



Services for Older Tenants and People with Disabilities Policy

Policy Number

POL 25

Purpose of Policy

To set out a framework within which Derwentside Homes and its partner agencies will work to ensure a range of appropriate and responsive housing services are provided for older tenants and people with disabilities.

Policy Statement

Derwentside Homes will:

- develop and improve existing services for the older and/or disabled customers;
- develop new services in consultation with tenants to enable older and/or disabled people to maintain their independence as far as practicable;
- work with partner agencies to ensure appropriate services are provided to meet the needs of older and disabled tenants to enable them to live independently in their homes;
- assist older and disabled tenants to access services and offer advice as to the types of services available to them.

Performance Measures

Derwentside Homes will measure:

- percentage of major adaptations complete within 29 days from date of issue;
- percentage of minor adaptations complete within 7 days from date of issue;
- percentage of minor works requests where tenant is due for discharge from hospital complete within 1 day;
- overall satisfaction of tenants with work carried out.

The following are reported quarterly to the Durham County Council Supporting People administrative team as part of contractual arrangements:

- number of support hours provided;
- service utilisation;
- reasons for departure from the service.

Responsible Officer	
Policy Author(s)	
Date Approved by the Shadow Board	9 th August 2006
Frequency of Review	Three years or as dictated by legislation/guidance
Review Date	
File Reference	
Consultees	Tenants Forum Staff Management Team Derwentside Homes Shadow Board

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1 Statement of Intent

- 1.1 Derwentside Homes is committed to the fair and equal treatment of all people regardless of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality or religious belief. Derwentside Homes values and respects diversity; it will seek to ensure that no unlawful or unfair discrimination takes place against an individual or group.
- 1.2 Derwentside Homes is committed to ensuring that it takes into account the specific needs of older and/or disabled customers in considering the range and quality of services it provides.
- 1.3 Derwentside Homes recognises that some older and/or disabled tenants may require higher levels of support than other tenants and is committed to working in such a way to ensure that these needs are identified and services delivered appropriately to meet their needs.
- 1.4 Derwentside Homes will contribute towards ensuring sustainable communities by offering services or working with partners to offer services to older and/or disabled tenants to enable them to have independent and quality lives in the wider community.
- 1.5 This policy outlines the key principles underpinning the services that Derwentside Homes will offer customers to older and/or disabled tenants. These key principles are:
 - to treat all customers with respect and dignity at all times having mind to confidentiality;
 - to recognise that not all older and/or disabled customers will want to access these services and to respect that wish;
 - to identify at an early stage a need for any of these services leading to the development of an achievable support plan;
 - to work with the individual to identify housing support needs and tailor services appropriately;
 - to make referrals to other agencies as and when required with the customers consent;
 - where appropriate, to work with third parties to bring in additional support;
 - to promote the use of advocates.
- 1.6 Derwentside Homes will consider new housing support service development for people within its area of operations and will carry out the necessary consultation with customers. Any development of service must meet a proven and justified need and be sustainable in the long term. Unless the service is funded from alternative sources, agreement on long term funding must be established with Durham County Council Supporting People team.

- 1.7 Derwentside Homes is mindful of its commitments in relation to the Supporting People contract with Durham County Council in the provision of services in order to achieve the aims of this policy.
- 1.8 Derwentside Homes will develop 'service user' groups to work with staff on 'service specific' services in relation to service delivery, monitoring and improvement e.g. floating housing support services.

2 Detail

2.1 Independent Living Schemes for the Over 55's

- 2.1.1 For those tenants who want a more secure environment, Derwentside Homes is committed to providing a modern Independent Living Accommodation for the over 55s to enable older people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible.
- 2.1.2 Derwentside Homes will provide at least the same level of service in this Independent Living Accommodation as tenants currently receive i.e. services of a Support Officer during officer hours Monday to Friday and an Emergency call and response service as provided by Derwentside Careline.
- 2.1.3 However Derwentside Homes will also look to improve upon these services 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.
- 2.1.4 Derwentside Homes is committed to completing significant repair and improvement works to Independent Living Accommodation to be in a position to offer tenants homes and facilities, which meet modern standards.
- 2.1.5 In addition, Derwentside Homes will carry out additional improvement works, such as those outlined below:
- remodel bed-sit accommodation where there is demand to provide modern single or double bedroom flats;
 - offer tenants a choice of a bath or walk-in shower, when bathroom replacement programmes are carried out;
 - provide heating systems with sensors which will enable tenants to regulate temperature also making homes more energy efficient;
 - install double glazing to all flats;
 - ensure all properties have good levels of security which include: modern door entry systems; good communal and security lighting; adequate fencing and boundaries;
 - provide facilities where practicable to store and charge electric wheelchairs, if the wheelchair has been recommended by an Occupational Therapist;
 - provide modern communal facilities, including: level access shower room for assisted bathing, accessible communal facilities and entrances to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, well decorated lounges and corridors, access to IT equipment, where possible;

- provide in consultation with tenants, well-landscaped garden areas at each Scheme;
- improve guest rooms, laundries, communal kitchens, air conditioned communal rooms, paved sitting out areas and secure boundary fencing; and
- install conservatories off lounge where practicable, subject to any necessary consents.

2.1.6 Derwentside Homes will improve housing management and maintenance services to Independent Living Accommodation and will 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.

2.1.7 Derwentside Homes will not force any tenant to have all or any of the improvements carried out, as long as the property is already in a reasonable standard or there are no health and safety issues or the work required does not include work required to a neighbouring property. .

2.2 Extra Care

2.2.1 Derwentside Homes recognises that as the numbers of very older persons, some with high care and support needs, increases over the next decade there will be a higher demand for services to meet the care and support needs of frail older people.

2.2.2 Derwentside Homes is committed to work with partner agencies to enable as many tenants to live independently for as long as possible.

2.2.3 Derwentside Homes will seek therefore 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.

2.3 Derwentside Careline

2.3.1 Derwentside Homes is committed to work in partnership with Derwentside Careline with the 24-hour emergency monitoring and response service for older and vulnerable tenants being maintained.

2.4 Adaptations

2.4.1 Where a tenant is encountering difficulties with daily living, adaptations can be provided to enable the tenant to remain in their own home thus assisting independent living.

2.4.2 Adaptations can fall into two categories, minor works such as grab rails or handrails (usually where the work costs less than £500) or major works, such as provision of shower or the installation of specialist equipment e.g. a stair lift. The provision of minor works will be dealt with directly by Derwentside Homes on either a self-referral basis or from a referral made by a health care professional. Major adaptations (and in exceptional cases a minor adaptation)

will only be provided subject to a full assessment by an Occupational Therapist who works with Durham County Council's Health and Social Care.

- 2.4.2 Derwentside Homes will provide information to tenants with regard to the availability of adaptations and how to apply where they consider the quality of their lives may be improved by the incorporation of adaptations into their homes.
- 2.4.3 Derwentside Homes will provide funding for adaptations and is committed to provide extra investment over the first five years after transfer. This will ensure that there will be no cost to the tenant where adaptations have been recommended.
- 2.4.4 Derwentside Homes is committed to carrying out adaptation work within set timescales with the commitment to carry out minor works requests within one working day where the tenant is due for discharge from hospital.
- 2.4.5 Where a recommendation is received for a major adaptation to be carried out, Derwentside Homes will approach the tenant to determine whether they would consider rehousing to a more suitable property, thus preventing the necessity for the work to be carried out. The tenant will not be forced to move but if they decide they would be willing to be rehoused, they will be moved as a priority to an area of their choice subject to availability and would be given assistance with moving and a relocation package.

2.5 Safety and Security

- 2.5.1 Derwentside Homes will improve the security of homes as part of its wider commitment to deliver the Derwentside Homes Standard to all the homes that transfer within the first 13 years.
- 2.5.2 Derwentside Homes will ensure that older and/or disabled tenants will have a real say in the security measures it proposes such as new doors, double-glazed Secured by Design windows, burglar alarms and environmental improvements.

2.6 Gardening Service

- 2.6.1 Derwentside Homes will expand the pilot gardening scheme for older and/or people with disabilities, which is provided at no cost to the recipient of the service. Derwentside Homes would seek to expand this service in line with demand.

2.7 Handy Van Service

- 2.7.1 Where a repair or small job does not fall within the remit of Derwentside Homes under the tenancy agreement, it may be difficult for an older and/or disabled tenant to carry out this small job. Based on feedback from older tenants it is apparent that it is often difficult to get people to do minor jobs. These can range from putting up shelves to changing hard to reach light bulbs.
- 2.7.2 In recognition of the difficulties older and/or disabled tenants may have in completing these minor jobs, to reduce the potential for injury and to assist in sustaining an older and/or disabled person in their own home, Derwentside Homes will introduce a Handy Van service within 6 months of transfer taking place.
- 2.7.3 The Handy Van service will carry out low level repairs for the older and/or disabled person and small repairs to tenants' homes which would help them stay safely and comfortably in their own homes
- 2.7.4 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.

2.8 Furnished Tenancies

- 2.8.1 Derwentside Homes will expand the current furnished tenancy service to provide, where appropriate, for the needs of older and/or disabled people.

2.9 Home Relocator Service

- 2.9.1 Moving home has a major impact on people's lives, particularly for people who have no family support to help them move home.
- 2.9.2 Derwentside Homes will 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 may include:
- contacting and notifying change of address details to gas, water, electricity and telephone companies;
 - 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.

2.10 Specialist Adviser for Older People

2.10.1 Derwentside Homes will 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' housing strategy for older tenants and how Derwentside Homes could work with other agencies including the Council, the Health Service and Social Services.

2.11.1 The housing strategy for older tenants would include addressing the longer term need for more specialist accommodation for the older person.

3 Specific Needs

3.1 Derwentside Homes will take into account the specific needs, which may arise, of younger,

4 Consultations

4.1 Any changes in service provision should always be referred to appropriate resident and / or user group.

5 Monitoring

5.1 In monitoring this policy, Derwentside Homes will:

- develop a range of performance management indicators that will be reported to the board at regular intervals;
- carry out periodic customer surveys;
- work with individuals and partner agencies to review services on a regular basis;
- report to Durham County Council's Supporting People team in accordance with contractual requirements

6 Links to Housing Corporation regulatory Code and Guidance

6.1 This policy has been written to comply with the following elements of the Regulatory Code and incorporates the identified legislation/guidance

Regulatory Code:

- Properly Governed: Sections 2.3, 2.5, 2.7;
- Properly Managed: Sections 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7;
- Identified legislation /guidance;
- Housing Corporations Regulatory Code and Guidance;
- National Housing Federation: The small print;
- Level Threshold.

7 Links to Other Policies

- Selection, Allocation and Transfer Policy;
- Rent Collection Policy;
- Current Rent Arrears Recovery Policy;

- Former Tenant Arrears;
- Anti Social Behaviour Policy;
- Tenant Participation and Consultation Policy;
- Relationship Breakdown Policy;
- Domestic Violence Policy;
- Harassment Policy;
- Equality and Diversity Policy;
- Customer Care Policy;
- Floating Support Policy (incorporating warden linked and Careline).

8 Responsibility

8.1 The Director of Housing Services has overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the policy.

9 Review Date

9.1 Three years or as dictated by legislation/guidance