences as clearly as possible, with active support if required
- to ask for help and / or advice when needed - don't be afraid to ask, if we don't know we can't help
- to be aware of others rights as tenants and to respect the opinions of others, regardless of differences in race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, age, religion, sex, mental or physical disability
- to let us know quickly if we have not provided the service we promised, or if there are any other problems.

Moving In

When you move in, your Scheme Manager will visit you and will:

- show you around the scheme and explain what is available in the area and where the community centre is
- explain the use of the emergency call system and the fire and emergency procedure
- advise you of local facilities such as doctors, dentists, chemists, shops, community centres and activities, and bus stops (please see 'useful contacts' list at end of booklet)
- complete a support plan with you. This is an official record of the support you can expect to receive.

Your Scheme Manager will also take some details from you concerning your health, next of kin contact details, doctor and those people who you want contacting if you are unwell. This information will also be passed on to the Vitaline service and will help us to provide the best service in the event of an emergency.

If you are unsure of anything when you move in, then please do not hesitate to speak to your Scheme Manager.

What does my Scheme Manager do?

Main Duties

You will by now have met your Scheme Manager. Their main duties are:

- to keep in regular contact with you, usually by daily visit or by use of the intercom system - the method by which you are contacted will be agreed as part of your initial support plan
- to respond to emergencies and get help
- to provide support to enable you to set up and maintain your tenancy
- to help you liaise with support providers such as doctors, care workers and social workers
- to help to organise and facilitate social activities and events for the scheme
- to promote a professional and trusting relationship with you to provide support and security in your home
- to help you to maintain an active and independent life
- to provide support in helping you apply for benefits
- to provide support to help you comply with tenancy requirements
- to ensure the scheme is clean and tidy and free from hazards
- to complete with your help a support plan that details your individual needs to enable us to help you to manage an independent lifestyle. Your support plan will be reviewed with you every six months or as and when necessary.

Advice

Your Scheme Manager can offer advice on:

Your home

- How to report repairs
- Disabled adaptations and tenants own improvements
- The location of your fuse box, meters and stopcock

Your well-being and safety

- Using your call system, pendant (if applicable) and what to do if you lose it
- Managing home security including keys
- Getting involved with issues that affect your scheme or the area you live in
- Maintaining an independent lifestyle and completing a support plan

Facilities available

- Booking a guest room located at Dunsop Court. This is available for all sheltered tenants
- Local amenities and facilities including health services
- Accessing social activities

Your financial issues

- Referrals to relevant services for budgeting skills and advice
- Referrals to welfare rights for advice on benefits

Working hours and out of hours cover**Your Scheme Manager's hours**

Scheme Managers work a standard 37 hour week, Monday to Friday. They do not work weekends or on bank holidays. Hours worked fall between the times of 8am and 4.30pm Monday to Thursday and 8am and 4pm on a Friday.

Cover for your Scheme Manager

If your Scheme Manager is off duty for more than a day, we normally organise another Scheme Manager to provide part time cover plus responding to any emergency situations which may arise.

Out of hours cover

Whenever your Scheme Manager is not on duty the scheme is linked to Vitaline monitoring service. This allows us to provide emergency cover 24 hours a day 365 days a year. If necessary Vitaline will contact the emergency services, your doctor or next of kin, or arrange for an emergency repair.

In order to contact your next of kin it is vital that they have up to date contact details. We would, therefore, ask you that should your doctor or emergency contact(s) changes address / telephone number that you notify your Scheme Manager at the earliest opportunity. Vitaline can also be contacted by telephone 477678.

Welfare checks

Your Scheme Manager will contact you regularly to check on your welfare. This is normally done by either a home visit or by using the intercom system. The preferred method and frequency of contact will be agreed with you and will be recorded in your support plan.

What your Scheme Manager cannot do

Your Scheme Manager cannot:

- Carry out duties which are the responsibility of other organisations, for example Social Services
- Act as a Home Carer, Nurse or Night Sitter
- Administer drugs or medication of any kind or collect prescriptions
- Do your washing, shopping, cleaning or cook your meals
- Look after your valuables
- Accept gifts for personal gain
- Look after pets
- Dispose of domestic waste
- Handle any money on your behalf
- Share personal information about themselves with you
- Develop a personal relationship with you
- Socialise outside of the workplace with you
- Borrow, give or receive money or gifts to/from you
- Engage in physical contact with you
- Sell or buy services or goods to/from you
- Enter into any business/financial transaction with you
- Act as a witness to any legal documents

Staff should:

- Be polite and respectful towards you
- Maintain confidentiality about your personal information

Support Planning Policy

The Sheltered Housing service is committed to service delivery based on the assessment of needs and the promotion of choices for all tenants, through ensuring each resident has a Support Plan in place which is regularly reviewed.

When you move into the scheme, the Scheme Manager will make an appointment with you to explain the support planning process and paperwork. The plan itself will be completed with you and any family, carer or advocate you would like present.

Information discussed with your scheme manager is confidential and will only be shared with other professionals or agencies with your permission.

Your Support Plan will record the level and nature of support that will be provided to you. It is based upon an assessment of your needs and any risks both faced by and presented by you. Support plans help to promote independence and choice for you by involving you in how your support is delivered. They also help your Scheme Manager get to know you and to understand what you hope to gain from the service.

The Support Plan will be reviewed with you on a regular basis, at least every six months or if your circumstances change.

Support Planning is underpinned by the following values:

PRIVACY: your right to be left alone and free from intrusion.

CONFIDENTIALITY: the assurance that personal information is kept private.

DIGNITY: the recognition of the value of people regardless of their circumstances.

CHOICE: the ability of people to make choices is fundamental to promoting independence.

RIGHTS: the recognition that all people have rights fundamental to citizenship.

FULFILMENT: the achievement of personal aspirations.

You will be given a copy of your Support Plan or if you do not want a paper copy you can access it at any time, just ask your Scheme Manager.

If you have any complaints concerning your support plan or any issues relating to Supporting People funding you can contact the Supporting People Team by writing to them at:

Supporting People, The Stadium, Seaside, Blackpool
Tel. 01253 651978 email: supporting.people@blackpool.gov.uk

Other Information

Master Key

Your Scheme Manager has a master key to your flat. It will only be used in the case of an emergency or if you have given your permission. If the master key is used the Scheme Manager will always knock or ring the doorbell before entering the flat. Please do not fit additional locks to your door or if the lock is changed inform the Scheme Manager immediately.

Emergency Alarm System

Each flat has an emergency call system which can be used to summon help in the case of an emergency. This can be activated by pulling any of the cords as they are linked to the unit, or by pressing your pendant if you have one. It can also be used to record incoming calls from your scheme manager or Vitaline.

Your Scheme Manager will also show you how to use the call system when you move into your property. Your Scheme Manager will also carry out a test on your system and pendant regularly to ensure it is working correctly. If you notice a fault on your system please report it as soon as possible.

Repairs & Maintenance

BCH is committed to giving a first class repairs and maintenance service.

Our responsibilities cover the structure of your home and the fittings inside that we have fitted including services such as plumbing, electricity and heating systems.

How to report a repair

If your home needs repair work you can report a repair by phone, on-line, text, e-mail, in person or by writing to us.

Emergencies

If you can smell gas:

- Do not smoke or use a naked flame
- Do not turn electric switches on or off
- Turn off the gas supply at the meter
- Open doors and windows to get rid of the smell of gas

Call the emergency number for gas escapes on 0800 111 999

Mains water leaks should be reported to United Utilities on 0800 330 033

If you have a problem with the electric supply please ring 0800 195 4141

If your repair is an emergency i.e. lives, health or property are at risk, you must telephone the repairs hotline free phone 0800 073 0184. This service is available for emergencies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

For all other repairs you can contact us by the following methods

BY PHONE

Telephone the Repairs Hotline free phone 0800 073 0184 from 8 am to 6 pm, Monday to Friday

REPORTING A REPAIR ON-LINE

Never use this service to report an emergency repair, always use the Repairs Hotline 0800 073 0184

TEXT

Send us a text from your mobile. Text Repairs to 07786 201409. Your details will be sent to the Repairs Hotline who will respond by contacting you for details of your repair. Outside normal office hours your request will be dealt with first thing during the next working day.

E-MAIL

E-mail us at repairs@bch.co.uk. Your details will be sent to the Repairs Hotline. Outside normal office hours your request will be dealt with first thing during the next working day.

IN PERSON

Call in at one of our Estate Offices and use the free phone provided.

IN WRITING

Write to: Blackpool Coastal Housing, Repairs Hotline, Progress House, Clifton Road, Blackpool, FY4 4US

Registering with a Doctor

If you do need to change doctor your Scheme Manager can give you information on local surgeries. If you do need to change doctor we ask that you do so within two weeks of moving into the scheme. If you have any problems finding a new doctor please speak to your Scheme Manager.

A list of the nearest doctors' surgeries to the scheme can be found in the 'Useful Contacts' section at the rear of this booklet.

Tenant Participation

Your Scheme Manager will hold regular meetings at the community centre. This will help you to keep in touch with developments in the service and allow you the opportunity to ask questions or make observations and comments on the service you receive. Please speak to your Scheme Manager for more details.

There are Talkback forms available from your Scheme Manager, in the Community Centres or any BCH Office. You are encouraged to use these should you have any suggestions on how the scheme or the service can improve or develop, in order to improve your daily living experience.

A Sheltered Housing Forum is held every three months in which representatives from all sheltered schemes and staff from the service meet, to discuss developments and suggest improvements to the service. The meetings are advertised in the quarterly Sheltered Newsletter and in the Community Centre. Please speak to your Scheme Manager if you are interested in attending. Transport and refreshments are provided.

A sheltered Newsletter is produced quarterly and any suggestions for articles to be included are gratefully received.

You will also receive a satisfaction questionnaire to complete on a regular basis. This will ask for your opinion on issues such as the service you receive from your Scheme Manager and Vitaline and is invaluable in helping us to assess what we need to improve and what is working well.

Service Standards

The service currently monitors its performance against a number of Service Standards which were agreed by the Sheltered forum members. These are:

1. When a fault with the warden call system is reported, we will fix it within 24 hours.
2. We will complete a full support plan with you within 4 weeks of a tenancy commencing.
3. We will complete a review of your support plan at least annually.
4. We will consult with tenants annually, through a satisfaction survey, about their view of the service.
5. We will aim to have a satisfaction level of 93% from tenants with the sheltered housing service.
6. We will aim to have a satisfaction level of 90% from tenants that community centres are well maintained and clean.

Performance is reported quarterly within the Sheltered Newsletter and discussed at the Forum.

Rent and Service Charges

Gross Rent

Your gross rent is made up of two components:

- The net rent
- The Support & Service Charges - you will be given an annual rent statement which details each separate charge.

Should you need any advice or assistance on paying your rent please contact the BCH Rents Team - see the 'Useful Contacts' section at the end of this handbook..

Council Tax

It is your responsibility to notify the Council Tax Section that you have moved into the scheme. You can do this by telephoning them direct on 478847, or by visiting Customer First at the Town Hall.

Utility Supplies

You will need to notify the utility suppliers that you have moved address. You will also need to supply them with the meter reading.

You will also need to inform United Utilities (Water) of the date you moved into the property. Their telephone number can be found in the useful contact number section at the end of the booklet.

Safety and Security

Security of Accommodation

Security of your accommodation is ultimately your responsibility. The Sheltered Housing Team aims to provide safe and secure accommodation for all our tenants. However this can only be achieved with your help in observing the following guidelines:

- Always lock all doors and windows when leaving your property
- Never let anyone you do not know into your property
- Always ask workmen and other official visitors for their identification
- Always inform your Scheme Manager if you are going away.

The majority of sheltered properties are fitted with multi point locks and your Scheme Manager holds a master key to be used in emergencies. Extra locks should not be fitted as this could prevent access in an emergency.

You should always ask for identification for any caller you do not know. If you are suspicious in any way DON'T open your door.

You can pull the alarm cord to get advice from your Scheme Manager or Vitaline at anytime.

Smoke Alarms

You can expect to find a smoke alarm/ heat detectors in your property. Should this be activated it will contact the Scheme Manager or Vitaline immediately. This equipment is maintained yearly by BCH.

The Community Centre

This is available for bookings by sheltered tenants for social events, meetings and parties or just for a cup of tea. Outside groups are also welcome to book activities within the centres.

Rules and regulations for the use of the centres do apply and a copy will be forwarded to you when making a booking. Please contact the Supported Housing Co-ordinator on 477898.

Visitor's Room

A visitor's room is available at Dunsop Court located in South Shore, for a small charge so friends and family can stay overnight, particularly for those who live far away. The room is booked on a first come first served basis.

The room can be booked on 476955 between the hours of 8am - 4.30pm Monday to Thursday and 8am - 4pm on a Friday.

Compliments, Complaints & Comments

You have the right to be able to make a complaint where you have a concern or are dissatisfied with the service provided. The complaints and compliments procedure has been designed to help you raise any issues or concerns in an easy, comfortable and fair way so that we can best satisfy your needs. We also want to take every opportunity to continually improve as a result of listening to your views and taking the appropriate actions.

Handling Complaints

Informal complaints - expressions of dissatisfaction

There is a formal three stage process for handling complaints. However sometimes there is no need for a formal process to be started as you may want to raise an issue or a problem informally that is more about an expression of dissatisfaction and can be dealt with very quickly. Expressions of dissatisfaction can be dealt with by any member of staff at any office, or on the telephone. Informal complaints will not enter the three stage complaints procedure.

Staff are trained to try to resolve a problem straight away or if need be they will refer the complaint to the

manager responsible for the complaint service delivery area.

In the event of a complaint not being resolved through an informal route, the Formal Complaints process shall be entered into.

Formal complaints

All formal complaints will be handled with set timescales in a three stage procedure:

Stage 1 Complaints will be acknowledged within 2 working days and will be investigated by a designated manager within 10 working days.

Stage 2 If the complaint cannot be resolved at Stage One, you will be notified within 2 working days that the complaint has moved to Stage Two where it will be reviewed by a senior manager within 10 working days.

Stage 3 If the complaint is not resolved at Stage Two you will be notified within 2 working days that the complaint will be treated as a Stage Three complaint and will be dealt with by an Appeals Panel. The Appeals Panel will be the final stage and will involve BCH Board members and will be held within 28 days.

In some circumstances, further information may be required therefore the stages could be prolonged with your agreement.

This staged procedure is to ensure that even the most difficult and complex issues can be successfully resolved within 8 weeks of the complaint first being made. It also enables senior staff and board members to be involved where the complaint cannot be resolved at the earlier stages.

BCH will do all it can within each of the three stage process to try to resolve the complaint to your satisfaction. If this cannot be achieved you will have the right to take your complaint to the Independent Housing Ombudsman.

A full copy of the complaints / compliments procedure can be obtained from your Scheme Manager or from any BCH office.

Should you wish to contact a member of the management team to discuss any complaints or concerns about the service, please call 477898.

Safeguarding Adults

Adults have the right to live their lives free from violence, fear and abuse.

Adults have the right to be protected from harm or exploitation.

Adults have the right to independence, which may involve a degree of risk.

Sometimes people are not able to enjoy these rights. If a person is seen as vulnerable or isolated within the community there are some people who may take advantage of them or cause suffering and harm to them.

Abusive behaviour can involve any of the following: physically hurting someone, financially exploiting them, neglecting a person, sexually abusing someone or causing them emotional or psychological distress.

People can be at risk from harm or exploitation anywhere. This includes their own home, in a residential or nursing home, in day centres, at college, in hospitals or in public places.

Safeguarding Children

Children have the right to live their lives free from violence, fear and abuse.

Children have the right to be protected from harm or exploitation.

Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. In the context of child protection, abusive or neglectful behaviour is behaviour towards a child or young person which has the deliberate intention of causing harm or is so reckless to the consequences that harm is caused.

The main forms of abuse are;

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

Any child can be abused and any child or adult can abuse. Abuse may be a one-off incident or may be a series of events over a period of time.

BCH tries to ensure the safety of all children accessing our sheltered Schemes. All Scheme Managers have current CRB certification and are trained in appropriate safeguarding procedures.

If you are concerned about a possible abusive situation involving an adult or child, you can contact the following numbers for advice and help.

Blackpool Council's Safeguarding Adults Team

Tel: 01253 651095 or email: safeguarding.adults@blackpool.gov.uk

OR

Social Services Direct

Tel: 01253 477592 or email: social.servicesdirect@blackpool.gov.uk

The council has qualified staff who will be able to offer you advice or assistance. Your call will be treated confidentially and your wishes in relation to any incident will be taken into account.

You can also speak to your Scheme Manager or the Sheltered Housing team Direct on 477898.

Useful Contacts

Vitaline	477678
Care and Repair	651555
Supporting People Team	651978
Advicelink	476843
Citizens Advice Bureau	308400
Blackpool Advocacy	290049
Older People's Advocacy Alliance	01543 490861
Welfare Rights	477770
Housing Advice	477760
Blackpool Council Customer First	477477
Housing / Council Tax Enquiries	478847
Social Services Direct	477592
Financial Services Authority	0845 606 1234
Community Legal Advice	0845 345 4345
Disability Information & Support	472202/ 472203
Disabled Parking Scheme (Blue badge)	476428
Disabled Person's Railcard	0845 605 0525
Pension Credit	0800 991234
Pension Service	0845 6060265
Avonline	0845 111855

General

Emergency Services (Fire/Police/Ambulance)	999
NHS Direct	0845 4647
NHS Stop Smoking Service	0845 601 2186
United Utilities	0845 746 2200
National Grid (Gas leaks)	0800 111999
National Grid (Electricity emergencies)	0800 404090
Crime Stoppers	0800 555 111
Samaritans	08457 90 90 90
Age Concern	0800 009966/ 622812
Help the Aged	0808 800 6565
Salvation Army	626114
Carers UK	292645
Carers Centre	393748
Mencap	0808 808 1111
SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Families Association)	735983
RSPCA	0870 5555999

If you need this handbook in another format or language please ask your scheme manager.

We have made every effort to make sure the information in this document is correct. Blackpool Coastal Housing cannot accept any liability for loss or damage of any kind resulting from any errors.



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

