

## **Sheltered Housing Consultation Survey**

### **Introduction**

- 1.1 The Housing and Safer Communities sheltered housing consultation took place between 18 November 2020 and 3 January 2021.

### **Rationale**

- 2.1 This consultation was undertaken to satisfy the Housing Act requirement to involve tenants in decisions which would affect the service. Tenants would be asked about the future of sheltered housing services including their views on the Scheme Manager role and the introduction of a combined service charge.

### **Method**

- 3.1 Every tenant in sheltered housing would be posted an invitation letter from Cllr Okereke, Cabinet Member for Housing, along with a consultation guide, a paper survey and pre-paid envelope. Tenants would be encouraged to complete the survey on-line using an access code but could also complete the survey with the letter and return it using the pre-paid envelope. A copy of the consultation guide and the survey can be found in appendix 1 & 2.
- 3.2 The consultation was not limited to just tenants as family members, carers, interested parties and voluntary sector services were also invited to take part through online methods.

### **Supporting the consultation**

- 4.1 Planning for the consultation was inhibited by Covid-19 restrictions and furthermore so by the second national lockdown which took place between 5 November to 2 December. These restrictions ultimately meant that the planned face to face surgeries which were to be run alongside the consultation could not take place as it represented a greater risk to the health and safety of both tenants and staff.
- 4.2 In recognition that tenants living in sheltered housing favoured speaking to officers directly, it was imperative that a method was found to ensure that tenants could still speak to someone about the proposals therefore the plan was revised to include a dedicated voicemail hotline service and further specialised support for anyone who needed it.
- 4.3 The hotline service enabled tenants to call at any time and leave us a message for us to call them back. Tenants would receive a call back by a member of the consultation staff within 24 hours and they would have helped with answers to queries and provided with support to take part in the survey online.
- 4.4 As well as the support given by the dedicated consultation staff, independent support was provided to 17 tenants through the borough's advocacy services provided by Metro GAVS and Mind. In addition, the consultation guide and survey were translated into Nepali to cater for this fast-growing demographic living in sheltered housing.
- 4.5 Given the trickier than normal circumstances around Covid-19, the consultation was extended for an additional 2 weeks to allow more time for advocates to engage with tenants and to provide more time for other tenants to be involved following the sending of the reminder letter.

### **Response**

- 5.1 The survey was sent to all tenants in sheltered housing and of which 45% responded. Of those who took part 75% of surveys were by tenants while 25% were completed by someone else on the tenant's behalf. 83% of all who responded were retired, only 4% were employed (either part time or full time) and 5% were looking for work.
- 5.2 Only 1 response was received from the family members, carers, interested parties or voluntary sector services.

### **Supplementary response**

- 6.1 A petition was received from tenants residing at Len Clifton House signed by 32 people. The thrust of the document was to ask for the Scheme Managers to be retained and cited the following reasons as to why their continued support/service was required.

The contents of the petition would be considered in context with the results of the survey.

## **The results**

### **Scheme Managers**

- 7.1 Tenants were asked how often they interacted with the sheltered scheme managers.

**75% said that they interacted with scheme managers daily** (when they were on site). A further 14% said weekly. 6% said they never interacted with them.

Through open questions later in the survey some tenants referenced the daily contact as the daily morning call via the intercom which suggested it may not have been face to face contact.

- 7.2 The most common reason tenants contacted the scheme manager were:

Reason	%
<b>For signposting services (116)</b>	<b>30%</b>
For security (99)	26%
For general advice (98)	25%

Other reasons identified by tenants in the free text question included:

- Ordering and chasing repairs and maintenance (10 mentions)
- Support reading letters (4 mentions)
- Support form filling (4 mentions)
- Support in emergencies and life crises (4 mentions)
- Support with benefits (3 mentions)
- Contacting hospitals and doctors (3 mentions)
- General help (3 mentions)
- Supportive of tenants with dementia (1 mention)
- The Scheme Manager is rarely on site (1 mention)
- The Scheme Manager is too busy (1 mention)
- The Scheme Manager is not interested ( 1 mention)

- 7.3 Tenants were asked where they would normally go to find information or help and advice about living independently and **49% said the scheme manager** with a further 31% saying they would go to their friends and/or family first. Only 5% said they would the internet.

7.4 Tenants were asked whether they would consider not having a scheme manager service in favour of a reduced overall charge.

Response	Total	%
Yes	57	21
No	198	72
Not sure	18	7

The table above tells us that **72% were in favour of keeping the scheme manager service.**

7.5 The responses of tenants in relation to their reasons for their choice in 7.4. have been analysed for sentiment. Over 200 themes were noted and have been analysed. Feeling mentally secure in the knowledge of a scheme manager being available, was the most popular sentiment at about 20%, followed by the importance given to being able to access the on-site sheltered scheme manager service at 17%. Please see appendix 3 for more detail.

7.6 It should be noted that those tenants who generally supported the reduction of service charge in preference to the scheme manager service mostly did so without explicit reasons/comment in the open questions.

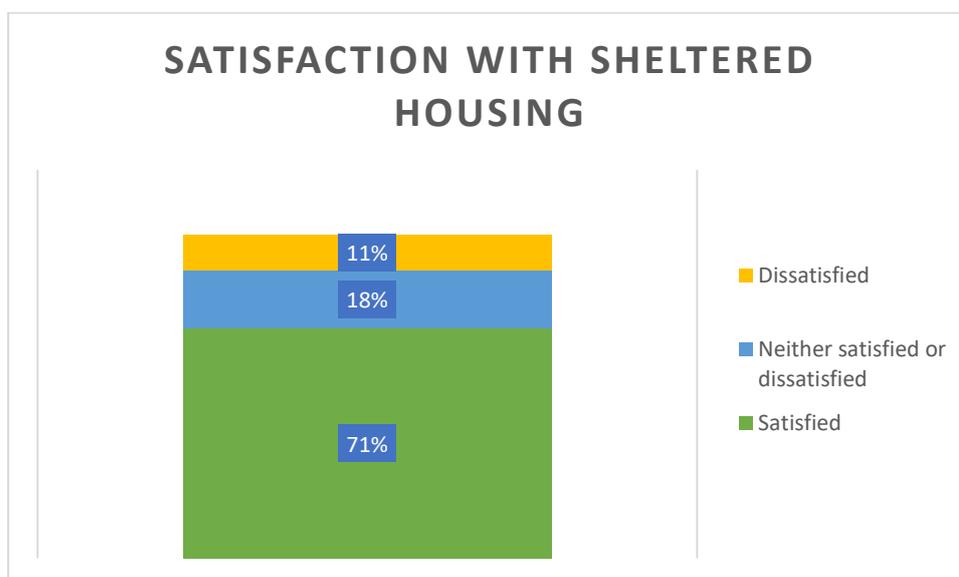
#### Digital inclusion

7.7 Tenants were asked how confident they felt using online services. **72% felt that they were unable to use the internet at all** and a further 16% were not confident in using online services.

7.8 Tenants were asked if they would be interested in additional support or training to help build confidence in accessing online services and support, **26% said that they would be interested** and a further 19% were not sure.

#### Satisfaction with current services

7.9 Tenants were asked how satisfied they were with current services. **71% were satisfied**; either satisfied (43%) or very satisfied (28%)



### Value for money

7.10 Tenants were asked whether they thought sheltered housing was value for money. **73% said it was value for money** and only 8% said it was not. The other 19% felt it was neither value for money nor was it poor value for money.

### Combined service charge

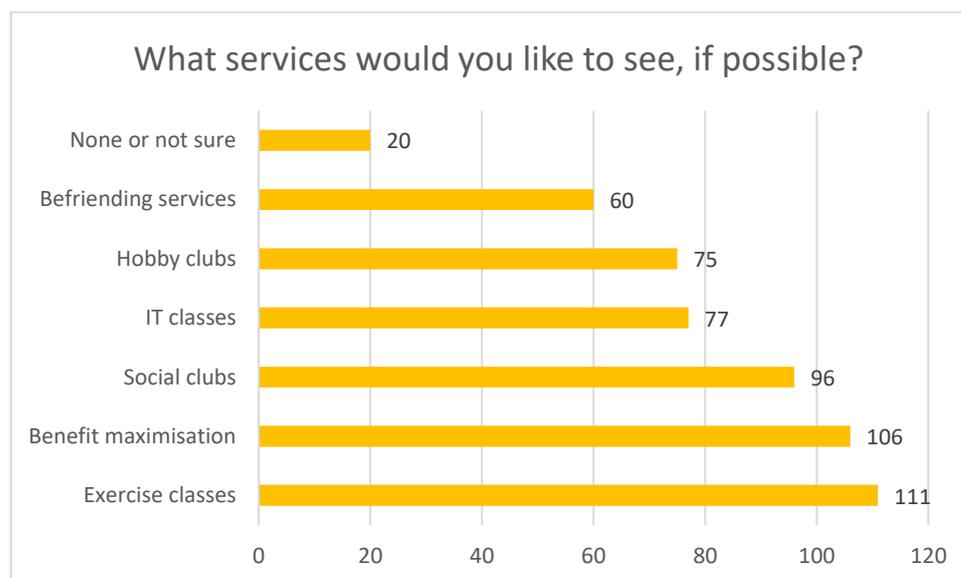
7.11 Tenants were asked whether they would support the proposal for introducing a combined service charge. **36% would support the combined charge**, with 41% saying that they were not sure and 23% opposed to the charge.

Response	Total	%
Yes	98	36
No	61	23
Not sure	111	41

**More people supported the combined charge than opposed it** however the largest group identified with 'not sure'.

### Suggestions for the future

7.12 Tenants were asked what other services they might like to see in the scheme. The chart below shows the number of responses to each suggestion



(545)

This table shows that exercise classes were requested most; representing 20% of all responses. This was followed closely by having sessions on benefit maximisation (19%) and social clubs (18%).

7.13 Tenants also made their own suggestions, here is a summary of these suggestions (none of which have been mentioned more than 4 times):

- A choir – communal singing in the lounge
- Healthy eating classes
- Adult education classes and other learning opportunities
- Shopping bus
- Day trips out (seaside, theatre and more)
- Indoor games in the communal area

- Communal tv for people to watch
- Form filling support
- Demonstrations of new equipment – like the new washing machines
- A communal exercise bike in the lounge

7.14 The final open question asked whether there was anything else that they wanted to say. A total of 118 comments were made. It should be noted that the majority of comments made were in support of the current service or an enhanced version of it. Those tenants who generally supported the reduction of service charge in preference to the scheme manager service mostly did so without explicit reasons/comment in the open questions.

7.15 The sentiments have been broken down as follows:

Sentiment	Total of comments
In favour of keeping the scheme manager service	44
Improvements required	24
Contentment and compliments	19
Preference to face to face service, fear of isolation and concern of digital exclusion	16
Non related issues	15
Lack of service	7
Other comments	4

For more information please see appendix 3.

7.16 The final consideration is to include the comments from the petition which was received from the residents of Len Clifton House. The document was signed by 31 individual residents.

A summary of their concerns are:

- Oppose the cutting back or total removal of the scheme manager service
- Rely on the scheme manager for conversation which cannot be replaced by technology
- The scheme manager and telecare are a necessity
- Disagree that the financial saving outweighs the benefit of the current service
- Tenants do not have technology to participate in digital methods, have not used the internet and some do not have the inclination to learn how to use it.

7.17 These results will be reviewed and a course of action determined based on the findings.