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# **Review into the Enhanced Landlord Scheme as part of the Sheltered Housing Offer from Selwood Housing**

**Jan – May 2021**

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## **Introduction**

The Sheltered Housing service had been identified on the forward plan by the Scrutiny Team as an area for review. With the introduction of the Enhanced Landlord Service (ELS) in November 2019, and a forthcoming internal evaluation of the service due in the Summer of 2021, it was agreed with the Sheltered Housing Manager that a review be undertaken into the Enhanced Landlord Service from a tenant perspective.

The key areas of interest were:

- To explore progress against the service promises set out in the ELS;
- To recognise how the service delivery evolved because of the pandemic, consider this from a tenant perspective and assess the impact of the enforced changes; and in conclusion,
- To understand how well aligned the new service is to the needs of the customer.

The Scrutiny Team also recognised that there were many factors influencing the service delivery both before and during the review, in addition to the service being relatively new. Four months after the introduction of the service, the coronavirus pandemic had a large impact on the delivery of all Selwood Housing's services, but particularly those in relation to sheltered housing customers. This meant several changes needed to take place to the service at short notice to ensure compliance with Government guidelines. In October 2020 the Supported Housing: National Statement of Expectations (NSE) was launched as well as Together for Tenants. Both set out expected ways of working with tenants, and along with the charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper, they set out the expectations for standards in

accommodation, and increase the emphasis on tenant's being listened to and having access to redress when things go wrong.

Within this context the Scrutiny Team still felt there was benefit in a review into the ELS. In particular it thought that there was the unique opportunity to understand how tenants had been affected by any enforced changes and value in (perhaps most importantly) obtaining these views whilst these experiences were still fresh in tenant's minds.

There were 6 points of focus for the team's research:

- A review of the pre-existing service commitments communicated to tenants for the beginning of the service in November 2019;
- A further examination of any changes that were then made to the service due to the covid-19 pandemic from March 2020 up until April 2021 (when the Scrutiny Team's research stopped);
- A review of compliments and complaints that the service had received;
- Benchmarking against other housing associations to see what they do and what examples of good practice exist;
- Staff interviews with the Deputy Service Manager and the Sheltered Housing Coordinators; and
- Tenant telephone interviews and an online survey.

The Scrutiny Team were interested in:

- the way the service operated;
- how tenants used the service and what they understood the service to be;
- how staff felt the service operated; and
- how the changes covid-19 forced the sheltered housing team to make affected both staff and tenants.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the Scrutiny Team review, as agreed with the Sheltered Housing Service Manager are as follows:

- a) To explore progress against the service commitments set out in the Enhanced Landlord Service (ELS) review as proposed in November 2019.
- b) To recognise how the service delivery evolved because of the pandemic and assess from a customer perspective the impact of the enforced changes for customers.
- c) To consult and review the perceptions of a representative sample of tenants who have used the service.
- d) To capture what has worked well in the adaptation of the service over the last 12 months.
- e) To review complaints and compliments statistics and any existing key performance indicators (KPI's).
- f) For the scrutiny team to draft a final board report and produce an action plan and observations in partnership with the manager of the service.
- g) For learning outcomes from the review to be fed back to the relevant areas of the organisation.
- h) For any action plan to be monitored by the relevant Selwood team and the scrutiny team.

## **Review Process**

To achieve the objectives of the review, as detailed above, the Scrutiny Team undertook the following actions:

1. The team explored in detail the existing information regarding the Enhanced Landlord Service (ELS) and service commitments, the original consultation documents and the subsequent letters to customers, including those sent throughout the covid-19 pandemic.
2. The team examined the information and expectations in the Together for Tenants charter, the charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper and the Supported Housing: National Statement of Expectations.
3. It examined the complaints and compliments given about the service.
4. A benchmarking exercise was undertaken in order to identify what other housing associations did for sheltered housing and to find any examples of good practice.

5. The team interviewed each of the sheltered housing/ELS coordinators and the Deputy Service Manager. There was also regular dialogue with the Service Manager.
6. The team interviewed a selection of tenants and simultaneously emailed tenants a link to an online survey which asked the same questions.

## **Findings and Observations**

### **1. Service Commitments**

- 1.1. The team were provided with a comprehensive collection of tenant correspondence and board papers regarding the consultation on and then the introduction of the Enhanced Landlord Service (ELS). However, the team found that identifying the exact service commitments to tenants is quite difficult from the paperwork provided.
- 1.2. Each document the team saw proposing the new service and charge uses slightly different wording to describe what will be offered to tenants as part of the ELS. In the main, however, they focus on 2 key commitments:
  - 1.2.1. The service will mean easier access to staff and more opportunities for engagement with Selwood Housing; and
  - 1.2.2. There will be improved on-site management of the buildings and the facilities, with a particular emphasis on ensuring schemes are safe.
- 1.3. Furthermore, throughout the letters and from speaking to Selwood Housing staff about the scheme, it is also clear that there is no single name for the ELS. It has been variously called:
  - The "Enhanced Landlord Scheme" (in the majority of the letters regarding the consultation)
  - The "Compliance and Facilities Management Charge" (in the final letter confirming that the scheme is due to go ahead and on rental account bills)
  - The coordinators are named "Sheltered Housing Coordinators"
  - And it was initially introduced to the Scrutiny Team as the "Intensive Housing Management Charge" (Dec 2020) and for tenants being invited to an information

session in their communal lounges it was called the "Improved Housing Management Service" (April 2019). Papers written for the Board also use the same name.

- 1.3.2. The Scrutiny Team needed to directly contact staff to seek an explanation for the different names, specifically asking whether what appears on rental account statements (Compliance and Facilities Management Charge) is the same thing as what the Scrutiny Team were reviewing. Whilst the team now understand why the ELS is named something differently for the purposes of billing tenants, it can find no documentation that explains this to tenants who are part of the ELS.
- 1.4. In comparison the initial consultation letter to tenants (28/03/2019) is very clear about what number of staff will be part of the new service and the Scrutiny Team understand that this is still the case.
  - "The new team will include:*
    - *One supported housing manager*
    - *One neighbourhood manager*
    - *Five new sheltered housing coordinators*
    - *One lettings coordinator*
  - The team will work closely with our caretakers (formerly housekeepers)"*
- 1.5. In addition this first letter contains a Q+A document which highlights the benefits to tenants, as summarised in 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 above.
- 1.6. The Q+A also states that
  - "a member of Selwood Housing staff will visit your sheltered Scheme on a weekly basis" (from Q4 - "What are the benefits?")*
  - And*
  - "This is not a return to the warden service. We are not providing a support service; for example, we will not be providing a regular/daily call over the alarm system" (from Q5 "What it is not?")*
- 1.7. However, this is the only mention the team can find committing Selwood Housing to the level of staff cover for the ELS and the only mention of the previous warden service. As highlighted below in section 6. *Customer Feedback* many customers are not aware that the ELS is not the previous warden service.

- 1.8. The team believe not having a single consistent name and message about the ELS scheme increases the confusion many tenants have regarding the scheme.
- 1.9. In the team's opinion, the confusion is further increased by the letter that served as the notice of variation to services under individuals tenancy agreements (dated 02/10/2019). This letter confirmed the cost of the charge and the date it would become effective.
  - 1.9.1. The previous letter informing tenants of the outcome of the consultation does not give a specific name to the new service but refers to an "*improved landlord service*".
  - 1.9.2. The following letter confirming the changes to tenancies begins by referring to the consultation looking at an "*improved housing management service for our sheltered housing*" and then refers to a "*Compliance and Facilities Management Charge*" under the same section where there is a list of some example tasks that may be carried out under the charge listed. This is the first and only reference the Scrutiny Team could find regarding the name of the ELS as it appears on people's account statements.
- 1.10. The example tasks listed in this letter also look significantly different to all the previous mentions of what the scheme could mean for tenants:
  - 1.10.1. From the letter dated 02/10/2019:

*The following list of services are being added to the existing services provided under your tenancy:*

*Where this applies, the tasks carried out by us may include, but are not limited to, the following:*

*Compliance and Facilities Management Charge*

*Risk Assessment*

*Management of facilities*

*Tenancy management*

*Fire Safety*

*Health and Safety*
  - 1.10.2. Up until this point the correspondence and presentation to tenants regarding the new scheme focused on the following points:

- Easier access to staff; for example, to report repairs or issues and concerns.
- A weekly visit on site from a member of the sheltered housing team, providing a service that is accountable and more convenient for you.
- More time when you and your family need it; for example, for new customers moving in or at the end of a tenancy.
- There will be more opportunities to feedback on services and to work together with Selwood Housing to agree priorities, with a greater focus on those priorities.
- Tenancy management.
- Working with you to ensure that our schemes are safe.

1.10.3. Whilst there is some correlation between the 2 lists (e.g. on tenancy management and health and safety) it is clear that the offer is explained in 2 differing manners:

1.10.3.1. a much more person-centred way in the initial approach to tenants that highlights the opportunity to deliver a more individualised approach to services, and the bringing together of services into one channel. In comparison to;

1.10.3.2. the notice of variation to tenancy, where much more limited, concise and specific examples of the service are given.

1.10.4. The team believes this also contributes to the confusion around the charge and services on offer to tenants.

1.11. In addition, this difference of focus and manner is reflected in the job description for the role. The job description focuses on the legal compliance and health and safety aspects of the job, in addition to tenancy and anti-social behaviour management.

1.11.1. Whilst job descriptions tend to be very task orientated by their very nature, the tasks highlighted for a sheltered housing coordinator focus more on reacting to triggers from the business (e.g. annual tenancy audits, responding to reports the business has been given re: tenancy breaches or ASB, compliance checks,

supporting access to buildings for contractors etc) and the active management of the estate, fixtures and fittings.

- 1.11.2. There is mention of actively engaging with tenants as part of the letting process to new tenants, of having regular contact with the support provider from Wiltshire Council and in ensuring all tenants are aware of fire evacuation procedures and have a personal fire risk assessment. However, these are currently the only tasks in the job description which currently refer to any active engagement with tenants before problems or issues identify themselves.
- 1.12. The Scrutiny Team believe that there is further scope for the job description to include more examples of actively engaging with sheltered housing tenants, for example to use the communal facilities, to help build a community and to help prevent future breaches of tenancy or anti-social behaviour.
- 1.13. As is detailed below in section 5. *Staff interviews* the Scrutiny Team know that not only do staff do this already to a certain extent and have done so in the covid 19 pandemic as well but in addition staff want to continue this. The Scrutiny Team also believe that the service commitments outlined above do indicate that the ELS service would include co-ordinators who more actively seek out tenant views, provide regular feedback to tenants on housing and tenancy issues they believe are important and not only resolve known issues reported to them by other parts of the business, but identify potential ones and resolve those as well.
- 1.14. For both new and existing tenants the website has little information about the ELS scheme. At the time of writing the report, the website still says:

*"We will soon be offering an enhanced landlord service across our 17 supported housing schemes. Our team of sheltered coordinators will be the first point of contact for our supported housing customers to answer any questions or queries."*
- 1.15. During the covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent Government restrictions, the Sheltered Housing Manager sent letters to tenants keeping them up to date regarding changes made to both Selwood Housing services and the sheltered housing team's services. Each letter also highlighted the key Government rules



that not only applied to individual tenants but that applied to sheltered housing tenants as a group.

- 1.16. All of the letters are informative, state clearly what the Sheltered Housing team can offer despite the restrictions and give clear instructions on how to access Selwood Housing services during the pandemic. The first letter was sent on 26/03/2020 – only 3 days after the Government announcement, which the team thought was timely and efficient. Subsequent letters were sent when changes were made to what Selwood Housing were able offer to sheltered housing tenants.
- 1.17. Each letter contained the main contact telephone number for Selwood Housing and the direct telephone number for the Sheltered Housing manager. The letters also offered welfare calls to each individual tenant as a replacement for the face to face contact tenants would have been able to receive had sheltered housing coordinators been allowed onto each scheme.
- 1.18. There is more detail on the Sheltered Housing Team's response to the covid-19 pandemic in section 5. *Staff Interviews*. In regards to the correspondence, the Scrutiny Team thought the letters were detailed and offered as much support as the team could provide at each point of the pandemic.

## **2. Government Expectations**

- 2.1. The Scrutiny Team studied the 3 major pieces of current Government and industry literature regarding the expectations in social and sheltered housing:
  - 2.1.1. Together for Tenants <https://www.housing.org.uk/our-work/together-with-tenants/> latest report dated 20 October 2020;
  - 2.1.2. The Supported Housing: National Statement of Expectations <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supported-housing-national-statement-of-expectations/supported-housing-national-statement-of-expectations> published 20 October 2020; and
  - 2.1.3. The charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-charter-for-social-housing-residents-social-housing-white->

[paper/the-charter-for-social-housing-residents-social-housing-white-paper](#) website last updated 22 January 2021.

- 2.2. Together for Tenants is written by the National Housing Federation (NHF) to support a sector-wide initiative focussed on strengthening the relationship between tenants and housing association landlords. There are several points mentioned in the charter which are relevant to this review. Adopters of the Together for Tenants charter commit to (among other things):
  - 2.2.1. Ensuring all tenants know what they can expect from their housing association landlord;
  - 2.2.2. Including the views and needs of tenants at the heart of strategic decision making;
  - 2.2.3. Providing clear, accessible and timely information to tenants on the issues that matter to them; and
  - 2.2.4. Ensuring homes are good quality, well maintained, safe and well managed.
- 2.3. The Supported Housing: National Statement of Expectations (NSE) is written by central Government, principally the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Whilst not statutory, the Government hopes that providers of supported housing will use, adopt and find helpful the principles and examples of good practice contained in it.
- 2.4. The NSE focusses on the accommodation element of supported housing. Selwood Housing does not provide any of the support services associated with supported housing, but they are the landlord for many tenants in sheltered housing who are in receipt of these services from other organisations and therefore they are covered by this guidance.
- 2.5. The NSE focusses on 2 main elements:
  - 2.5.1. Assessing local need and planning effectively to meet demand; and
  - 2.5.2. Delivering accommodation which is safe, good quality and value for money.
- 2.6. Throughout the NSE, the importance of communication and keeping tenants informed at all stages of any process is highlighted, in addition to a specific reference to explain the way charges are spent.

- 2.7. The charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper sets out the Government expectation that every social housing tenant should (amongst other measures):
  - 2.7.1. be safe in their home;
  - 2.7.2. know how their landlord is performing, including on repairs, complaints and safety, and how it spends its money;
  - 2.7.3. have your voice heard by their landlord; and
  - 2.7.4. have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in, with their landlord keeping their home in good repair.
- 2.8. The Scrutiny Team thought there was a particularly strong emphasis in all 3 documents on communication with tenants, transparency and safe, good quality homes.
- 2.9. The team acknowledges that all 3 documents include many things that Selwood Housing already do along with some elements that do not apply to Selwood Housing. They do, however, also include some things that the Scrutiny Team thought that Selwood Housing could improve upon.

### **3. Complaints and Compliments**

- 3.1. There were 18 compliments and 3 complaints regarding the Enhanced Landlord Scheme (ELS) that the Scrutiny Team were sent details of. It is possible that other feedback has been given to customer service staff about the ELS however the details may not have been recorded as an official compliment or complaint.
- 3.2. 13 compliments were pre-pandemic and of the remaining 5, 4 specifically mentioned the extra support and the welfare calls during the pandemic as a positive and helpful thing, with each tenant wanting to thank staff personally for the support received.
- 3.3. All 3 of the complaints were regarding the cost of and the introduction of the ELS and each customer mentions they are not happy, and 2 of them explicitly mention that they believe the majority do not want the scheme.
- 3.4. 2 of the complaints were submitted just before the introduction of the scheme in October 2019 and the third was in January 2020.

## **4. Benchmarking**

- 4.1. Conducting a review during the covid-19 pandemic has made finding information about other housing associations for benchmarking very difficult. The Scrutiny Team was unable to make direct contact with housing associations in many cases, as the housing associations were delivering their own response to the pandemic and so the team has had access to limited information.
- 4.2. However, the team was able to find 2 housing associations who run a similar tenant-funded service to Selwood Housing:
  - 4.2.1. Gloucester City Homes; and
  - 4.2.2. Sutton Housing Society.
- 4.3. Both housing associations have had their own enhanced landlord services in place since 2017 and from what the team can tell charge a similar amount to Selwood Housing.
- 4.4. These housing associations deliver the same functions that Selwood Housing commit to as detailed in section 1. *Service Commitments* and in addition they also offer more targeted support for individual tenants and opportunities to engage in and build a more cohesive community at each scheme they manage. Examples include:
  - 4.4.1. Regular welfare checks;
  - 4.4.2. Budgeting support;
  - 4.4.3. Mental health advice and support;
  - 4.4.4. Help in establishing social contacts and activities; and
  - 4.4.5. Help in establishing personal safety and security.

## **5. Staff Interviews**

- 5.1. The Scrutiny Team interviewed each of the Sheltered Housing Coordinators and the deputy Service Manager, using the same set of questions each time (please see Appendix 1). The team also spoke regularly throughout the whole review with the Sheltered Housing Service Manager.
- 5.2. Firstly, the Scrutiny Team would like to highlight that the sheltered housing staff are exceptionally dedicated and clearly really passionate about their roles. Each staff member clearly

demonstrated that they were part of a really supportive team, they knew what they were talking about and knew where to signpost and direct tenants who needed further support and how to support them in doing that.

- 5.3. They have also had to contend with remarkably challenging circumstances. The scheme only began four months before the pandemic hit which meant that staff had a limited opportunity to establish their roles and get to know their tenants and schemes before they were forced to provide an almost exclusively office based service. Despite this, when the Scrutiny Team spoke to the coordinators, they were all enthusiastic about their roles and looking forward to getting back onto schemes and meeting tenants face to face again.
- 5.4. All of the coordinators described their role as being there for the tenants, making tenant's lives easier and building confidence and trust in Selwood Housing and the coordinators themselves. Staff felt their most important role included:
  - 5.4.1. Supporting tenants to access support, both ones who already receive it and those who aren't known to any services yet;
  - 5.4.2. Being the single point of contact for Selwood Housing and being a go between for the different services;
  - 5.4.3. Helping to combat the social isolation of many of the tenants; and
  - 5.4.4. Helping tenants maintain their overall health and wellbeing, not only to prevent potential future housing issues but also because the coordinators are passionate about their work and care about the tenants on their schemes.
- 5.5. Most of the coordinators felt that tenants probably don't know exactly what coordinators do, nor what the Enhanced Landlord Scheme (ELS) actually means they are paying for. This is mainly because of the restrictions brought about because of the covid-19 pandemic. Some of the coordinators felt more of their tenants had a better understanding but all felt that they wanted to increase tenant understanding of the scheme, particularly when coordinators are able to get back onto schemes and provide an in-person service and when changes that had to be made because of the pandemic have been relaxed.
- 5.6. Before the covid-19 pandemic the coordinators were visiting schemes normally at least once a week, and some of the bigger

schemes (e.g. Rowley Place) more than that. Coordinators tried to base themselves in the communal lounges for drop in sessions, in addition to putting up posters and putting leaflets through tenant's letterboxes to advise them who their coordinators were and how to contact them.

- 5.7. However, once the pandemic hit coordinators were unable to be on site for regular drop in sessions. Staff did say that if they needed to see a particular tenant they would make that visit, as long as it was safe for everyone involved to do so, and everyone agreed to it, but in the main they were providing assistance to tenants from a distance. There were still legal compliance and health and safety checks that needed to be done on each scheme and the coordinators did continue with these where it was necessary and needed.
- 5.8. During the first lockdown weekly telephone calls were offered to tenants to check how tenants were doing and make contact with them. All of the coordinators felt that the welfare calls actually helped their roles and was a 'silver lining' of the pandemic, enabling the coordinators to get to know some of their tenants much better, learning more about their tenants and speaking to more tenants in general. They also said the calls had to a certain extent helped them understand what role they need to provide in the future to meet the needs of the tenants on their schemes.
- 5.9. These calls were not explicitly offered after the first lockdown. However, some of the coordinators continued to provide those calls for a small selection of tenants, particularly for tenants who they thought had benefited most from them and would continue to benefit from them.
- 5.10. The staff recognised that because of the covid-19 pandemic there are some tenants who will not have engaged with the welfare calls and would not have previously gone to communal lounge drop in sessions or seen the coordinators out and about. Coordinators are keen to ensure they reach out to those tenants when they are allowed back onto schemes, and this includes those tenants who are more independent or who work, as well as those who haven't engaged because they are less confident.
- 5.11. During the pandemic the 2 biggest issues that staff noted from the welfare calls and other tenant interaction with Selwood Housing was:
  - 5.11.1. an increase in low level complaints about other tenants, including anti-social behaviour and perceived anti-social

behaviour, causing some schemes to become more fractured; and

- 5.11.2. tenant social isolation and poor mental health.
- 5.12. Many of the coordinators commented that because of the pandemic, and the welfare calls in particular, their job evolved from a housing officer into being more of a welfare officer. Whilst this meant a very steep learning curve this is clearly what the tenants wanted and needed. The Scrutiny Team believe that it is clearly evident that the pandemic has caused the coordinators far more involvement and far more stress than originally could have been anticipated when the scheme was introduced in November 2019. As mentioned in 5.2 and 5.3, the team are exceptionally supportive of each other and have risen to that challenge, even if the level of involvement (both tasks and people hours to do each task) required by the lockdown restrictions is not sustainable.
- 5.13. The coordinators were all agreed that the opening of communal lounges and facilities needs to be a priority once Government rules allow it. They all thought extra effort would be needed on each scheme, particularly as the lounges reopen, to help bring communities back together. All of the coordinators want to really focus on community involvement and cohesion and build that sense of a community on each scheme. Several of the coordinators spoke about coffee mornings, getting people back in communal lounges, being on schemes for longer to meet tenants individually more often and organising ad-hoc communal events or activities to help bring communities back together as examples of what could be done.

## **6. Tenant feedback – online and telephone survey**

- 6.1. On behalf of the Scrutiny Team, Selwood Housing staff emailed an online survey (in survey monkey) to every sheltered housing tenant who had an email address registered with them to explore tenant views on the Enhanced Landlord Scheme (ELS). The foreword to the survey was carefully phrased to ensure as much as possible that tenants understood that the survey came from the Scrutiny Team and not Selwood Housing staff. Both the foreword and the questions can be found in Appendix 2.
- 6.2. The team who live on sheltered housing schemes themselves also phoned a selection of tenants on the same scheme as them

to explore tenant views, using the same foreword and set of questions. We included a mixture of tenants, and ensured we spoke to tenants who lived in 'dispersed' and 'linked properties' to schemes, as well as those residents who may have access to communal facilities in the same building as them.

6.3. 77 people answered the online survey (18% response rate of total number of tenants emailed).

*6.3.1. Note on the online survey - whilst there were 77 surveys answered online;*

*6.3.1.1. in 2 questions a tenant answered both yes AND no – so in these cases the Scrutiny Team has decided to disregard the answer to that individual question;*

*6.3.1.2. a tenant was able to skip questions; or*

*6.3.1.3. in the case of the question asking if tenants found the coordinator helpful having used the service, the survey monkey was designed to automatically skip that question if you answered "no" to the preceding question, "Have you used the service personally since it was launched?".*

6.4. In addition, the team had 36 telephone responses.

6.5. For the purposes of analysis, where the questions asked of tenants are an exact match the Scrutiny Team has amalgamated the online survey answers and the telephone responses (113 responses in total). The team have added in brackets how many tenants responded to each individual question after the percentage figure stated in the below points. Where the questions were asked in a different way over the phone vs. the online survey, the team has separated the responses out – please see exact examples below for more details.

6.6. The responses the team received are:

6.6.1. 54% (112) of tenants have met their local coordinator or know what their role is. 31% (110) of tenants said they had personally used the coordinator service.

6.6.2. On the online survey 90% (21) of tenants said their coordinator was helpful, having used the service, but only 57% said that the coordinator was able to resolve their issue. Over the phone the team asked the question as one, resulting in 58% (12) of tenants saying their coordinator was helpful and/or able to resolve their issue.



- 6.6.3. 58% (105) of tenants thought having a coordinator on site weekly/or being able to contact them is better than making direct contact to the Selwood Housing Service the tenant wanted to use (e.g. tenancy management, payments, repairs etc).
- 6.6.4. 51% (107) of tenants thought the service had met their expectations during the pandemic.
- 6.6.5. 57% (102) of tenants thought the service is good value for money. It is worth noting that on the online survey tenants were asked to rate the value for money on a scale of 1-10 whilst over the phone we received yes or no responses. For analysing the results, the team made the decision to classify a score of 4/10 or under as a no, or a score of 5/10 or more as a yes. 17% (66) of tenants who responded online chose 10/10 although 12% chose 1/10.
- 6.6.6. On the online survey, 52% (66) of tenants said they used to use the communal facilities and 60% plan on using them again. Over the phone 53% (36) of tenants said they had used and intend on using them again.
- 6.6.7. 19% (102) of tenants said they had made a complaint about the service, although this includes 4 responses answered over the phone, where the team asked if the tenant had made a compliment or complaint. If all of the telephone responses are removed, 23% (66) of tenants responded by saying they had made a complaint. Looking solely at the telephone responses 11% (36) of tenants made a compliment or complaint about the ELS.
- 6.6.8. The team asked 101 tenants how they would rate the ELS service out of 10, with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent. 33% rated the service 8/10 or better, including 12% who scored the service 10/10. However, 36% rated the service 4/10 or under, including 30% who gave the service a score of 2/10 or under. The average score is 5/10 (both mean average and median average) and there is no significant difference in average between those tenants who identified themselves as self-funders and those who explicitly answered no to that question.
- 6.7. Through speaking to tenants and from the comments left at the end of the online survey the Scrutiny Team observed that:

- 6.7.1. Those who know and use the service are generally very grateful.
- 6.7.2. However, many tenants are not fully aware of the ELS and some still believe they have wardens and/or the Selwood Housing Coordinators are wardens.
- 6.7.3. The covid-19 pandemic has made personal contact with the Coordinators very difficult, and this has impacted tenant's experience of the ELS. A number of tenants felt that they had not been contacted at all during the pandemic.
- 6.7.4. Some tenants raised concerns that feedback from their Coordinator, when the tenant had raised an issue for example, was either too slow or not forthcoming at all.
- 6.7.5. The communal lounge and facilities are seldom used to any great extent by tenants not living in the immediate building.
- 6.7.6. The overall impression from tenants is that wherever possible Coordinators are explaining the ELS but during the pandemic a great deal of the Coordinators effort has had to have been focused on mental health issues, which has taken priority.

## **Recommendations**

The Scrutiny Team recommends that the Sheltered Housing Team:

1. clarify and publish their commitments to tenants with regard to the ELS scheme, including updating the web pages.
2. work with the communications and marketing team to come up with a comprehensive communications strategy. This strategy should include a formula for direct tenant contact to explain the coordinator's job role and the services that the charge covers and it should carefully consider the sheltered housing audience and methods of communication.
3. to create a specific policy and process that ensures tenants are regularly updated regarding any issue they have raised. This should include details on making sure tenants know when they should expect answers by and ensuring tenants are aware of the outcome of any report regardless of whether any action was needed or has been able to be taken.
4. continue the extended support role that came about due to the covid-19 pandemic. This should include providing training to

coordinators so that they can continue to help individual residents as required and build cohesive active communities.

The Scrutiny Team would like to acknowledge and thank all staff and customers who gave their time and information willingly and cooperatively to this review, particularly in the midst of a pandemic, the restrictions of working from home and virtual meetings.

**Scrutiny Team members invested 390 hours on this review.**

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Staff interview questions**

1. How long have you been in your present role and what is your background within Selwood Housing Group?
2. How would you describe your job role?
3. How many schemes are you a coordinator for?
4. How often are you on-site at each scheme?
5. Is this a manageable work-load?
6. Have you introduced yourself to all the tenants at the schemes you represent?
7. What about tenants who may be working, have you made yourself known to them/made sure they know how to contact you?
8. Do you feel tenants know what your role is and have tenants come to you for help?
9. What do you think is your most important role?
10. How has your role changed with the pandemic?
11. And have any issues arisen during welfare calls that required you to take any action?
12. What would you do if you thought, or were told, that one of the tenants was struggling to live independently?
13. Would you know where to signpost the tenant or their family to get help? e.g. social services
14. Is there anything you would add or take away from your role once we return to full service?
15. Are there any areas where you would like to see changes which could assist in your role?

## **Appendix 2: Tenant survey foreword and questions**

### Introduction for online survey to tenants

#### *HELPING US TO HELP YOU*

*We are the Selwood Housing Scrutiny Team and all of us, like you, are tenants (customers).*

*We undertake a variety of Reviews to ensure the best possible service is offered by Selwood from a customer perspective.*

*Our latest Review is into the 'Performance of the Enhanced Landlord Scheme' as it relates to sheltered housing.*

*It would be really helpful to us in producing this Review to get your answers on a variety of questions. A questionnaire is attached and all answers will be treated in strict confidence.*

*Thank you for helping us to help you.*

### Introduction for telephone interviews

*Hello, my name is.....and, like you, I am a tenant (customer) of Selwood Housing.*

*I am a member of the Scrutiny Team which conducts reviews into a wide range of areas with the aim of ensuring tenants receive the best possible service from Selwood.*

*We are currently looking at the Performance of the Enhanced Landlord Scheme as it affects sheltered housing.*

*Would you be happy to answer a few questions which will help us and in so doing help you?*

*All answers are treated in strict confidence with no names or personal details being mentioned.*

Online survey questions – all questions have a yes/no answer unless otherwise stated

1. Have you met your local Coordinator and do you know what their role is?
2. Have you used the Coordinator service personally to resolve an issue since it was launched?
3. Was the coordinator helpful?
4. Was the coordinator able to resolve your issue?
5. Has the service met your expectations during the pandemic?
6. Do you feel having the coordinator onsite on a weekly basis and being able to contact them directly is better for you than making contact with Selwood first?
7. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is very poor and 10 is excellent, how would you rate the service's value for money?
8. Before the covid-19 restrictions came into effect in March 2020, did you ever use the communal facilities?
9. When the communal facilities reopen, do you intend to use them?
10. Have you ever made a complaint to your coordinator or to Selwood Housing about this service?
11. It would help our research if you were willing to tell us if you are a self-funder. (optional)
12. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is very poor and 10 is excellent, how would you rate the overall service?
13. We would love to hear your personal thoughts and experiences. Do you have any comments about the service?