

Supporting People

Wishing you a Happy New Year from
all at Kirk Care, Hanover (Scotland)
and Bield Housing Associations

This issue of the Newsletter has the theme "Supporting People".

The aim of Supporting People policy is to provide good quality services focused on the needs of users, to enable vulnerable people to live independently in the community, in all types of accommodation. The Scottish Executive is responsible for implementing the Supporting People programme in Scotland.

The purpose of the newsletter is to keep the Black and Minority Ethnic Communities informed and updated of the new legislation and policies which can have impact on their lives.

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A Message from The Scottish Executive Supporting People Team

Supporting People is a new national policy which will be introduced throughout Great Britain on 1 April 2003 when responsibility for the planning and funding of housing support services transfers to local authorities. The Supporting People Budget can only be used to pay for housing support services, the council cannot decide to spend the money on other services. The initiative is aimed at making housing support services more responsive to people's needs.

Housing support is not about to change for the sake change. If someone is already getting housing support to help them live independently, and they are happy with this service, their service will not change. They will continue to receive the same service at no extra cost unless their circumstances change. People who pay for their housing support services through housing benefit will however notice a reduction in the amount of housing benefit they receive. They should not worry about this because the cost of the service will be met by the local authority.

If people do want to make changes to the housing support service they receive - Supporting People can help them do this. Some examples of housing support are:

- Help to ensure your home is safe and secure
- Assistance with arranging appointments e.g. with a GP, tradesmen, council department
- Help with filling in forms and claiming benefits
- Assistance with shopping and preparing food
- Help with general advice and support services that help you cope with living in your home
- Assistance with cleaning where due to individual circumstances tenants are unable to do so

Direct Payments is another new scheme and will give an even greater choice because local authorities must offer disabled people the money to buy their own housing support service from June 2003.

From April 2004 local authorities will have to offer direct payments to a much wider range of people to enable them to buy their own services. People will not have to accept direct payments if they prefer the local authority to provide the services for them.

Under the new arrangements, for the first time, the quality of housing support services will be regulated and providers will have to show that the services meet national standards.

The Scottish Executive Supporting People Team's view is that Supporting People is a fresh approach that will create new opportunities for older people and others requiring housing support services who can expect to receive good quality services which will more closely meet their needs in future.

How Glasgow City Council is Working for Supporting People

Glasgow is well underway in its preparations for the introduction of Supporting People and a multi-disciplinary team of officers based within the Housing Services department of the council are working hard to ensure that the various tasks are carried out in accordance with the timescales laid down by the Scottish Executive.

Glasgow City Council and NHS Greater Glasgow have joint plans and strategies for a number of Community Care Groups. The central aim of those strategies is to work together to meet the needs of Glasgow's most vulnerable people particularly to enable them to live as part of the community. In June 2002, Glasgow City Council gave approval for up to £30m of services to be put in place this financial year, this has resulted in new services being introduced - Older People and Homelessness services are two major priorities in Glasgow and the supporting people team are working closely with colleagues in Social Work Services and Health to identify other vulnerable people who may benefit from housing support services.

To assist in the preparation for the introduction of Supporting People, all Councils have in place an interim benefit scheme called **Transitional Housing Benefit (THB)** has been put in place to identify and calculate the cost of housing support services in the run up to April 2003. People who are assessed as requiring housing support and are currently in receipt of housing benefit are eligible for THB. This includes people who live in a council or housing association house, live in a hostel, supported accommodation or in a sheltered housing complex.

THB and in turn Supporting People will fund "housing related" support which is practical support, advice and assistance with day to day tasks associated with managing and maintaining a home.

The Scottish Executive requires that each Local Authority produces a strategic plan for Supporting People, this has been drawn up jointly by Housing Services, Social Work Services and NHS Greater Glasgow. As part of this plan the Supporting People Team are consulting with Housing and Support Providers and are developing various approaches to inform Users of services. The Glasgow Supporting People web site is about to go live and leaflets and posters have been distributed, the translation of these into a variety of languages is currently being progressed.

If you think you might need housing support or know someone who would benefit from this type of assistance you should contact the Local Authority in your area who will offer advice on how to apply.

The City of Edinburgh Council's Approach for Supporting People

The City of Edinburgh Council is devoting considerable resources to preparing for the introduction of Supporting People. A corporate team has been set up to lead on implementation of Supporting People. The Team's Priorities are:

- To ensure that providers have sufficient funding in place in April to continue to meet the housing support needs of service users
- To ensure that procedures are in place for individuals with support needs to access needs to access the services that they need
- To have an action plan for the implementing the programme in 2003/04 and developing the programme between 2003 and 2006.

The team is working hard to set up interim contracts with providers. This work will continue well into the new year. Amendments are being made to Councils payments system to ensure that they can make grant payments to all providers in April. However further guidance is awaited from the Scottish Executive to assist Council to price contracts.

Edinburgh Council are aiming to ensure a smooth transition to Supporting People. Any changes in how housing support services will be accessed will be discussed with providers. Council have held back on issuing information directly to service users as there were so many areas of guidance yet to be firmed up. This work will be taken forward in partnership with providers of services in the new year.

If you would like further information about Supporting People in Edinburgh, Please contact Elaine Scott, Supporting People Lead Officer, City of Edinburgh Council, Claremont House, 130 East Claremont Street, Edinburgh EH7 4LB. Elaine can be contacted on 0131-529-7562 or emailed at elaine.scott@edinburgh.gov.uk.



Scenes from the Housing For Older People Video

Supporting People Benefits Update

The implementation of Supporting People policy will introduce a new way of paying for housing support. The charges for the housing support services will no longer form part of the rent payment. Support charges currently form part of the monthly rent for all sheltered and very sheltered housing tenants. These charges will still exist, but they will be levied and collected by local Councils.

The good news is that a tenant receiving any level of Housing Benefit (even the minimum award of 50 pence per week) will not have to pay any housing support charges. So if you have not applied for Housing Benefit, please do so now.

Any tenants, who lose entitlement to Housing Benefit on 1st April 2003 because their housing support charges are no longer included in the benefit calculation, should not suffer financially.

Tenants who do not qualify for Housing Benefit will be liable to pay the full cost of housing support services to their local Council. However, they can apply to the Council for a " Financial Assessment " in the same way as some tenants do at present in respect of Home Care charges. Each Council is likely to operate it's own assessment process, so there will not be a unified scheme across the country. Any support charge the tenant has to pay will be made to the respective Council.

The Supporting People programme will not be available to owner-occupiers until April 2004 whereas every other household group can in theory access Supporting People from April 2003.

If in doubt, submit a claim for benefit/additional benefit to the relevant Council Housing Benefit office.

Video Production

The Housing Association's new initiative to produce a video on Housing for Older People is ready. The video will be available in English, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali and Chinese.

The video has the well-known film and television celebrity, Sayeed Jaffrey. It also features Hugh Henry, Deputy Minister Social Justice and many real life stars from the communities.



Many thanks to all the participants who have given their time and shown enthusiasm to be part of this video. Special thanks to Milan (Senior Welfare Council) Edinburgh and Wing Hong Chinese Elderly Centre, Glasgow for their support in the making of this video.

The Video will be shown at its launch to be held in March 2003 in Edinburgh and in April 2003 in Glasgow. Watch the space for dates and venues.

Community News

LINKnet Mentoring Project

LINKnet mentoring is looking for black/ethnic minority people in the Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders areas to join the mentoring scheme to foster better representation of minorities in further and higher education, public and civic life. Mentors will support and guide the mentee to develop their education, career and employment. If you are interested in participating as a mentor or mentee contact Neeru Bhatnagar at 31, Guthrie Street, Edinburgh, Tel: 0131 650 9528/29, Email: neeru@linknetmentoring.com

Edinburgh Racial Incidents Monitoring Project

The Edinburgh Racial Incidents Monitoring Project (ERIMP) was set up a year ago to collect, analyse, and disseminate data about such incidents across the city. By asking a standardised set of questions, a series of sixteen charts can be produced that give a precise, but anonymised, picture of racial incidents. By activating various search filters, even more detailed information about where and when incidents happened, what occurred and who was involved as victim and suspect can all be uncovered. At present, there are over 200 incidents on the ERIMP database, and this number is continually growing. If your agency would like to participate in ERIMP (giving you access to the aggregated findings and fulfilling part of your statutory requirements), or if you would like more information, please contact the ERIMP co-ordinator, Jeff Kemp, on (0131) 466 1949, or email, or look at the website www.erimp.org.

Monthly Surgeries

Advice and information on housing for older people and job opportunities within these Housing Associations, continues to be available at our Monthly Surgeries.

every second Tuesday of the month
12.00 - 2.00pm at **Milan**.

Tel: 0131 555 5330 Tel: 0131 555 6500

every first Tuesday of the month
11.00 - 1.00pm at **Mel-Milaap Centre**
Tel: 0141 564 1038

every second Wednesday of the month
11.00 - 1.00pm at **MECC**
Tel: 0141 585 8012

This is a joint publication by Kirk Care, Hanover (Scotland) and Bield Housing Associations.

If you would like to tell communities about an event or about your project and would like it to be advertised in this newsletter please write or telephone:

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