



Housing Support Service Brochure
Sheltered and Very Sheltered Housing

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Brochure is to advise you about sheltered housing and very sheltered housing provided by Castlehill Housing Association, how our housing support and other services operate and your rights and responsibilities as a service user.

WHO ARE CASTLEHILL HOUSING ASSOCIATION?

Castlehill Housing Association was formed in 1970 and is a non-profit making charitable organisation controlled by a voluntary Committee of Management. The Association owns and manages over 1800 properties in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and The Moray Council areas. This includes sheltered housing, very sheltered housing and amenity housing for older people, other properties suitable for single people, couples and families and shared ownership properties on a part rent/part ownership basis. Castlehill also provides a 'Care & Repair' service for older people in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council areas. Castlehill is registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator as a social landlord and is also registered with the Care Inspectorate as a housing support provider.



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WHAT IS SHELTERED HOUSING?

Sheltered housing provides independent accommodation for tenants in a warm, comfortable and secure environment. The accommodation is designed to recognise the particular needs of older people and in each individual property there is normally a living room, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom or shower-room with heating throughout. In addition to this, most sheltered housing schemes have communal facilities, including a communal lounge and kitchen, to allow tenants to pursue social activities together. A laundry is also normally provided for tenants use with washing machines and dryers and most schemes have guest room accommodation for friends or relatives of tenants.

In our sheltered housing schemes a housing support is provided for tenants by staff employed by Castlehill. The role of these staff is to provide housing and other support, to ensure the general welfare of tenants, to deal with any identified needs and to provide security. When staff are not on duty support is provided by the Regional Control Centre (RCC)/Community Alarm who can respond to any call made by a tenant through the alarm system and initiate appropriate action as necessary.

WHAT IS VERY SHELTERED HOUSING?

The accommodation provided in Castlehill's four very sheltered housing schemes in Banchory, Dyce, Mintlaw and Aberdeen is similar to that in other sheltered housing, including communal facilities. In very sheltered housing there are enhanced facilities in that tenants have access to daily meal provision in a dining room at each scheme and there are links to day care facilities in some schemes and access to other provisions such as assisted

bathing. Staff in very sheltered housing are on duty 24 hours each day to provide support for tenants. This support is provided in conjunction with individual care arrangements for tenants and recognises the needs and choices of individuals. Although Castlehill do not employ the staff who provide services in our very sheltered housing schemes it offers an opportunity for inter-agency working between Castlehill and the relevant Housing Support/Care providers who will give tenants information about their services. Very sheltered housing may also provide an alternative option to residential care or nursing homes for older people unable to live in their own homes who require more support and care than normally available in sheltered housing.

WHAT IS HOUSING SUPPORT AND HOW IS IT PROVIDED?

Housing support is a term used to refer to a range of services which are provided in a variety of ways with the aim to help people establish themselves and be able to continue to live in their own home. Currently the largest group of people who receive housing support are tenants living in sheltered and very sheltered housing provided by housing associations like Castlehill and other landlords such as local councils. Housing support is provided by the staff who work in our sheltered housing schemes, and all of these staff also carry out other administrative and management tasks associated with the operation of the scheme.

In our sheltered housing schemes we provide services with staff either on duty five or seven days each week. In the schemes where we provide a service seven days each week we employ a Manager and Relief Manager who are normally on duty seven hours each day. Staff duty hours vary between schemes i.e. from 8am to 4pm, 8.30am to 4.30pm or 9am to 5pm all

with a one hour flexible break for lunch between 12 noon and 2pm. As a tenant you will receive information on service hours from scheme staff.

In our schemes with a five day a week service we employ a Manager, who is normally on duty five days each week Monday to Friday from 9am to 1pm.

In our four very sheltered housing schemes at Dalvenie Gardens, Banchory, Victoria Grange, Dyce, Abbey Court, Mintlaw and Craigielea Gardens, Aberdeen, and our sheltered housing scheme at Richmondhill Court Aberdeen, housing support is provided by other agencies and they will provide tenants with details of their services.

People who use our services have housing and support needs. Priority is given to those people who are most in need of accommodation and the housing support services we provide. Prior to any allocation of tenancy being made we will carry out an assessment and consult with other individuals and agencies to determine the extent of housing support and other services which are required.

When you start your tenancy our staff will discuss with you the support and assistance that is available and complete with you a Housing Support Plan that records various information about you and your personal circumstances. The Plan will also advise as to how we provide our housing support service and record your specific housing support needs and choices. You will receive a copy of this Plan and it is reviewed regularly. As the Housing Support Plan and other documents contain confidential information we will keep them secure and only share the information contained in them in a need to know basis. The Care inspectorate who regulate and inspect our services have a legal right to look at Housing Support Plans to ensure that the service user is receiving services that meet their individual needs and choices.

Our staff will also advise you when and how they are available to assist you and how to contact them to maintain your tenancy through the range of housing support activities, examples of which are given below.

You may find that your need for support and assistance can vary from time to time, and staff will keep in regular contact to check that you are getting the support that you need.

The delivery of housing support services is defined by National Care Standards published by the Scottish Government which incorporate various principles and rights for service users. These include the need to respect the rights of service users, particularly for personal freedom, choice in daily living, dignity and self-respect, independence, privacy and confidentiality, protection from risk of abuse and harm, and exercise of free will.

There is an emergency call system installed throughout the scheme which allows two-way speech contact between tenants and staff when they are on duty. We can also provide a body worn 'pendant' to activate the call system to individual tenants who require one. This will be discussed when the Housing Support Plan is completed and at any time thereafter as required.

In responding to an emergency staff can gain access to any property with the use of a master key so it is important that you do not leave keys in your door lock or have a chain fitted as this will restrict such access. We will also ask you if there are other circumstances when you may allow staff to use their master key to allow access for others such as contractors. If so we will record this on your Housing Support Plan and subsequent reviews.

When our staff are not on duty the scheme will be connected to the RCC/Community Alarm where trained operators will respond to any call

made. At all times a response to a call will be made and appropriate action initiated as necessary. Further information about how this service operates is given below in the section on page 8 on 'What is Community Alarm and how does it Operate?'

SOME EXAMPLES OF HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES ARE:

- General counselling and support, including a regular check on your general health and welfare, reminding you about appointments with others, advising on the availability of more specialised support and care if required and other advice and support as necessary.
- Assisting with the safety and security of your home e.g. reminders if required about locking your door, and providing advice about fire safety and the safe use of domestic appliances.
- Providing and maintaining an emergency call/alarm system and responding to emergency calls made by yourself as necessary.
- Encouraging you to socialise with neighbours and others, including our staff, encouraging social activities within the scheme.
- Assisting you to speak to and liaise with other people, professionals and other agencies with an interest in your welfare e.g. GP's, Homecare, relatives etc.
- If you have a need, assisting in an assessment for adaptations to be done at your home to meet this need, and in arranging for these to be done.
- Advising or assisting in dealing with relationships and any disputes with neighbours and services available to help with this.
- Assisting in arranging minor repairs and servicing of domestic equipment and appliances.
- Advising or assisting you with benefit claims and other tenancy related correspondence.

Housing support services are available to ensure that tenants/service users can set up home and are able to continue to live independently. The needs of individuals will vary depending on a range of factors, and if these needs change housing support can change to meet them.

As a housing support service provider there are restrictions as to what our sheltered scheme staff can do. We are not in a position to provide personal care or administer medication and if this is required it will be delivered by Social Care or medical services. Our staff are also not able to be involved in the handling of services users' money and finances.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ALARM AND HOW DOES IT OPERATE?

When the Manager/Relief Manager is off duty they will switch the scheme alarm system 'off site'. This means that any call made on the system will go direct to the Regional Control Centre (RCC)/Community Alarm.

The Regional Control Centre is located at Frederick Street in Aberdeen. It is staffed 24 hours every day of the year by trained operators who can deal with a range of situations which may arise including medical and other emergencies.

When the pull cord has been activated by the tenant it sends a call through a dedicated telephone line to staff at RCC/Community Alarm. The vast majority of calls will be answered in less than a minute but if operators are busy with other calls it may be a little longer, but your call will be answered. The operator will be able to identify the caller because they hold information on all Castlehill tenants. They will respond to your call and ask you to explain why you are calling.

You will be able to have a conversation with the operator so please be clear and honest. They will then assess the situation and take appropriate action to deal with it. This may involve them calling a nominated 'resident contact' to assist, calling emergency services such as fire, police or ambulance or calling for medical assistance.

If you do not respond to them they will initiate appropriate action assuming that you require assistance. It is important to remember that the service provided by RCC/Community Alarm is primarily for emergencies, and should not be used if the situation you are calling about can wait until a member of staff is on duty. Similarly if you use the alarm by mistake please advise RCC of this or they may assume that you require assistance.

RCC/Community Alarm hold information about each tenant including name, address, telephone number, certain 'keyword' information e.g. medical or mobility and details of GP and resident's contacts. This information is input on their computer system which means that when you call they know who you are. When you move into your home our staff will obtain this information from you.

It is recommended that you have up to three nominated 'resident's contact' persons. You will need to check that the people you are putting on your contact list will be available and willing to be contacted in an emergency or incident night and day, when staff are not on duty. We will need to know their contact telephone numbers for both home and work, where possible, and also any mobile telephone number if there is one.

We also require the full name, address and status of the 'resident's contact'. This information will be kept secure and will not be given to any other organisation apart from RCC.

At the very minimum one 'resident's contact' will be acceptable. If you have any problems with this, please discuss this with scheme staff.

If there are any future changes to your 'resident's contact' details please inform scheme staff as soon as possible in order that records can be updated.

Scheme staff will also check if your 'resident's contacts' have a key to access your property and if not any action to be taken to address this. Although RCC are able to allow emergency services access to sheltered schemes, and to a master key to allow entry to individual properties, they are unable to do this for individual 'resident's contacts'.

Please note that this system is for emergencies which could include the following;

- a fall or other accident which requires urgent medical attention;
- any health problems which require urgent medical attention;
- an intruder;
- an assault where the Police need to be notified; or
- fire

If the situation is not urgent then please wait until scheme staff are back on duty. Always remember to notify scheme staff of any future changes to your 'resident's contact' details.

WHAT ARE THE CHARGES FOR THE ACCOMMODATION AND HOUSING SUPPORT?

Tenants living in Castlehill's sheltered and very sheltered housing are required to pay a monthly rent and service charge to the Association. This covers the cost of providing and maintaining the property and also services

such as the upkeep of communal areas and equipment. The amount of rent and service charges vary between individual properties and schemes since they are based on the size and type of accommodation and services and facilities provided and are reviewed annually. Further information about this is provided in the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement which every tenant receives when they 'sign up' for their accommodation.

The housing support service, which includes the majority of staff time in sheltered and very sheltered housing schemes and the provision and maintenance of emergency alarm, is funded by local councils who commission the service from Castlehill Housing Association and provide funding for this. The funding allows us to deliver our housing support services and contract agreements stipulate terms and conditions for the provision of such funding. Local councils are responsible for collecting any housing support charges due from individual tenants/service users and will contact tenants directly about this. These charges vary between different council areas and schemes, and are payable every four weeks. Details of contacts for local Council staff teams are provided at the end of this brochure.

WHAT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE TO MEET THESE CHARGES?

Assistance is available to individual tenants to help to meet rent and service charges payable to Castlehill through housing benefit which is administered by local councils. Similarly, financial assistance is available from local councils for the housing support charge. Councils will make a financial assessment of the circumstances of new tenants in relation to payment of the housing support charge and advise of the outcome of this and how much they will have to pay, if anything.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A TENANT AND SERVICE USER?

All tenants of Castlehill Housing Association receive and sign a copy of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement which sets out their rights and responsibilities as a tenant, and the duties and responsibilities of Castlehill Housing Association as the landlord. Further information is also provided in the Tenant's Handbook. In addition to this, as stated previously in this brochure, it is necessary that a Housing Support Plan is completed and agreed with all tenants as housing support service users. This sets out the services which we will provide to meet your needs and the terms and conditions on which we will provide them.

This Plan is required in order to comply with the principles of nine National Care Standards which have been developed by the Scottish Government from the point of view of people using housing support services. They are based on the principles of dignity, privacy, choice, safety, equality, diversity and realising potential.

The Standards describe what you as a tenant/service user can expect from Castlehill as a service provider, and focus on the quality of life that you experience in using this service.

HOW DO CASTLEHILL USE AND STORE PERSONAL INFORMATION ABOUT ME?

Castlehill retains all the information which you have provided to us including housing application form, assessment reports and correspondence. We also hold copies of letters which we have sent to you and any reports or other correspondence about your circumstances which we may have received from

other sources. In our sheltered housing schemes where we provide housing support services we hold individual Housing Support Plans for tenants/service users and subsequent reviews of these. Information about service users including name, address, date of birth, details of GP, any relevant medical information and details of nominated 'resident's contacts' is also provided to RCC/Community Alarm for their records in order that they can respond to any call for assistance made to them.

It is essential that we hold this information in order to provide you with an effective, efficient and consistent service and to ensure that our obligations to you can be fulfilled. We will ensure that your records are kept securely, they are kept up-to-date and accurate (providing this is within our control) and no unauthorised person can gain access to your information.

All Castlehill staff are also required to comply with our Code of Conduct in respect of Data Protection and Confidentiality and to ensure that all tenants/service users are treated equally and fairly.

HOW DO CASTLEHILL MANAGE RISKS AND ACCIDENTS FOR SERVICE USERS?

The Association has comprehensive Health and Safety policies in place for all staff and recognises the need to provide relevant training for all staff on health and safety issues. Castlehill is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment for its employees and living environment for its tenants/service users, and to ensure, as far as practical, that these persons and others are not exposed to risks to their health and safety in situations or premises within our control. Copies of our Health and Safety policies and procedures are available in all of our sheltered housing schemes and these are revised as and when necessary.

In all of our sheltered housing schemes fire notices are displayed in individual properties and in communal areas. It is important that tenants/service users are aware of these and what to do in the event of a fire as this can vary between schemes. Our staff will advise you on fire procedures and identify any specific issues or needs which you have with regard to this for future reference and action.

Our Health and Safety policies also require all staff to ensure that any incident, accident, dangerous occurrence or notifiable disease is reported and recorded in the appropriate way, and notified to their Line Manager at the earliest opportunity.

HOW IS THE HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICE REGULATED?

As a housing support service provider Castlehill is registered with the Care Inspectorate which is the national organisation in Scotland responsible for the registration, inspection and monitoring of housing support and other National Care Standards issued by the Scottish Government.

The Scottish Government have established nine Housing Support Standards which guide our service, and are used by the Care Inspectorate in monitoring the quality of our service.

The Care Inspectorate periodically inspects our service which will involve contact with tenants and our staff and following this an inspection report is published. This gives details about the service and may highlight any issues for action or improvement. Such reports are published and can be accessed by any interested person, including on our own website.

Local councils commission Castlehill to provide the housing support service, and also monitor that Castlehill is adhering to the terms of the contract. Local councils are also responsible for review of our housing support services which can also involve contact with tenants and our staff.

Castlehill staff working in sheltered housing also have specific procedures and systems to follow in recording the way they work with each tenant/service user. This includes reference to the Housing Support Plan and subsequent reviews and also keeping an ongoing and confidential record of housing support services and activities provided for the individual. These are checked by other staff from Castlehill who will also monitor that the Association's policies and procedures are being properly followed. Our policies and procedures are contained in our Staff Handbook, a copy of which is available in each of our schemes. If you wish information about individual policies and procedures, please contact our scheme staff or our Housing Manager (Sheltered).




Castlehill also recognises the importance of self-monitoring. This is achieved by regular contact between our Housing Manager (Sheltered) and staff in individual sheltered housing schemes by telephone, e-mail and meetings at schemes which take place at least three times a year. We also seek to consult with and gather information from tenants/service users and/or their representatives by means of questionnaires, meetings and discussions and take account of these before making decisions about changes in our services. We have a Tenant Participation Strategy which recognises the importance of involving tenants in the decision making process. Further information about these aspects of our service is available from our Housing Manager (Sheltered) who is based at our office at 4 Carden Place, Aberdeen.

WHAT IF I HAVE A COMPLAINT?



Castlehill is committed to providing high quality customer services. We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services. If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us. We have a complaints procedure which details what you can complain about, how you can complain, what happens after you have made a complaint and what you can do if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way that we dealt with your complaint. This includes the option to ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to consider your complaint but only after it has been considered through our complaints procedure. Further information and a copy of our complaints procedure is available from our sheltered scheme staff or our office at 4 Carden Place Aberdeen.

If your complaint relates to the Housing Support service which we provide you can choose to complain to us or the Care Inspectorate whose contact details are provided on page 17. You also have the right to make a comment or complaint about the housing support service you receive direct to the local councils who commission these services from us and whose contact details are also given on page 17.



The contacts for the Care Inspectorate are:



	Care Inspectorate Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY
	0845 600 9527
	www.careinspectorate.com



The North Region of Care Inspectorate also has offices at:

	Regional Office Johnstone House, Rose Street, Aberdeen AB10 1UD
	(01224) 793870

The contacts for local councils who commission our Housing Support services are:

	Aberdeen City Council Support Services, Communities, Housing & Infrastructure, Aberdeen City Council, Business Hub 1, Lower Ground Floor West, Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB10 1AB
	(01224) 523791

	Aberdeenshire Council Commissioning Team, Housing and Social Work, Unit 12, Blackhall Industrial Estate, Burghmuir Circle, Inverurie AB51 4FS
	(01467) 629034

	The Moray Council Commissioning and Performance Team, Moray Health and Social Care Partnership, Spynie Hospital, Duffus Road, Elgin IV30 5PW
	(01343) 567179