

Consultation on housing costs for sheltered and extra care accommodation

Question 1: We would welcome your views on the following:

a) Sheltered Housing definition: what are the features and characteristics of sheltered housing and what would be the practical implications of defining it in those terms?

Sheltered housing provides peace of mind for its residents to continue to live independently due to having a warden either resident or visiting and an on-call out of hours service. The accommodation is mainly for elderly persons with low level support needs that can be provided by carers funded by the tenant or social care. Schemes often include communal facilities for residents to make use of such as lounges and laundry rooms.

b) Extra Care definition: what are the features and characteristics of extra care housing and what would be the practical implications of defining it in those terms?

Extra care accommodation is similar to sheltered housing and still allows the tenant to live independently but provides care as well as support. This is often provided by the on-site carers rather than carers visiting the premises. Some schemes will have a café/restaurant and other services within the premises such as shops and hairdressers.

c) Is there an alternative approach to defining this stock, for instance, housing that is usually designated for older people? What would be the practical implications of defining sheltered and extra care supported housing in those terms?

Sheltered and extra care housing is generally for older people because they are more likely to need this type of accommodation than younger people; however this type of accommodation can be suitable for some younger people who would fit into that environment.

Housing providers need to be careful when housing younger people into this type of accommodation due to different lifestyles which

can create issues with cohesion. However, the reason younger people might be considered could be due to a lack of suitable supported accommodation for that age group.

Defining this type of accommodation for older persons only could create difficulties housing younger people who need the same type of accommodation, care and support.

Question 2: Housing costs for sheltered and extra care housing will continue to be funded through the welfare system. To meet the Government's objectives of ensuring greater oversight and value for money, we are introducing a 'Sheltered Rent' to cover rent inclusive of eligible service charges.

How should the detailed elements of this approach be designed to maximise your ability to commit to future supply?

No comment

Question 3: We are keen to make appropriate allowance for eligible service charges within Sheltered Rent that fairly reflects the costs of this provision, whilst protecting the taxpayer. What are the key principles and factors that drive the setting of service charges (both eligible and ineligible)? What drives variations?

Type of accommodation and Tenure.
Legislative requirements
Consultation with residents and landlords.
Cost of similar accommodation in the area.
Cost of managing services to tenants and leaseholders.
Actual or estimated cost of the services.
Housing Benefit Legislation
Affordability

Question 4: The Select Committee and a number of other sector representatives have suggested that we use a banded approach to reflect variety of provision across the sector. We are interested in understanding more about this. How do you think this might work for

sheltered and extra care housing?

It is unclear how this could work in practice and there might need to be many bands. If a set amount would be paid for sheltered housing, would this take into account of the variation in costs from scheme to scheme, for example whether a scheme did or didn't have an on-site warden. If there were few bands, could the housing provider be paid too much or too little for the scheme in question?

Question 5: For providers only

Question 6: For providers only

Question 7: Attached to the policy statement is a draft National Statement of Expectation (see Section 4). We would welcome your views on the Statement and suggestions for detailed guidance.

The national statement of expectations is a clear and informative document.

Several key groups that are very difficult to accommodate are missing from the list and these are hoarders, people with dual diagnosis, personality disorders and persons with a conviction of arson or considered at risk of causing arson.

The amount of sheltered and supported accommodation has reduced due to reductions in funding and this needs to be taken into account when deciding on the level of funding required to meet demand. Basing the budget on current expenditure will be insufficient to meet the current demand and future demand. The demand for short term and transitional supported accommodation will likely increase due to the Homelessness Reduction Act. This also needs taking account of when considering funding levels.

It is also unclear whether accurate information is held on current expenditure. If accurate records are not held this could result in a big reduction in funding.

Question 8: The National Statement of Expectation encourages greater partnership working at local level regarding supported housing, including sheltered and extra care housing. What partnership arrangements do you have for sheltered and extra care housing

at the local level?

For short term supported housing such as homeless hostels and domestic abuse refuges, the council works closely with the housing providers as well as commissioners in regard to the provision of accommodation as well as access to accommodation.

The local authority has nominations agreements for each extra care scheme within its district and a housing representative will attend allocations panel meetings. Other meetings on an adhoc basis take place from time to time.

For sheltered accommodation, there is minimal partnership working.

Question 9: Government has moved the implementation of the reform on sheltered and extra care accommodation to April 2020. How will you prepare for implementation in 2020, and what can the Government do to facilitate this?

The first tier and second tier authorities will work together to complete the needs assessment and write the strategic plan and this will need to be overseen by some form of Governance meeting or Scrutiny Panel which would need to be formed. This might need to consist of councillors, key partners from all local housing authorities, health, social care, police, probation and housing providers. This could include how the upper tier authority could be held to account to make sure the funding is used appropriately and meets local priorities that were agreed by all relevant parties.

Question 10: Deferred implementation will allow for additional preparatory measures. What suggestions do you have for testing Sheltered Rent?

No comment

Question 11: How do support services predominantly in sheltered and extra care accommodation get commissioned in your organisation or local area?

- By local authority (upper tier) **Yes**
- By local authority (lower tier)
- Through the local NHS
- Other (e.g. nationally). Please name.

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Question 12: We believe the sector can play an important role in driving forward improvements in outcomes and value for money, for instance through joint commissioning and sharing of best practice. What role can the sector play in driving these improvements forward?

Services need to be commissioned based on what is required rather than what providers want to provide and this will help to achieve the required outcomes that need to be identified within the needs assessment and strategic plans.

In regard to value for money, this is complex and guidance should be clear about who we are achieving value for money for, is this the individual organisation, the Government or the public purse. If some public sector organisations had better preventative services which can be low cost, many people who become in need of expensive support services wouldn't have needed these services but there isn't always a financial benefit to that organisation to provide preventative services because they don't foot the bill for the expensive support services. For example if a social care service such as mental health or learning disability lifts their thresholds of who can receive their service, more people will become in need of expensive supported accommodation at greater cost than continuing to have provided low level support. The social care service will have reduced their costs but the costs for another organisation and the public purse increases.

Question 13: If you have any further comments on any aspect of our proposals for sheltered and extra care accommodation, please state them here.

Many housing providers who have extra care schemes only provide the tenancy management and rely on a third party to provide the care. It is unclear within the consultation how this situation would be managed from 2020.

The Government could be missing out on an opportunity to reduce bed blocking within hospitals by keeping the funding of extra care accommodation within the Welfare system. If providers were guaranteed funding the same as short term supported housing they would be able to keep some accommodation void to enable hospitals to easily and quickly discharge patients from hospital who either need short term extra care prior to returning home or long term extra care housing. Housing providers are reluctant to keep accommodation vacant if they are not guaranteed funding for voids. This would also create value for money for the public purse because residential care which is often used in these situations might no longer be needed.