

Introduction

If transfer goes ahead, Derwentside Homes would develop existing services and provide new services that the Council cannot provide.

Around 50 per cent of the Council's tenants will be aged 60 or over in 2005 and the numbers of elderly persons aged over 75 is set to increase substantially over the next decade. If the transfer goes ahead, Derwentside Homes would have 2,800 elderly persons bungalows and flats (of which around 250 are sheltered flats).

Derwentside Homes would work with partner agencies to improve the provision of housing support services, with support targeted at those households which most need support.

Derwentside Homes would maintain the Careline Service if transfer goes ahead.

Making your homes safe and secure

Elderly tenants would have a real say in the security measures Derwentside Homes proposes such as new doors, double-glazed Secured by Design windows, burglar alarms and environmental improvements. Derwentside Homes would have around **£17 million** in its budget to spend in the first five years if transfer goes ahead. These measures would form part of a wider commitment to deliver the Derwentside Homes Standard to all the homes that would transfer within the first 13 years.



Gardening Service

Derwentside Homes would expand the pilot gardening scheme for elderly and disabled tenants which is provided at no cost to the recipient of the service. The Shadow Board is aware of the growing popularity of the service currently provided by the Council and would seek to expand this service in line with demand.

Aids and Adaptations

Whenever improvements are carried out to homes, Derwentside Homes would give consideration to tenants' needs. Whenever practical, adaptations would be carried out to help tenants to remain in their own homes for longer periods.

Derwentside Homes would provide more funding for aids and adaptations than the Council

is currently able to provide. Extra investment is planned over the first five years after transfer. Assessments for individual tenants would continue to be done by qualified professionals ensuring that high standards are maintained.

A Handy Van Service

Older tenants have told us that it is often difficult to get people to do minor jobs for them as they are not the Council's responsibility. These can range from putting up shelves to changing hard to reach light bulbs. Derwentside Homes would introduce a Handy Van Service within six months of transfer taking place. The Handy Van Service would carry out low level adaptations for the elderly and disabled and small repairs to tenants' homes which would help them stay safely and comfortably in their own homes.

Whilst the primary function of the Handy Van service would be to fast track low level adaptations without the need for referral from Social Services, the Handy Van operative's day may also include other tasks such as putting up curtain tracks, changing tap washers or light bulbs.

The service would normally be offered free to qualifying tenants, but tenants would need to pay for materials or fixtures which are not the responsibility of Derwentside Homes.

Furnished Tenancies

Derwentside Homes would expand the Council's current furnished tenancy service to provide, where appropriate, for the needs of elderly and disabled persons.

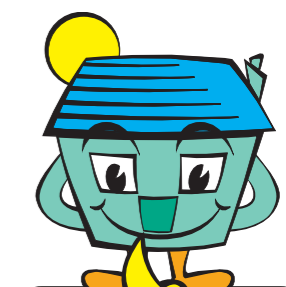
Home Relocator Service

Moving home has a major impact on people's lives, particularly for people who have no family support to help them move home.

Derwentside Homes would plan to develop and provide a Home Relocator Service designed to meet the needs of older people when they move home.

Subject to tenant consultation the Home Relocator Service could include:

- ✓ contacting and notifying change of address details to gas, water, electricity and telephone companies;



Derwentside Homes would look to improve its services for tenants in sheltered accommodation.



- ✓ contacting and notifying change of address and circumstances to the Council's Housing Benefit and Council Tax departments where authorised by the tenant;
- ✓ advising on re-direction of post and services available in the new area.

A specialist adviser for older people

Derwentside Homes would appoint an adviser for older tenants to reflect their needs in the provision of housing services. The adviser would be responsible for developing Derwentside Homes's housing strategy for older tenants and how Derwentside Homes could work with other agencies including the Council, the Health Service and Social Services. The housing strategy

for older tenants would include addressing the longer term need for more specialist accommodation for the elderly.

Improvements to Sheltered Accommodation

For those tenants who want a more secure environment, Derwentside Homes is committed to providing a modern Sheltered Accommodation service.

Derwentside Homes would work with the Council and other agencies to plan and deliver an efficient and effective Sheltered Accommodation service. It would also have the financial resources to deliver this.

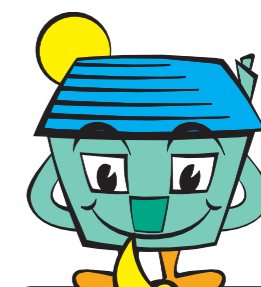
The Council is keen to make sure that older people are able to stay in their own homes for as long as possible.

To enable this to happen, the Council wishes to see substantial improvements to Sheltered Accommodation to make sure that the Sheltered Accommodation offer tenants homes and facilities which meet modern standards. Derwentside Homes's main business plan would include resources for significant repair and improvement works for the Sheltered Accommodation.

In addition, Derwentside Homes would carry out additional improvement works, such as those outlined below:-

- ✓ Remodelling of all bed-sit accommodation where there is demand to provide modern single or double bedroom flats;
- ✓ Tenants given a choice of their own bath or walk-in shower, when bathroom replacement programmes are carried out;

- ✓ All homes to be energy efficient, having heating systems with sensors which enable tenants to regulate temperature;
- ✓ All flats to be provided with double glazing;
- ✓ All properties to have good levels of security which include: modern door entry systems; good communal and security lighting; adequate fencing and boundaries;
- ✓ Facilities to accommodate electric wheelchair storage and charging to be provided, where practical, and the wheelchair is recommended by an Occupational Therapist;
- ✓ Modern communal facilities, including: level access shower room for assisted bathing; DDA compliant toilets; well decorated lounges and corridors; access to IT equipment, where possible;



Derwentside Homes's business plan would include resources for significant repair and improvement works for sheltered accommodation.



- ✓ Well landscaped garden areas at each Scheme, improved in consultation with tenants;
- ✓ Improvements to guest rooms, laundries, communal kitchens, air conditioned communal rooms, paved sitting out areas and secure boundary fencing; and
- ✓ Installation of conservatories off lounge, where practicable, and subject to any necessary consents.

Services You Would Receive

Derwentside Homes would improve housing management and maintenance services to Sheltered Accommodation.

Derwentside Homes would seek tenants' views on the level and type of improvements

required and would make sure that each tenant's situation would be considered and improvements designed to meet individual needs as far as practicable.

As long as your property is already at a reasonable standard, Derwentside Homes would not force you to have all or any of the improvements carried out, unless there were health and safety issues or it was work which was required to carry out work to your neighbours' homes.

Derwentside Homes would provide at least the same level of service in Sheltered Accommodation that the Council does now.



However Derwentside Homes would also look to improve its services for tenants in Sheltered Accommodation by:

- ✓ Consulting tenants at each scheme to improve the service;
- ✓ Consulting tenants at each Scheme about programmes of works;
- ✓ Working with other agencies to improve care, health and leisure services.

Extra care

Derwentside Homes would seek to work with partner agencies to ensure that there are the necessary services in place which represent real alternatives to residential care. Such provision is often described as extra care. Derwentside Homes would work with partner agencies to enable as many tenants to live independently for as long as

possible. Derwentside Homes recognises that as the numbers of very elderly persons increases over the next decade it would need to work with partner agencies to meet the needs of frail elderly people with high care and support needs. The Careline Service (24 hour emergency call line for elderly and vulnerable tenants) would be maintained if the transfer takes place.



