

# Retirement Housing Service Specification



## Contents

Background	3
Management Structure	5
Hours of Service	6
Operational Service	7
Further Information	10

# Retirement Housing - Service Specification



## BACKGROUND

For more than 40 years Sheltered housing was at the forefront of Bield's housing services.

Whilst the core aims of Bield have changed very little over the years, the same cannot be said of the external environment. Significant change has taken place to the funding of housing support; regulatory requirements with respect to both the tenancy management and housing support service; and changes across our customer base.

As a leading provider of housing and care services for older people, we recognised the need to review and adapt our sheltered housing service. We needed to ensure we could meet the future needs and aspirations of older people seeking quality housing and tenancy support within a safe and secure community. Additionally we had to ensure these services were financially sustainable over the longer term.

In 2012 we commenced a 3 year programme, to modernise our existing sheltered housing and offer our newly defined Retirement Housing Service, the detail of which is set out within this service specification.

An integral part of the development process involved consultation with internal and external stakeholders and individual tenants and tenants' representative groups. A summary of the feedback highlighting is outlined on page 4.

The new service was first introduced across 19 developments on 1 April 2013. By 2015 a total of 79 developments across Scotland will deliver our new Retirement Housing Service.

# Retirement Housing - Service Specification

## A summary of the feedback is outlined below:

- The need to recognise older people as individuals and as such tailoring our services to meet personalised needs
- Our current and future tenants want quality housing suitable for the changing needs of older people with varying needs to minimise the need to move home
- Our tenants choose to move into our housing service as they want housing which is safe, secure and properly maintained, taking away the worry about their own personal safety, and property repairs and maintenance issues
- Where possible, older people want to stay independent and having access to local employees on site who can provide information and advice on a range of services including the provision of enhanced support and care services to encourage independence is invaluable
- Having access to the range of services delivered by a call receiving centre when there are no local employees on duty to offer that added peace of mind and reassurance
- Having access to social stimulation through on site social activities or support to engage in local community activities

## Taking account of the foregoing, our Retirement Housing Service will:

- deliver an enhanced tenancy and property management service to tenants, aligned to the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement, the Scottish Social Housing Charter and service standards as agreed with tenants in each of our developments;
- be delivered by highly skilled local employees, with knowledge and experience of tenancy and property maintenance services who will also offer locally based advice and information services to tenants (and where appropriate non tenants) relating to welfare benefits, housing options, and accessing a range of personalised support services either delivered by Bield or by external providers; and
- support the delivery of a range of development and community based activities aimed at reducing social isolation and supporting Bield's tenants to remain actively involved in the communities they live in.

No regulated housing support services are provided by local employees as part of the Retirement Housing Service. However some individual tenants may receive regulated housing support and/or care services delivered on a personalised basis from Bield or from external providers.

The key aspects of the management structure, minimum hours of service and day to day delivery of this service are outlined on page 5.

## MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

A Retirement Housing Manager and Retirement Housing Assistant(s) make up the core local team at each retirement housing development. Some developments are also supported by volunteers and casual workers. The Retirement Housing Manager provides support and supervision to all local employees and volunteers. He/she is line managed by an externally based Housing Officer who will manage a group of developments and local employees.

Housing Officers are based within one of our 3 regional Housing Operations Teams (located in Edinburgh, Dundee and Glasgow) who provide a range of support services to tenants, employees and internal/external stakeholders within their geographical area.

The Housing Operations Teams work alongside our Tenancy Sustainment Team and Housing Allocations Team. The Tenancy Sustainment Team provide a range of specialist support services to enable tenants to successfully create and maintain a tenancy, as well as exploring initiatives to enhance the quality of life of our tenants across our housing service. This includes personalised services to prevent tenancies ending unnecessarily and intervention where serious tenancy issues arise due to anti social behaviour or other complex problems. The Housing Allocations Team manage the allocations and voids process across our housing service, as well providing information and advice to applicants on our housing service and the applicants' prospects of housing with Bield.

The Retirement Housing Manager has responsibility for the overall management of the development and will ensure that tenants receive a high quality tenancy management and property maintenance service. The Manager will also ensure that all communal facilities offer a welcoming, secure and comfortable environment to tenants and members of the public, and will encourage

tenant involvement and engagement in making full use of these facilities, as well as consulting on a range of operational issues as they relate to the development. The Manager will also ensure that service standards relating to individuals' properties and communal areas are maintained.

The role of the Retirement Housing Assistant is to support the Retirement Housing Manager to deliver the Retirement Housing Service by undertaking a range of duties which ensures that all common areas are maintained to a high level of cleanliness. They will also support the Manager to encourage the use of the communal facilities by tenants and interested local residents and/or community groups as well as providing general assistance to tenants, contractors and other visitors on issues relating to the development or the service.



Further to this they are fully familiar with the use of development systems and equipment, and will assist the Manager to carry out and record regular checks and testing as per Bield procedures and timescales. The Assistant will also cover for the Manager when they are off duty.

## HOURS OF SERVICE

The hours of service will be dependent on the number of flats receiving the new service in each individual development. The guide below shows the **minimum hours of service** that tenants can expect local employees on duty in our retirement housing developments.

- **31+ flats**

Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm with cover provided by the Retirement Housing Assistant during the Retirement Housing Manager's lunch period.

- **21 – 30 flats**

Monday to Friday: 9am to 12.30pm / 1.00pm to 5pm. There is no cover during the ½ hour Retirement Housing Manager's lunch period.

- **11 – 20 flats**

The Retirement Housing Manager will be on duty Monday to Friday 9am to 12.30pm. Our Retirement Housing Assistant will be on duty when the Manager goes off duty at 12.30pm for around a couple of hours each day Monday to Friday. Please note that the actual number of and arrangement of hours for the Retirement Housing Assistant will be determined locally to meet the needs of smaller developments of this size.

No overnight responder services are provided as part of this service. However all Bield tenants will have warden call systems and/or telecare equipment linked to Bield Response24 (BR24), our call receiving centre, when there are no local staff on duty. Some tenants may also benefit from out of hours responder services delivered by external agencies such as the local authority.

Through local consultation with tenants, some developments may receive on site services 7 days per week, subject to affordability and tenants' choice.

## OPERATIONAL SERVICE

Key aspects of the day to day service include:

### Enhanced Tenancy Management

**Local employees are responsible for:**

- providing advice and assistance to new tenants to enable them to settle into their new home;
- carrying out periodic visits to tenants properties to undertake designated tasks to offer advice on tenant issues, and to ensure equipment and fittings are safe and secure;
- offering advice and support with regard to welfare reform and other benefit issues and to ensure that all tenants maximise their income to avoid financial hardship.
- managing minor tenancy issues relating to the use of the building, use of the communal facilities and neighbour related issues;
- offering advice and support regarding Bield's The Sure Call Service (see page 8 for further information), telecare, physical aids, adaptations and social care. This includes the provision of information regarding newly developed, personalised services delivered by Bield;
- liaise with appropriate Officers within Housing Services where personalised, intensive support is required with regard to housing options advice, tenancy matters or care/support needs.

### Property Maintenance and Security

**Local employees are responsible for:**

- reporting and monitoring the progress of reactive repairs which occur within individual properties and across communal areas;

- on site liaison with contractors undertaking reactive, cyclical and major repair works;
- checking and testing service equipment;
- dealing with local property emergencies;
- regularly inspecting the development to ensure it remains safe and secure, and taking action where issues arise;
- managing a range of locally based health and safety tasks relating to the development.

### Allocations and Void Management

**Local employees are responsible for:**

- assisting with local marketing initiatives to increase demand across our developments,
- carrying out inspections of tenanted (where notice of termination has been provided) and within empty properties, recommend works required to meet Bield's minimum letting standard, and/or action required to increase demand for individual void properties,
- undertaking accompanied viewings with applicants who have been made an offer of a tenancy;
- undertaking the full sign up process for all prospective tenants;
- supporting tenants where alternative housing options are required or where the tenant terminates their tenancy;
- offering general housing advice to members of the public on Bield's services.

# Retirement Housing - Service Specification

## Emergencies

Tenants will continue to use the emergency pull-cord within their flat or communal area, or use their individual pendant if they have any emergency.

Local employees will continue to respond to any immediate emergencies that arise for tenants and visitors to the development when they are on duty. They will assess the situation, contact the appropriate agency on a tenant's behalf, and remain with the tenant (if that is what they wish) until the emergency service or a family/carer has arrived. Thereafter the tenant or their family/carer will require to access ongoing support directly from appropriate health or other agencies if this is required.

## Community Alarm and Telecare Services

BR24 provide assistance to tenants through telecare equipment directly linked to the centre and also when local employees are off duty.

Within retirement housing, tenants will be offered our daily contact service called "The Sure Call Service". This service is optional for tenants and provides re-assurance through a daily automated call to either a tenant's home telephone or their mobile telephone, whichever is preferred. The time of the call will be agreed with each individual tenant taking up the service. Tenants can also choose to have this every day or on certain days of their choice. If a tenant does not respond to the first 2 automated calls, BR24 will contact local employees when they are on duty to check on the welfare of the tenant. Out-with on duty hours, BR24 will contact the tenant's keyholder(s) or named contact.

This service will continue to operate alongside the development based warden call system. There is currently no charge to tenants within retirement housing for this service.

Where this service is unable to meet the tenant's individual needs, the Retirement Housing Manager will be able to provide advice on alternative support options including other forms of Telecare. In discussion with BR24, Telecare can be provided by Bield to tenants to offer additional safety and security features within their home. Where additional care and support is also required, the provision of equipment will be considered within the context of an overall care review process.

A video providing further information on The Sure Call Service is available to view at: <http://www.bield.co.uk/Response24/The+Sure+Call+Service>

## Home Adaptations and Mobility Equipment

The Retirement Housing Manager will provide information and advice on how tenants can access aids and adaptations for their home.

## Rent and Welfare Benefits

Tenants' can seek advice and information from the Retirement Housing Manager or Housing Officer if they have a query about their rent or welfare benefits. If the queries are of a more complicated nature our Welfare Benefits Officer (a member of the Tenancy Sustainment Team) can offer specialist advice and support to individual tenants.



## Neighbour Problems

If tenants have been unable to resolve a neighbour problem by discussing their concerns with their neighbour or feel unable to, they can speak to the Retirement Housing Manager who can provide advice or assistance as appropriate to the issue. And if required they can seek additional support from the Housing Officer or Tenancy Sustainment Team.

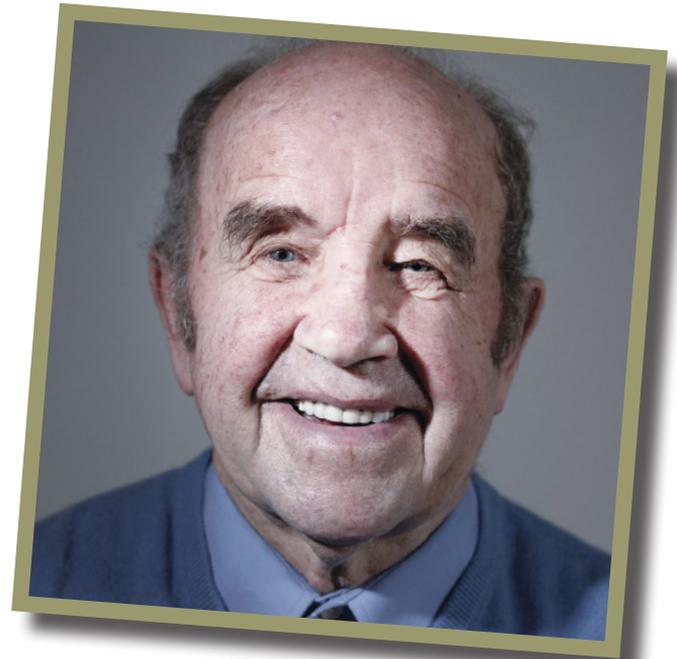
## Social Activities

Maintaining and developing the range of social activities held within our Retirement Housing developments is an important aspect of the service.

Although local employees do not have a “hands on” role in participating in activities such as preparing food for lunch and breakfast clubs, they have an important role in assisting tenants to take part and enjoy activities within their developments.

Local employees will help to set up tables and chairs for social events, encourage and advise tenants on how to set up social committees, and offer advice on arranging and funding new activities.

The Retirement Housing Manager is also involved in the recruitment and management of volunteers and has an important role in promoting the use of communal facilities by tenants and members of the wider community.



## Cleaning and the Management of Communal Facilities

**Local employees will:**

- manage all communal facilities to ensure they are safe, clean and secure;
- promote the use of communal facilities by tenants and externally across the local community;
- support the development of community based initiatives hosted within Bield’s developments, and as appropriate manage these activities; and
- work with other Bield colleagues to recruit volunteers and to raise funds to support existing and/or new initiatives.

## People Management and Administration

The Retirement Housing Manager is responsible for all development based administrative systems and the management and support of local employees including casual workers and volunteers.

## ACCESSING THE SERVICE

People aged 60 years and above can apply directly to Bield to be considered for one of our retirement housing developments. Across some of our developments we may consider people below 60 years of age where a local lettings initiative has been developed relating to this individual development. Further information on how to apply for housing and information on individual developments, including variations to the age criteria, can be found on our website [www.bield.co.uk](http://www.bield.co.uk)

## PAYING FOR THE SERVICE

Tenants within retirement housing pay a rent, service charge and where applicable, a heating or energy charge. Tenants do not pay a housing support charge. Local employee costs are split between basic rent and service charge costs to reflect the apportionment of time spent on specific service activities.

Following service redesign from our Sheltered Housing to the new Retirement Housing Service, rent and service charges were set at the same level as the charges which applied to the Sheltered Housing service or lower.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

**For further information about this service please contact:**

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