

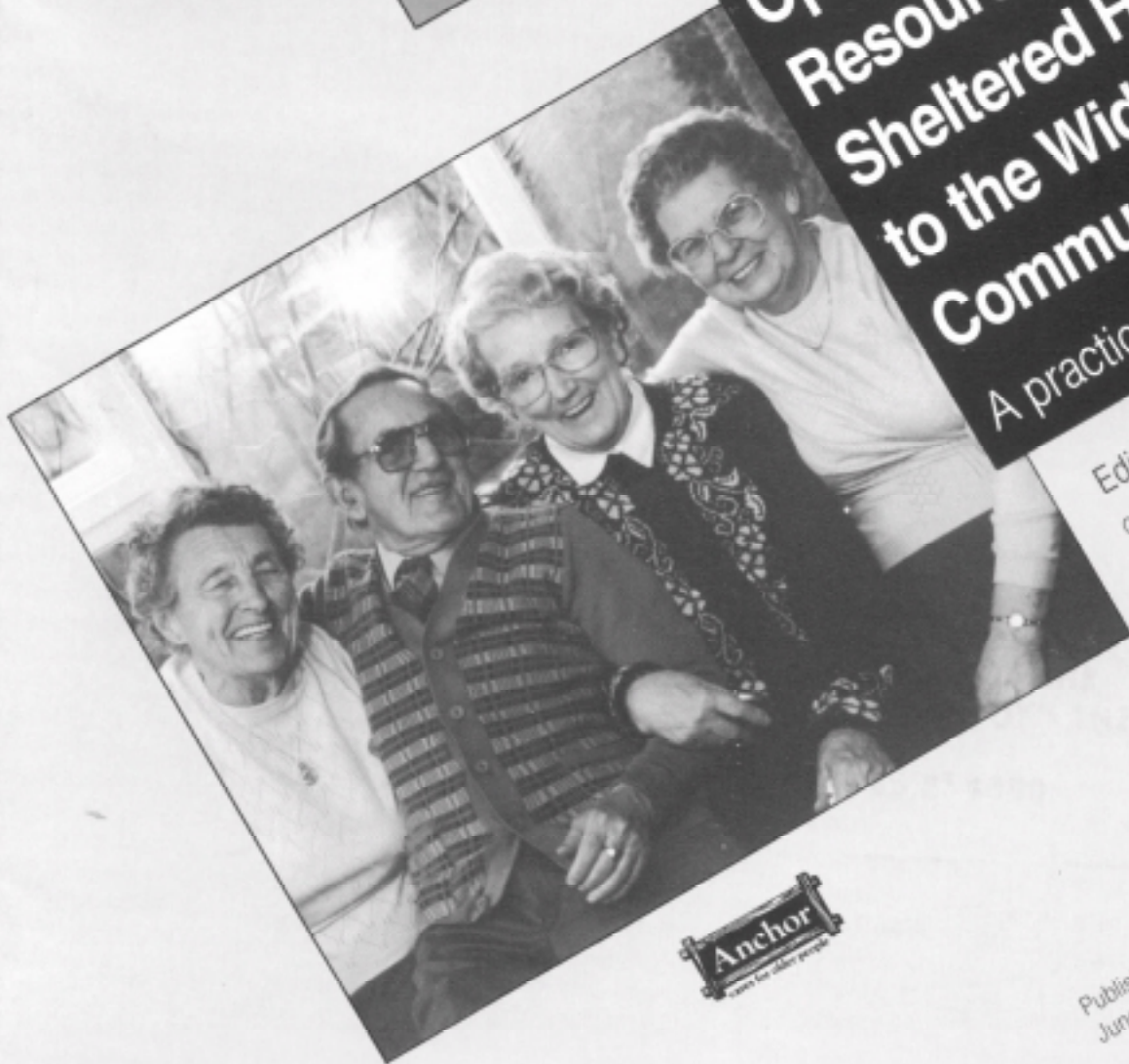
Anchor Studies 3

A n c h o r
s t u d i e s

**Opening up the
Resources of
Sheltered Housing
to the Wider
Community**

A practical guide

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Moyra Riseborough

Anchor

Anchor is the leading charity providing housing and care for older people in England. This housing and care is provided through sheltered housing for rent and special Housing-with-Care for very frail old people. We also organise community initiatives including Staying Put help to older homeowners in difficulties, and look for new ways in which older people can be helped.

Since its work started in 1968 Anchor has built more than 600 sheltered housing schemes throughout England and now has 25,000 tenants. Anchor has its central office in Oxfordshire with divisional offices in Altrincham, Bradford and London, and fourteen other local offices.

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Foreword

The principle of opening up the resources of sheltered housing to the wider community is not a new one for Anchor or its tenants. For many years we have put our own resources into building larger kitchens linked to the common rooms so that luncheon clubs can be run both for Anchor tenants and other older people in the local community.

Many tenants' groups in Anchor schemes have themselves run coffee mornings, bingo and other activities where again they have opened the scheme up to other elderly people living nearby. Many of our wardens have wanted to make sure that communal facilities - lounges, hairdressing and so on - built largely or totally with public funds are used for maximum benefit and in consultation with tenants, and have, as you will see from this report, run a wide range of events and activities.

Anchor celebrates this broader concept of sheltered housing as outward looking not inward looking and as a resource to the local community as well as Anchor's own tenants.

This report reflects some of our work to build on the community use of sheltered housing. It highlights the need to balance community use with that of protecting the rights of Anchor tenants to quiet enjoyment of their homes.

We welcome the opportunity to share our experience.

Peter Fletcher
Director of Corporate Policy,
Marketing & Public Affairs

Introduction

This guide looks at how the resources of sheltered housing are being made to work better in the true spirit of caring in the community. It draws on the experience of Anchor Housing Association tenants and officers who have opened up the resources and services in their sheltered schemes to others in the community. It is a practical guide which has identified good practices and it provides examples of models that Anchor has found useful. Hopefully tenants and officers in other social housing organisations will find these useful as well.

Why the guide is needed

The guide was produced for four reasons. Firstly, sheltered housing schemes are often well designed and accessible to people whose mobility is restricted. Their features include good access, comfortable lounges, adapted toilets and bathrooms. Tenants in sheltered housing often host social and leisure activities, from keep-fit to bingo, which can be made available to others who do not live there.

Secondly, tenants in sheltered schemes are part of the community too. Many sheltered schemes were built with public subsidy. There is a responsibility, therefore, on the part of social housing providers and their tenants to share the resources of sheltered housing with others who need them.

Thirdly, the Anchor experience shows that its tenants have benefited enormously from involving the community in activities based in sheltered housing. As a result Anchor has been able to offer more tenancies to people in housing need. Other older people in the community have also been able to exercise their choice to stay in their own homes while using care, social and recreation services in nearby Anchor schemes.

The final and fourth reason concerns good practice. Anchor has experimented with the community use of sheltered housing for several years. As a result considerable experience has been built up. The guide, therefore, draws on the best aspects of practice so far.

Structure of the guide

The guide is broken down into five sections. These are

- 1 Auditing the services and social activities that existed
- 2 Community care needs review: Appraising sheltered schemes
- 3 Assessing the needs and wishes of tenants and others in the wider community
- 4 Consulting tenants
- 5 Reviewing the community use of sheltered schemes so far. Projects and comments from tenants, service users and Anchor officers.

Section 1 begins with auditing what existed already. Reference here is made to the diversity of formal and informal arrangements, and to services which were running in partnership with social and care organizations during 1992/93 in Anchor.

Tables in this section provide examples on the recording of audits. Audits of services, facilities and amenities are illustrated for individual sheltered schemes. In addition a table is shown which uses a simple framework for the purposes of comparing information about a number of schemes.

Section 2 goes on to look at how information about the services needed by people can be collected. This is referred to as a community care needs review. A table in section 2 illustrates the results of the community care needs review together with results from the previous appraisal in section 1.

Section 3 looks at the views of tenants in sheltered housing schemes. It discusses their wishes *and* needs. What tenants think is obviously of paramount importance and their views must support the expansion of existing services or the wider use of what exists already. The section, therefore, discusses the pros and cons of opening up sheltered facilities from the point of view of tenants. A 'model' framework for the purposes of consulting with tenants

is included in this section. A model which covers the main points to be considered in a service level agreement is provided too. This may be particularly helpful to tenant groups who wish to be involved in partnerships with housing providers and external service providers.

Section 4 discusses health and safety requirements which have to be considered in order to make some initiatives work, for example, luncheon clubs.

Finally, section 5 sets out the outcome of a review carried out recently by Anchor on the community use of sheltered schemes after a policy to encourage this had been in operation for over a year. The section provides examples of community care and social/ leisure projects initiated in Anchor sheltered schemes. It also provides comments from tenants, users from the community and Anchor officers on the experience so far of opening up sheltered housing to others in the community. The comments speak for themselves.

Auditing what already exists

The diversity of activities available in sheltered schemes means that it is difficult to generalize about anything without having detailed knowledge about activities in individual schemes. The purpose of the audit is, therefore, to describe and record the details on existing provision. The audit involves collecting information on services and activities. Some services may be organised by external organisations whereas others may be organised by tenants. Attention in the audit is also given to the amenities and facilities in individual sheltered schemes. Amenities includes the provision of rooms for certain activities, such as a communal lounge, a games room or a hairdressing salon. Details about the access arrangements in schemes are also collected in relation to the amenities in schemes, Access in this sense refers to the suitability of schemes for wheelchair users and for people whose mobility is restricted.

Approaches to audits

An audit may be done in several ways. The housing provider could, for example, ask a group of officers to form an audit working party. Housing officers may record the information that is needed and return this to someone who will be responsible for collating it all. Tenants may also wish to carry out audits on their sheltered scheme together with or separately from, officers.

Recording the audit

Anchor used the working party approach. Housing officers and scheme wardens were responsible for collecting information about sheltered schemes. Some officers also carried out discussions with groups of tenants. The information collected from each scheme was then collated so that the working



party obtained an overall picture on the provision of services and activities, and the amenities in each scheme.

Examples of audits on individual sheltered schemes are shown in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1, therefore, records the services and activities in a mythical sheltered scheme called Azure House. Table 2 records the amenities available there.

As can be seen from Table 1, some services and activities are less well used than others. The lounge is used most frequently to hold social activities or for the

delivery of services. There are no organized activities in the lounge on Monday afternoons or on Tuesday mornings for example. There are also no activities recorded at week-ends. The hairdressing room is only used once a week.

Turning to Table 2 some amenities are suitable for people who are wheelchair bound and for those with poor mobility. However, others are not. The kitchen in the lounge is not suitably equipped at present to deal with food preparation. The laundry room (which is free of charge to tenants) does not appear to be suitable for use by others. The reasons are that it is

Table 1 Example auditing services and activities

Audit services and Activities Azure House Category 2 sheltered: 40 units 1-2 bed flats 60 tenants (18 frail)

Service/Activity	Bingo on Wed/ Friday evenings	Quiz. Tues. p.m.	Library (books delivered once a week to lounge)	Chess group Tues. evening	Keep-fit Monday a.m.	Wed. and Fri. Luncheon club 10 am-2 pm	Hairdresser Mon. 2-4 pm
Location	Lounge	Lounge	Lounge	Lounge	Lounge	Lounge	Room specially equipped
Attended by no. Of tenants	8-17 on average	8-14	6-7 use this	6	16	6	8
Attended by no. of others	6-7	2-3	None	None	None	10	None
Provided by	Tenants	Tenants	Library Service warden co- ordinates book requests for tenants	Tenants	Local authority Instructor	Social services department	Local hairdresser
Charge to tenants	£1 and 30p for tea/biscuits	30p for tea/ biscuits	None	None	50p a session	Free if on I.S.* £1.50 for rest as above.	Same as low cost Hairdresser for Over 60s

*IS = Income Support

Table 2 Example of recording sheet used to record amenities

Audit: Amenities Azure House Category 2 sheltered

Amenity	Lounge/meeting room	Lounge/kitchen	Garden/paved patio area	Room equipped for hairdressing	Laundry
Access Standards	Excellent and easily approached by wheelchair users	Poor	Excellent – level surface with raised flowerbeds	Poor access – at the end of sharp corner	Good
Standards for use eg. not suitable for people with poor mobility	Excellent – see above has handrails	Not suitable for good preparation – suitable for re-heating food using approved equipment	Excellent standard	Not suitable	Not suitable for people in wheelchairs – controls too high. Too noisy to be used in the evenings
Comments		Kitchen could be improved for community use	A good place for a fund raising barbecue or special birthday party	Room could be improved by removing the outer door	Washing machines and dryers could be replaced cyclically with more appropriate equipment Used very heavily not suitable for non-tenants



already used heavily during the day and tenants do not use the laundry room at night because the noise affects other tenants living close by.

Eight of the tenants living at Azure House are very frail. The housing provider in this instance may want to consider the benefits of holding a luncheon club on more than one day a week in the near future. In addition the need for a luncheon club may grow over time as more tenants age. However, since the kitchen is not currently suitable for food preparation the housing provider may have to consider other options, for example, working with a partner agency which provides ready to heat meals.

Assembling and making sense of the audits

Table 3 provides a partly worked example on the use of a simple framework to compare the services and

facilities in a number of schemes against a range of questions. The questions in the example shown here were chosen to identify particular days or times when services occurred. This led on to an analysis of the future possibilities for community use.

Spreadsheet packages lend themselves well to this sort of comparative work. However, where tenants are involved they may want to use the simple framework in Table 3. In previous work with tenants in Anchor it has been found that day or half day workshops using someone acting as a facilitator to lead the discussion have been helpful. Initially comparisons and main points are noted on flip chart paper. These are transferred to a mock-up grid on a flip chart sheet, using the framework in Table 3. The eventual results can then be transferred to A4 paper so that everyone is able to have a copy of the workshop outputs on the audits.

Table 3 A Comparison framework

Azure House (1)	Clarence Villas (2)	Dorothy Eden Court (3)	Edmund Hall House (4)	Freebody Place (5)	Mandela Gardens (6)
Bingo/Quiz Library/Chess Keep fit Hairdressers Luncheon Club	Luncheon cub Chiropody Gardeners club				Service Activities
Lounge/Kitchen Garden/ Hairdressing room/ Laundry room	Small meeting room Lounge Laundry room Courtyard				Amenities
Lounge	Small meeting room Lounge				Locations most used
Hairdressing room	Courtyard				Locations least used
Lounge Hairdressing room	Lounge Courtyard				Possibilities for more use is named locations
Mon 12.30 am (6) Tues am. eve (4)					Times/days for More use
Hairdressing room Useful for health/ Chiropody					Ideas and comments

(The numbers in brackets were used as identity numbers for each scheme.)

Summary points: Section 1

- Audit what exists already. Services, activities and social events should be recorded in each sheltered scheme.
- Audit the amenities and access arrangements of each scheme. Record comments on the standard of amenities and include views on future possibilities.
- Compare what is available and identify possibilities for the future by looking at the extent of existing provision in a number of schemes.

After all the information has been assembled from the audit exercise a number of patterns should emerge. The comments and ideas should provide clues about possibilities for future use of sheltered facilities and amenities. These clues will be put to good use in the next stage outlined in section 2. This involves comparing what is known about the needs and wishes of tenants and others in the wider community and appraising the usefulness of sheltered schemes to meet needs and wishes.

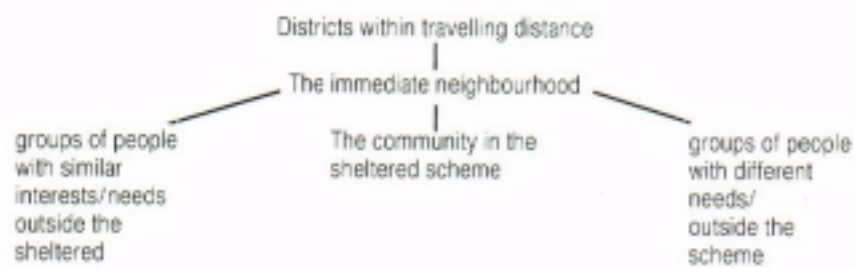
Community care needs review: Appraising sheltered schemes

Section 2 provides suggestions on how to carry out a community care needs review. It goes on to compare information about community needs to information collected previously on sheltered scheme services, activities and amenities. Together the comparison appraises possibilities for the future.

First of all though a basic question has to be asked. Which 'community' is going to be reviewed?

As the diagram in Table 4 shows there are at least two communities, that is, tenants living in a sheltered scheme and people who live elsewhere. Beyond that there are lots of permutations, Anchor decided to focus on older people with similar interests and/or needs to those shared by tenants. The geography of

Table 4 The 'Community'



a district was defined in relation to the immediate neighbourhood and in relation to the ease with which older people outside the scheme could travel there. The availability of public or other special needs transport were key considerations in determining which communities of older people were likely to be involved.

Getting information on needs

The next question concerns how to collect information on needs for services etc.

Generally, this sort of exercise relies on:

- what individuals say themselves about their needs; and
- what carers, other individuals and service providers say about the needs of particular groups of people.

Tenants

A postal survey of tenants could be useful but there are lots of alternatives to choose from depending on the sort of information that is being looked for. You may, for example, want to target particular sheltered schemes which are known to house very frail tenants. A postal questionnaire might not be very useful in this case and one to one interviews could be used instead. Anchor carried out face to face interviews with a representative sample of tenants using a broad range of questions to structure the interviews.

Other People

As far as the needs of other people in the community are concerned it will be necessary to identify these in consultation with social and care organizations. For example, Age Concern, WRVS, the Leisure and Recreation Department. Local community and social groups including local churches may also be prepared to pass on their views about needs in the area to housing providers doing community care reviews.





Table 5 Possibilities after a community care needs review

Name of sheltered scheme	Views/needs of tenants	Others in community	Comments on location
Azure	10 tenants are very frail. Luncheon club x 1 a week needed. Chiropody once a month a possibility	Luncheon club would be of interest to social services. Chiropody a good idea say the health centre	Bus service poor. Social Services would provide transport for lunch club. Chiropody not possible.
Clarence	Tenants want exercise classes	The Darby and Joan club are keen to try out exercise classes	Excellent location near town centre
Dorothy Edmund	Tenants are all pretty fit, exercise classes would be popular	A stroke club in the area would like to join in keep-fit activities	The stroke club volunteers would organize transport
Freebody	Non denominational Sunday service Wanted	Local churches say other older people would be interested	On a steep hill but has good bus services
Mandela	Some tenants are very frail – care services are needed	Community centre on a nearby estate have identified local needs	Location is good and is near bus stops

It may be possible to organise a survey in conjunction with some local organisations or to use previous survey information collected by another organisation in the area.

After information has been collected on community care needs a list of possibilities should emerge. Table 5 illustrates how the needs of tenants in five sheltered

schemes and those of other people in the community are comparable.

Summary points: Section 2

Section 2 has looked at doing a community care needs review and at appraising needs against the

services or activities available. A number of questions were asked in order to do the review. These were:

- Which Community?

Tenants?

Others - Who?

- What are the needs of people in the chosen community for services?

- How will the needs be identified?
- What interest or demand exists for social and leisure activities?
- Who/which organisations support this need/interest or view?

Finally, the appraisal involved comparing what was known about needs and wishes in the 'community' order to suggest possible future outcomes.

Consulting tenants

Preparation

In Anchor's experience discussions with tenants about expanding the use of their sheltered scheme to others require careful preparation. A number of issues need to be addressed and tenants will usually require time to think about issues put to them. Tenants will require certain safeguards. They will want to know what the direct benefits or disadvantages are to them. Tenants will certainly want to know more about the groups in the community that may be targeted as potential sheltered scheme users.

The discussion that follows examines each of the points mentioned above more closely. Next the discussion turns to the sort of framework that might be necessary for consulting with tenants. A 'model' framework is suggested as a basis for housing providers to draw on. At the end of the section discussion turns to 'model' agreements.

Consultation issues

Housing provider policies

Consultation with tenants on any matter necessarily requires housing providers to be able to state their policies and agendas on relevant subjects. The use of sheltered housing by the wider community is no exception. Anchor has taken a policy decision which outlines the Association's intention to pursue the wider use of sheltered housing by the older community wherever needs for services and activities exist. This means that two things have occurred. The first relates to newly built schemes and the second concerns existing sheltered housing.

New schemes are designed and let on the basis that the communal amenities will be used by a wider community. Care is taken to ensure that the schemes have good access arrangements. Anchor is also experimenting with panels of tenants drawn from existing schemes whose role is to advise on the design of the scheme from a consumer point of view.

Tenants of existing schemes have been informed that Anchor is pursuing a policy to make better use of schemes by the wider community.

As a result consultation with Anchor tenants on proposals about specific initiatives around the community use of their schemes takes place in the context where Anchor's policy is very clear. This is not to say that tenants views are not taken seriously since they most certainly are. Tenants are also involved at every stage in the process. Moreover there have been occasions in existing Anchor schemes where particular proposals have not been practicable because tenants oppose them. The circumstances are rather different in new schemes since tenants accept the offer of housing in the knowledge that the communal amenities will be used by others.

Ultimately then, in consulting with tenants Anchor's policy favours the community use of sheltered schemes and their intention is to involve tenants in order that the policy is implemented.

The following discussion, therefore, largely relates to consultation with tenants in existing rather than in new sheltered schemes.

Needs and wishes

Tenants should be asked to consider the evidence gathered so far on tenant needs and wishes in the scheme and in the wider community. For example, so many people have said that they need or want a particular service or facility. This is a factual matter. Discussion should focus on clarifying the information presented if it is not clear already. It should be made clear which community has expressed needs/wishes and how many. For example ten tenants and twelve other people. It should also be said who the 'others' are likely to include.

Impact on tenants and the scheme

Tenants should be asked for their views on how they think a particular service or activity will affect the 'feel' of the sheltered scheme. Tenants will have views on the possible advantages and disadvantages to themselves and others who could be using the scheme. Advantages include the benefits to tenants. These may be financial as well as life enhancing. People in the community would also benefit as a result.

Financial benefits

Certain financial benefits arising out of a wider use of facilities may appeal to tenants. Charging external service providers for the use of the lounge, for example, should be discussed if this is relevant or possible. Sheltered scheme service charges paid by tenants could be reduced in this way as well.

Leisure, social and support benefits

Other benefits may include a new range of social activities for tenants and/or other people in the community. Health promotion and keep fit are popular with tenants. Support services may improve the quality of life to tenants in a sheltered scheme and to other people. Tenants may welcome the opportunity to make a difference to the support services available in the area. There are other possibilities too which are much broader. For example, choirs and drama groups which need premises for rehearsals may also provide entertainment and new leisure opportunities for older and young people.

Examples of projects and activities help to stimulate discussion. The views of tenants in sheltered schemes where community involved projects are already based may also be useful. External

organisations who are involved in the delivery of services or activities could be approached to provide speakers to talk to groups of tenants about the work that they do. Section 5 later on provides examples of projects and comments from a selection of people about their experience on the community use of sheltered schemes.

Safeguards and standards: Charges and service agreements

Tenants should be encouraged to express their views on the way in which certain safeguards and standards can be brought into play. A common concern amongst tenants, for example, is the fear that they will be responsible for the wear and tear on the furniture in lounges or common rooms in sheltered schemes. As a result tenants may believe that their service charges will be increased to cover extra costs,

This is a serious issue. Anchor has devised a charging procedure which involves costing standard amenities, charging for the use of utilities and building in amounts to cover wear and tear. Other housing providers may want to develop similar procedures.



The scenario below provides some indication of how tenant concerns about the cost of wear and tear can be dealt with to everyone's satisfaction.

The wear and tear scenario

Charlie Care Group - a local charity - has approached Besmouth Housing Trust with the proposal to hold twice weekly day care sessions in a sheltered scheme lounge. Tenants living in the scheme are initially opposed to the proposal because Charlie Care Group are not able to afford to rent the lounge. However, after a grant is given from social services to cover wear and tear as it arises, tenants are more willing to consider the proposal.

Tenants may want to ensure that there are other safeguards. For example:

- safeguards over security in the scheme
- safeguards over who will be responsible for the service/activity on a day to day and overall basis
- effective ways of obtaining redress if something goes wrong.

A 'model' framework. Tenant consultation on the wider use of sheltered housing

Obviously almost all social housing and care providers have existing consultation mechanisms in place and it is best if familiar consultation practices are followed. The situation is rather different where tenant groups want to take on the process of consulting with other tenants. The framework set out here, therefore, provides a series of approaches which should add to the existing expertise of housing providers *and* tenant groups.

A model framework

A model framework should involve consideration of the following:

- statement by the association of its policy and strategy on sheltered housing
- the time-scale for consultation
- what it is that is being proposed in principle
- informing tenants

- obtaining tenant views in principle
- next steps:
Involving tenants in working up the details of an agreement
Reviews after a period of operation.

Timescale

Tenants require sufficient time to listen to, read and discuss information but the period for consultation should not be too long because people will lose interest.

What is being proposed

Proposals should set out clearly what it is that tenants are going to be consulted about. An in-principle proposal is simpler to present initially. However, tenants should be informed at the same time that they will be involved in working out any details later if they agree to consider a proposal in principle. The example below illustrates how one group of tenants presented a written proposal to other tenants. A meeting was then held for all tenants to discuss the proposal.

Proposal to tenants from Charlie Care Group

Tenants are asked to consider the following proposal from Charlie Care Group. Charlie Care Group has asked if tenants are willing to consider allowing the Group to hold a luncheon club in the Azure House lounge one Monday a week.

Charlie Care Group would offer the luncheon club service to 25 older people living locally. There would also be eight places reserved for Azure House tenants. The proposal could, therefore, benefit tenants and older people in the community.

At this stage tenants are being asked to consider the proposal in principle only. If you agree the details will be worked out with you at a later stage. Information about Charlie Care Group is attached.

Informing tenants

Information has to be given with the proposal. Some tenants are likely to want more written information whereas others prefer to receive information verbally - especially those who have sight difficulties. It is important to ensure that information is delivered to everyone in a sheltered housing scheme. Allowing two to three weeks for the process of information delivery is probably sufficient. A meeting at the end of

that period at a time that is convenient for most tenants could then be held.

Obtaining tenant views in principle

People attend meetings for various reasons and these frequently do not include those intended by meeting organizers! Allowing time at the end of meetings for people to raise other matters is, therefore, a good idea. The purpose of the meeting is to assess whether or not there is interest in the proposal from tenants, in principle. Further information will be requested by some or possibly all tenants. Having a representative from the proposer organization at the meeting will help tenants to make an in-principle decision.

It must be made clear to tenants that there are benefits and disadvantages to them arising out of the proposal. Safeguards and standards should be discussed. However, as has been said already, the details which would form the basis of a working agreement can be worked out with tenants later on.

A show of hands, a ballot or other methods may be used to obtain tenant views on the proposal in principle. Consideration has to be given to democracy and it should be made clear at the outset how tenant views will be counted and how decisions will be made. Efforts should be made to obtain the views of tenants who are not able to attend meetings because they are away or not well enough on the day the meeting is held.

Next steps

Information should at the very least be fed back to tenants. The extent to which tenants are involved afterwards in working up the necessary details to take the outline proposal further, depends on tenant relationships with their housing provider. It may be possible, for example, for tenants to nominate representatives to joint steering group made up of representatives from all the potential partner organizations. Alternatively, tenants may be able to meet collectively with representatives from the housing provider organization in order to express their views. Regardless of the method chosen to involve tenants, the role that they are playing in the process should be communicated to all the tenants who live in a particular scheme, and to external (potential partner) organizations.

Where tenants are fully involved in working up the details of proposals it should be noted that the process takes time. Tenants may benefit from looking at previous agreements for similar services. Tenants should decide on a number of details for themselves. These include:

- the length of time a particular service will operate before it is reviewed
- the purposes of a review and who will carry it out
- how tenants can liaise effectively with the partner organization/s.

Tenants will also need to discuss the role that the housing provider is able to play in the future to make the proposal work,

Standards, agreements and specifications

Tenants should be asked to think about standards as well as the more obvious safeguards. Standards may include clearing up after a luncheon club, for example.

A particular service or facility need not last for ever. Tenants may want to consider a trial period, for example. Alternatively they may want to think about agreeing to a particular service in their sheltered scheme for six months. Tenants may then review the situation together with other service users and providers after a period of operation.

Putting safeguards and standards together into one document means drawing up a service agreement that reflects the wishes and views of tenants. Agreements can also help to promote the well-being of everyone. Particular points to consider here are complaints procedures and liaison arrangements to make the relationships work well throughout the agreement period. A spirit of partnership is essential and it is important to recognize that goodwill is not something that can be enshrined in a document. Documents can, however, set out rights, obligations of all parties as well as standards and specifications to which services are expected to be delivered and ignore the importance of goodwill. Trust between the partners to an agreement is essential for effective working so every effort should be made to establish trust and to retain it.

Good practice

- Anchor has decided as a matter of good practice that tenants should be involved as far as they wish in deciding the details above.
- It is good practice to prepare agreements that state matters simply. Documents should therefore, be in plain English as far as possible.

A model agreement

The model shown here covers the main considerations that should be addressed in an agreement.

What

- What the service/activity seeks to do and details of the service.

This should include statements which describe the groups of people who will benefit from the service and the standard to which the service will be delivered.

When

- Details of the time, day and length of time the scheme will be used by others.

Responsibilities

- Which organization - who if possible - will be responsible for certain duties as part of their responsibility/ies. There may be a number of responsibilities divided between partners, for example, monitoring arrangements.
- Details of duties attached to services/activities standards and safeguards. These include insurance and health and safety matters including arrangements to comply with the law.

Charging

- Charges to be paid by the service organization and the dates when payments will be due.

Equal opportunities

- Details should be provided on the equal opportunities policies and procedures that will be in place to protect and promote all users of the service.

Insurance

- Responsibilities for insurance including indemnities for particular insurance cover should be set out. Details should include which partner is responsible for particular aspects of insurance/indemnity charges.

Liaison

- Who - named officers - will be responsible for making the agreement work/trouble-shooting and for dealing with potential problems. Clarity is needed to ensure that liaison activities occur at specific, regular times.

Complaints /redress and user views

- Methods should be set out for tenants and other service users to make their views heard, to make complaints and to obtain redress.

Monitoring

- Statements should clarify how the service is going to be monitored throughout, what is going to be monitored and who will be responsible for this.

Review

- When a review will be carried out, for example every six months or annually. The purpose of the review should be set out. For example, a review may seek to evaluate the effectiveness and importance of the service from the perspectives of all the stakeholders, including users. Details also need to include a statement on who will do a review and who will be involved in discussing the outcome of the review.

Ending the agreement

- The agreement should provide details of the circumstances which would cause the agreement to end. The circumstances could include, failure to pay charges, repeated late payment of charges, negligence or a failure to maintain standards after this had been noted and time had been given for the situation to improve. The circumstances which would cause an agreement to end should be considered from the point of view of all 'partners' ie:

*tenants
service users
service provider
housing provider.*

Summary points: Section 3

This section has discussed consultation with tenants on the use of sheltered housing by people in the community. It suggested that housing providers should state their policy objectives. As a result everyone will understand the direction in which the housing provider wishes to go. The consultation issues discussed in the section relate to existing tenants of sheltered schemes. The issues for newly built schemes may be different depending on policy directions decided by housing providers in relation to community use of sheltered housing.

Proposals for community use need to be made clear but discussions with tenants on the basis of proposals in principle might be a useful way to start. Other points included:

- the importance of tenant views
- the need for tenants to have adequate information
- the need for safeguards to protect tenant interests
- the benefits to tenants and to others as a result of involving others in the community
- a model framework for consultation
- working up details that can be included in service agreements and involving tenants in the partnership
- good practice points where involving tenants is concerned
- a model for agreements.

Section 4 looks at health and safety issues. These are matters which have to be examined by external service providers and/or housing providers.

Health and safety

Where the wider community will be using facilities and services in sheltered housing schemes it is likely that improvements will have to be made to existing health, safety and insurance/indemnity policies and practices. This section sets out the main issues in Anchor's experience and it provides some suggestions on ways forward. However, it is by no means an exhaustive guide and further advice should be obtained from experts.

Insurance

Insurance has already been referred to in the model agreement contained in section 3 but adequate insurance cover is obviously vital. External service providers may have to provide details of current insurance cover to satisfy the underwriters of insurance policies who provide insurance cover to

housing organizations. Indemnities may also be necessary to protect key members of staff and consumers who are not tenants in case of claims of accidental injury. Insurers may also require housing providers or external service providers to improve or adjust existing facilities in order to meet appropriate standards. These standards are usually laid down in health and safety legislation including regulations for dealing with food hygiene. Professional advice will be necessary and external service providers may want to be involved in a joint insurance cover discussion with advisers.

Health and safety: Food

Local authority Environmental Health Officers will want to inspect the premises of sheltered schemes if food preparation is going to be a regular activity provided for a wider population than tenants,



Anchor has had some experience in what could be described as the dos and don'ts of food preparation where using kitchens in sheltered schemes are concerned. Some examples are summarised on the pages which follow.

Example 1: Communal kitchen used for coffee morning

1. Scheme managers/wardens must check that the kitchen is in a good, clean condition. Milk and other perishables should be kept for as short a time as possible and never beyond their 'best before' date.
2. A thermometer must be kept in the refrigerator and checked regularly.
3. A straightforward cleaning schedule and checklist with daily, weekly and quarterly cleaning jobs must be prepared identifying the jobs and who will do them.
4. The scheme manager/warden must have an appreciation of food hygiene.

Example 2: Communal kitchen used for a luncheon club that is run by an outside organization

1. External service organizations should be advised of their responsibilities. These include training staff who will be responsible for food handling and preparation. Untrained volunteers should only prepare food under supervision and they ought to be aware that eating food in the kitchen is not allowed. Food handlers should wear suitable clothing including hats.
2. Food stuff should be consumed on the day the club meets. Leftovers should be disposed of.
3. Procedures for cleaning waste disposal, food storage and preparation should all be written down. Periodic checks should also be carried out by the outside organization.
4. It is recommended that the scheme manager/warden checks that the kitchen is in a good clean condition before each luncheon session. There should also be a check afterwards.

Example 3: Kitchens used for food preparation where scheme managers/wardens are actively involved

1. The scheme manager/warden must be a trained and "certificated" food handler (ie to BS5750 or alternative standards).
2. The procedures for cleaning, waste disposal, food storage and preparation must be written down. They must be produced by the housing organization on request and the procedures should be regularly audited.
3. The scheme manager/warden must ensure that untrained volunteers (which may include tenants) only prepare food under supervision of a qualified food handler.
4. Records of food deliveries and temperatures, storage temperatures and observation of 'best before' dates in both refrigerators and freezers need to be maintained.
5. Once procedures are established it is recommended that the local authority Environmental Health Officer should be asked to review them as soon as possible.
6. Premises must be registered with the local authority Environmental Health Department.

Physical improvements

It is possible that some changes may have to be made both to the amenities and to the standards of premises used for food preparation. Again Anchor has had some experience of working with Environmental Health Officers to make necessary changes. A summary of useful information is provided below.

Environmental health: Requirements

Requirements are likely to involve meeting specifications on:

1. Design and layout - Food handlers should be able to carry out their duties safely and with sufficient working space. Therefore it is important

to look at access, storage facilities, equipment used, washing-up areas, refuse storage, and cleaning equipment.

2. The working environment - The working environment must be safe to work in. Organizations should consider existing floor coverings, walls, and ceilings to ensure they can be easily cleaned. Floors need to be checked for dangers, such as slipperiness or faults. Doors and windows should be easy to clean and they must comply with the fire authority's requirements.
3. Services - Organizations must ensure adequate ventilation for food preparation. There must be suitable lighting. The water supply must comply with relevant water quality regulations. There must be sufficient separate hand basins which can be used by all food handlers. Sinks used for preparing/washing food and utensils must be provided to commercial catering standards.

There must be a suitably located wc with wash-hand basin for food handlers to use. The safety of electrical and gas supplies and equipment must be checked regularly. Any kitchen equipment used must be checked for safety on a regular basis.

Other matters and getting help

Other matters include fire protection, arrangements and procedures to handle first aid and procedures to report accidents and incidents.

Existing arrangements in sheltered schemes will be affected by the wider use of sheltered schemes but

help is available. Fire Service Officers will offer advice and suggestions on requirements about fire safety standards, Training courses for food handlers are commonly available in colleges of further education. Members of staff in housing provider organizations with first aid qualifications should be able to make helpful suggestions as well. Advice on other issues raised here may also be obtained from the local social services department.

Summary points: Section 4

This section has provided some information on the main issues relating to health and safety, Issues include:

- possible needs to upgrade floor-coverings, equipment and the physical amenities of buildings
- cleanliness
- schedules for cleaning and checks to ensure schedules are observed
- training staff to observe necessary rules and practices for health and safety
- complying with the law on health and safety
- obtaining advice from appropriate organisations.

Section 5 looks at examples of initiatives and services. Comments from people who have been involved in opening up sheltered housing facilities to the wider community are also included.

Section 5

Reviewing the experience on the community use of sheltered schemes so far

Largely positive so far

Between the end of 1993 and mid 1994 Anchor's officers carried out a review of the results of encouraging the use of sheltered schemes as a resource for older people in the community. The review demonstrated that social housing providers have a positive contribution to make to the well being of the community.

Numerous innovative projects have been developed which enhance the quality and extent of community care services to older people. Partnerships have been formed between groups of tenants and leisure organizations have provided new opportunities to tenants and other older people that would otherwise not exist. The University of the Third Age (U3A), is one of those organisations but there are many more that could be mentioned.

It has, of course, taken valuable officer time to pursue projects, to consult with tenants, to involve them and to keep tenants involved. Officers have, therefore, had to develop closer relationships with tenants. Closer relationships have also had to be formed between Anchor officers and social and care organisations. Charging policies have had to be developed and agreements worked out with many partners over service specifications and delivery. However, Anchor tenants have benefited and so have other older people in the community.

Most importantly a greater understanding about older people's needs and wishes has been achieved in Anchor and within other social/care organizations as a result of Anchor's commitment to the community use of sheltered housing. The good practices of social housing organizations concerning the involvement of tenants has been extended to other users, particularly to other older people in the community. Anchor's experience shows that social



housing organizations can, therefore, influence the provision of social and care services and ensure their community delivery.

Negative aspects

Against all of the positive things one can say about the community use of sheltered housing there are also more negative aspects. These include the opposition of some tenants to any community usage of a sheltered scheme and partnerships that fail.

Anchor has chosen to phase in the use of sheltered schemes as community resources since long established tenants in some schemes are very opposed to changing the arrangements they are used to. However, most tenants have been convinced after careful consultation and after safeguards have been put in place to protect their security. New schemes are let on the basis that community use will occur provided that the scheme is in a suitable location and that services are proven to be needed.

Failed partnerships with organizations providing social or care services are inevitable in some instances. However, Anchor has developed monitoring arrangements and procedures over time which have reduced such instances of failure to the minimum.

Examples of projects in Anchor

Returning to a positive theme again, a number of different projects have been developed in Anchor sheltered schemes. The examples illustrated here include home care services, movement to music, preventative health care and extending warden cover from a sheltered scheme to other older people in the neighbourhood.

Example 1: The sheltered scheme and home care

The local social services department base a Home Care team in the sheltered block seven days a week from 8.30am to 2.00pm and again from 7.00pm to 8.30pm to put frail tenants to bed. It has been agreed with tenants that the Home Care staff should have the use of the laundry each morning. The warden has permission from the social worker to instruct Home Carers in an emergency. Freshly cooked or frozen meals are prepared at the scheme for tenants and for delivery to the community. Older people from the community can also collect meals if they wish. This helps to take pressure off the Meals on Wheels service.

Social services pay £20 per month for the electricity used in preparing meals seven days a week. This arrangement was formalised in a recent Social Services Day Care Agreement

Closer relationships between tenants, other community users, Anchor and social services have developed as a result of the project.

Example 2: Movement to music

This 'movement to music' class was formed in Autumn 1990; it is held every Monday, between 3.30pm and 4.30pm in the lounge of a sheltered housing scheme.

The classes are run by a fully trained member of the Keep Fit Association who has taught keep fit, aerobics and chairaerobics, for eight years. Classes are adapted to suit the particular requirements of groups from those who are fully fit to the disabled.

Tenants benefit physically and mentally. They enjoy each other's company and that of outsiders who attend. Ages range from early seventies to mid-eighties. Many have mobility problems and some are frail.

Recently the class took part in a keep fit festival which everyone enjoyed.

Numbers in the class vary between 12 and 18.

Example 3: Preventive health care – the MOT clinic

The clinic is run by community care nurses once every two months on a Monday and lasts for three hours, it is held in a comfortable lounge in a sheltered scheme.

On the first visit patients are registered and a case sheet is created to record details of medical history, weight, blood pressure etc.

This type of clinic has a number of advantages:

- it alleviates some pressure on G.P.s by removing the necessity for appointments for minor ailments and non-medical problems
- it provides an informal but confidential atmosphere which encourages people to attend who would not otherwise visit their G.P. for one reason or another
- it allows regular monitoring of patients at risk e.g. high blood - pressure and allows professionals to pick up other warning signs
- it gives patients access to help and advice on other care, non-medical matters and social services facilities
- It makes it easier for referrals to be made to G.P.s and other medical services
- It has established regular liaison between health care providers and the warden.

Example 4: Extending warden cover to others in the community

Anchor was asked by a local authority to consider extending Anchor warden cover to bungalows in the neighbourhood where a number of older and frail local authority tenants lived.

The Anchor warden and tenants in the sheltered scheme considered the proposal. Some concerns were raised but in principle it was decided that the idea was a good one. A six month trial was agreed.

It was a gradual process for the older people nearby to venture into the Anchor scheme at first but they received a warm welcome. The community users have the use of the lounge, public toilets, telephone, and where there are emergencies (eg power cuts) access to the communal kitchen. The warden observes, listens and assesses just as with scheme tenants. Emergency situations are responded to but Anchor tenants take priority and if the warden is dealing with an Anchor tenant the central control system can send a mobile warden to deal with problems in the local authority bungalows.

The successful merger of interests has given the Anchor scheme a place in the community. More events and leisure activities now take place in the scheme which Anchor tenants and older people from the community attend. Local shops support by making prizes and contributions for bingo sessions and other fund raising events.

Tenant and 'community' users views

Most comments made by tenants and other older people who have used services and attended activities in Anchor sheltered schemes are very positive. Some tenants have been moved to write poetry! (see the contribution from Maud Thomas from Bolton in the inside back cover of the guide). Keep fit, dancing and health promotion activities are popular with tenants and other older people. Just how popular is demonstrated by comments such as these:

"I feel and look better", chairbound woman aged 70 doing chairbics.

"It's great fun and keeps me in trim", a woman tenant attending a weekly keep-fit class.

"It helps me to take better care of myself", a man who attends the M.O.T. clinic and suffers from diabetes.

Tenants and older people have enjoyed making new friends as the following comments about the luncheon club at an Anchor scheme illustrate:

"I look forward to it. It's a real treat", a tenant who often gets lonely.

"It is more than a meal – it's a trip out", an older woman from the neighbourhood who is housebound.

"It gets me out – it's much better than the four walls at home.

Of course, luncheon clubs are also providing food as well as company. It is too much to hope that the food provided will always be tasty and interesting but the comments from these three luncheon club users below show that they appreciate and enjoy their lunches

"It's always good food", an older woman living in a leasehold for the elderly scheme.

"I like the variety. I would not bother to try new things on my own", a male tenant.

"I like cooking but this is a change", a woman tenant.



Day care services in some Anchor schemes can help tenants and others to feel better in spirit as well as body. One older man who suffers from depression said:

It's the company I like - I would go mad if I didn't come here".

Another day care user pointed out that she had learnt to do new things through going to the Anchor scheme and she had rediscovered that she enjoyed meeting other people.

"The craft work is smashing and I really enjoy coming here."

A disabled tenant appreciated the provision of breakfast because it took her a long time to get "going" in the mornings.

Carers benefit from the services in Anchor sheltered schemes too. Day care and luncheon clubs, for

example, provide them with a break from their everyday responsibilities. Anchor schemes have also hosted regular meetings to enable carers to come together and to share information that is useful to them. Comments received from carers suggest that Anchor's facilities and amenities make a lot of difference to them and to those that are being cared for. For example, one woman said that the sheltered scheme her mother attended once a week was:

"Homely, warm and a pleasant place to be".

Another carer referred to the good atmosphere:

"There's a lovely atmosphere in the sheltered housing block - more homely instead of the clinical one you find in some places".

Many carers are older people themselves. Two women carers who are both in their seventies described the difference that the provision of services

at the Anchor scheme in their neighbourhood had made to their lives:

"I look forward to coming here because it's a break for me and my husband. I can relax for a while and he gets all the help he needs".

"It gives me the chance to go to college one day a week and to do the shopping on the way back. My husband wanders off if he is not supervised and it is hard to get a sitter when we need one".

Views from Anchor officers

The comments made by Anchor's officers show that the work to achieve a wider use of sheltered housing by the community has been worthwhile. For example:

"We have the beginning here of a really lively community", Anchor warden.

"The tenants enjoy getting together with people from outside the scheme and they enjoy it too", Anchor Housing manager.

"It means that our tenants get better services and so do other older people", Anchor deputy warden.

However, some Anchor officers had initial misgivings as this comment shows:

"I thought tenants would make my life very difficult. Some did but only at first", Anchor Housing manager.

The misgivings held by officers concerned the views of tenants who did not want particular services or activities to be held in their schemes. However, Anchor has pursued the implementation of policies to do with the community use of sheltered housing in a

sensitive way which involves tenants as far as possible. This has helped to convince most tenants that their interests and needs are being taken seriously.

Summary points: Section 5

Section 5 has provided examples of live projects operating in Anchor sheltered schemes which bring tenants and other older people from the community together. Comments from tenants, community users and Anchor officers have also been included:

- the experience so far has largely been positive
- there have been some negative aspects and the section discusses how Anchor has responded to these
- projects have been innovative, as the examples show
- tenants and others in the community who need care services have welcomed the availability of these locally
- Anchor sheltered schemes are comfortable, friendly and pleasant places to be
- Anchor tenants and community users have made new friends and have enjoyed themselves
- sheltered schemes have developed into lively places
- despite some initial misgivings Anchor Housing officers maintain that the wider use of sheltered schemes by the community has brought benefits to all.

The Plant Club and Me

What does the Plant Club mean to me
I'll put on my thinking cap let me see
The Plant Club is refreshing, like a lovely cup of tea
I look forward to the meetings - they mean a lot to me

I don't get out much to see nature at work
Inside this burdened body an outdoor girl does lurk
The Plant Club makes my horizons wide
It brings the green outdoors inside

It means being with nature lovers every one
Who enthral us all with the things they have done
Grown from seed, pricked out and re-potted
Like me with green things quite besotted

Taken cuttings, cherished them and potted on
And loved these plants every one
The members are enthusiastic and so keen
To learn and love things all green

We are kindred souls so now you know
Why I love the Plant Club so.

By **Maud Thomas**, *an Anchor tenant from Bolton.*



Opening up the Resources of Sheltered Housing to a Wider Community is a practical guide which follows the steps taken by Anchor Housing Association to make sheltered housing a base for the delivery of responsive community care services and lively social activities. The guide focuses on the methods used by Anchor to gain tenant support for the wider use of sheltered housing. It looks at the way information was collected on the needs and wishes of the community for services, and at how tenants were consulted and involved in the decision making process. The guide discusses the good as well as the less good things that tenants, other community users of services and officers have said so far on their experience of using sheltered housing as a community resource. Since this is a guide, examples of models and checklists as well as good practice points are provided. These may be copied by other social housing providers and tenants if they wish.

The guide has been written at a time when the distinctions between housing, support and care services in sheltered housing are increasingly blurred. The guide, therefore, stems from the changes that are occurring in sheltered housing as a result of care in the community. However, it also underlines Anchor's fundamental commitment to strengthen the relationships between housing and social care.

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