

Aberdeen City Council

Very Sheltered Housing Review



A Strategic Review of Very Sheltered Housing Stock

January 2015



ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

Very Sheltered Housing Review

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Very Sheltered Housing Review

Introduction

This report describes a review of Very Sheltered/Extra Care Housing in Aberdeen City, which examined allocations, service delivery, provision of facilities, and funding. The reason for the study was to identify and address inconsistencies in service provision for the purpose of achieving a more streamlined and equitable approach for tenants. The review provides an opportunity to help inform and shape future provision at a time when the Council are in the process of 'realigning' existing sheltered housing stock to increase provision of Very Sheltered Housing.

The review is a small scale but comprehensive study, looking at the establishments that Aberdeen City Council provides funding for, commissions services and/or allocates tenants to. The study included tenant and staff questionnaire surveys, with housing and care agency involvement.

Key findings and recommendations

The report findings indicate that the Very Sheltered Housing service is highly valued by tenants. However there is a need for improvement to address a range of issues within the wider 'picture' of Very Sheltered Housing, including lack of consistency. The following provides a summary of the key issues with a list of recommended actions that would be best practice to take forward:

1. Improved communication and understanding at all levels:

- There is a general lack of understanding about what Very Sheltered Housing is, and how to distinguish it from 'housing' and 'residential care'.
- A new welcome pack, forums and open days are recommended to meet customer expectations and improve information sharing. This would benefit relatives, tenants, staff, as well as those in the wider community such as GP's, fire, and community health services, to achieve improved understanding, help set realistic expectations, and promote the benefits of the service.

2. Allocations process

- There is no common city-wide route (or 'pathway') for Very Sheltered Housing applicants in Aberdeen.
- Enhanced joint working with housing partner landlords is recommended to aim for a more consistent way of allocating Very Sheltered Housing city-wide, facilitated by:
- A new 'passport' approach whereby applicants have their housing support eligibility confirmed 'up front' to prevent delays to individuals being housed;
- A new joint care/accommodation panel including housing and care partners; and:

- Ensuring that Care Management involvement is consistently achieved early on in the process city-wide: this provides assessment and review as a key part of the process (the mechanism) by which the varying needs of tenants can be met within the resources available.

3. Core services

- There is potential to achieve greater consistency in delivery of core services and facilities to an agreed 'standard' without compromising on the unique characteristics and 'personalities' of individual establishments.
- Staff would benefit from 'sharing best practice' events to help achieve a more standardised delivery of core services, and help each other in the difficult task of delivering 'care' alongside 'support'.
- Supporting independence is a key part of the service and staff have a central role in tenants' lives in helping them both 'feel' and 'be' independent.
- Both tenants and staff feel more can be done to provide and encourage participation in social activities to avoid isolation and improve quality of life;
- The importance of the physical design of spaces should not be overlooked for encouraging informal and everyday social interactions, e.g. communal kitchen facilities for dedicated tenant use; reception area as convivial hub of activity, laundry rooms as sociable laundrette/meeting places.
- Tenants highly value the meal service: the current inequitable and inconsistent way of charging tenants needs to be modernized. Tenants and staff indicate this should be easy to administer, but flexible to accommodate tenants' changing and often unpredictable needs.
- To achieve greater consistency in terms of provision and funding of the meal service, all establishments should have meals commissioned integral to the overall service in future.

4. Implementation

The following next steps are recommended:

- Arrange a stakeholder consensus meeting to agree a task list of actions based on the study findings and conclusions outlined in this report.
- Engage Council's 'Rapid Improvement' team to facilitate working group including housing and care partners, together with tenant and staff representatives (personal carers), to streamline allocation assessment process, including review of criteria;
- Trial a new payment scheme for meals using pre-payment card similar to laundry system, per tenant;¹

¹ A meal service review has now been initiated as a separate piece of work, and is currently being progressed by ACC.

- Set up a working group to agree ways of achieving a more streamlined 'standard' for core services using key findings and conclusions of this review as an initial framework for setting up 'Sharing best practice' workshops for personal carers, to include all Very Sheltered/Extra Care establishments across Aberdeen, including housing and care partner agencies.

SECTION ONE: SCOPE OF STUDY

1. Introduction

The Housing for Varying Needs ('HFVN') Review carried out by Aberdeen City Council (December 2011) identified a number of recommendations to be implemented. This highlighted the need for a review of Very Sheltered/ Extra Care Housing service provision in Aberdeen City, to include Aberdeen City Council ('ACC') and Registered Social Landlord ('RSL') stock.

Key drivers for change and other considerations included:

- Aberdeen City Council are in the process of 'realigning' existing sheltered housing stock to increase the provision of Very Sheltered Housing establishments;
- Ongoing drive to improve quality of service;
- The opportunity to assess existing service delivery to help inform and shape future provision of Very Sheltered Housing;
- Commitment to achieve equitability;
- A review of Very Sheltered Housing at this time presents an opportunity to modernise and streamline for the purpose of achieving consistency in Very Sheltered Housing service provision, service delivery, and funding.

2. Project Brief: Aims and objectives

The overall aim of the current project was to undertake a review of the allocation, service provision, delivery and funding of Very Sheltered Housing across Aberdeen City to establish where inconsistencies occur, and to establish whether a more streamlined and equitable approach might be achieved.

The project involved a study of:

- how Very Sheltered Housing properties are **allocated** (including the allocations process, allocation criteria and eligibility);
- provision of **support services and communal facilities** at different establishments, including aspects of the meal service²;
- how Very Sheltered Housing services are **funded** by Aberdeen City Council (an overview);

² Refer to separate review of meal provision and charging at ACC Very Sheltered/Extra Care Housing Developments currently in progress (ref. 'Meal Provision Summary Report' by ACC).

Including:

- a) tenant survey of services received;
- b) staff survey of services delivered;
- c) RSL and care agency partner involvement.

The project seeks to identify:

- d) where inconsistencies occur across all aspects of service delivery and funding;
- e) where variation in provision of support services and facilities occurs at existing Very Sheltered Housing establishments;
- f) where there is scope and opportunity for improvement in terms of modernising and streamlining the service to achieve greater consistency and equitability for tenants.

3. Methodology

The study approach and methodology is summarised below as a five stage process: 1. Scoping exercise, 2. Tenant Survey, 3. Staff Survey, 4. Mapping exercise (for the allocations process), and 5. Analysis & Interpretation.

3.1 Scoping exercise

The scope of the study comprised Aberdeen City Council and RSL stock for Very Sheltered/Extra Care Housing.

The establishments considered within the scope of the study are set out below in table 3.1. The number of properties (i.e. units) per establishment are stated alongside.

This report incorporates findings from stakeholder engagement that took place prior to the creation of Bon Accord Care ('BAC') - an arms-length Local Authority Trading Company that began providing services on behalf of Aberdeen City Council from July 2013.

Any reference within this report to Aberdeen City Council staff in the Very Sheltered Housing complexes e.g. personal carers, refers to staff that are now Bon Accord Care staff.

Table 3.1: Very Sheltered/‘Extra Care’ Housing establishments

<p>Aberdeen City Council owned and managed* ³ :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kingswood Court (40 + linked cottages) 2. Denmore Court (37 + linked cottages) 3. Coronation Court, (33 + linked cottages) 	<p>Castlehill Housing Association (RSL owned / service provided by ACC)* :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Craigielea Gardens (50) – linked cottages not included in study 	<p>VSA owned and managed (non RSL, private landlord):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Broomhill Park 7. Cloverfield Grove
	<p>Castlehill owned / support service provided by Carewatch / meal services by ACC:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Victoria Grange, Dyce (39) 	

* ACC commission Bon Accord Care (‘BAC’) to provide services.

Tenant and staff surveys were carried out at the establishments identified as 1. to 5. in the above table. Appropriate consent was sought from Castlehill Housing Association and Carewatch, who assisted in the survey process.

It should be noted that the VSA establishments identified as 6. and 7. in the above are part of the Very Sheltered Housing ‘picture’ across Aberdeen City, although tenant and staff surveys were not carried out for the current study at these two establishments. VSA were however included in stakeholder consultation prior to concluding the current report. Stakeholders who were otherwise involved in, or consulted with, during the study process for information gathering, is summarised as follows.

a) Key stakeholders

- Aberdeen City Council/Bon Accord Care staff:
 - Supporting people team
 - Selections co-ordinator
 - Service managers (Care management and Housing management)
 - Community Care Strategy Officer
 - Tenant participation team
 - Wellbeing co-ordinators
 - Research team
- RSL housing partners & care providers: representatives from:
 - Castlehill Housing Association
 - Carewatch

³ The linked cottage ‘Sheltered’ tenants attached to establishments 1. to 3. were included in the ‘Very Sheltered’ tenant survey on the basis that these tenants have access to and/or use Very Sheltered communal facilities and services.

- Very Sheltered Housing establishments (ACC/BAC, Castlehill & Carewatch staff and tenants):
 - Managers/senior personal carers/co-ordinators;
 - Housing officers
 - On-site staff (personal carers)
 - Tenants and relatives
 - Tenant representatives from the Sheltered Housing Tenant Forum

b) Information gathering

For the initial scoping exercise, Informal interviews and discussions were held with stakeholders, including tenants and care staff combined with on-site observations to scope out key issues from an operational perspective. These initial perceptions helped categorise in broad terms where variations/distinctions exist across establishments, so establishing a basic framework for ongoing information gathering and a 'baseline' on which to draw comparisons across different establishments, as follows:-

- Building/physical environment e.g. building layout, facilities
- Location / context e.g. access to local services and facilities
- Core services e.g. meal times, daily calls, activities
- Staffing structures and systems e.g. shift patterns
- Social environment e.g. tenant activities, client demographic/social mix
- Communication and understanding e.g. tenant/landlord, housing /social work teams, partnership working

3.2 Tenant survey

A mixed method approach was devised for the tenant survey, using a combination of questionnaire, informal discussion and observations to generate information. Such an approach was believed to be appropriate given the interests of the study to achieve explanatory depth in a small scale study, with predominantly frail and elderly participants. The methods comprised:

- Tenant questionnaire
- Tenant workshop using graphic facilitation method (a communication method using pictorial graphics)
- Tenant 'walkabouts' (accompanied walks with tenants in communal areas indoor & outdoor)

a) Tenant questionnaire

The purpose of the tenant questionnaire was twofold: to seek an overview of tenant satisfaction levels in very sheltered/extra care housing, but also to attempt to identify what is most important to tenants, and where variation exists in relation to provision of services and facilities across establishments.

A blank copy of the tenant questionnaire used for the current study is included in Appendix A.

b) Methodology & data limitations (tenant survey)

- The questionnaire was used in conjunction with tenant workshops and walkabouts. These additional discussion-based methods were used to ‘flesh out’ detail that was beyond the scope of the questionnaire. This approach helped distinguish generalised findings from place-specific issues at individual establishments.
- The use of discussion-based methods also helped broaden out to tenants who may not be able or willing to respond to the questionnaire. In practice, the workshops and walkabouts were small scale and limited in occurrence, but did nonetheless add context to the tenant questionnaire data. Tenant comments received through discussions and questionnaire comments are drawn together in the discussion provided in Section Two of this report.
- For a more detailed review of the merits and limitations of the tenant questionnaire refer to Section Two, item 14 in the current report.

c) Tenant questionnaire results

The full set of data, information and analysis is provided in Appendix C.

d) Tenant workshops

Tenants were invited to sit down with the researcher in small discussion groups. The purpose was to explore tenants’ understanding of Very Sheltered Housing. To give discussions structure and focus, tenants were asked to imagine designing a new leaflet and what it should say in it to explain the Very Sheltered Housing service to new people. A graphic facilitation method using pictorial graphics, flip charts and pens as a communication method to help facilitate and record the discussions.⁴

e) Tenant ‘walkabouts’

The purpose of this exercise was to examine the tenant experience of communal areas /shared use facilities in the building, and explore how well the building supports tenants’ in their everyday living – likes/dislikes, what works/doesn’t work, what could be done differently; what helps/ what hinders etc.

Walkabouts were held in communal areas indoor & outdoor areas only (not individual properties).

⁴ ‘Getting to grips with graphics: A workbook for Graphic Recorders and Facilitators’ by Helen Wilson. (Getting to Grips with Graphics – © Envision, 2006).

3.3 Staff survey

a) Staff Questionnaire

A blank copy of the staff questionnaire is included in Appendix B.

b) Methodology & data limitations (staff survey)

- The staff questionnaire was developed in tandem with the tenant questionnaire.
- Questions were developed with the intention of making direct comparisons between staff and tenant perceptions.
- The questionnaire was devised with the assistance of the ACC research team in terms of the design of the content, and setting up the 'survey monkey' for data input and synthesis.
- Questionnaires were issued anonymously to staff in establishments 1. to 5. As identified above in table 3.1, and each questionnaire was issued with a pre-paid reply envelope.
- There was a low response rate to the staff questionnaire. The results must therefore be read with caution in terms of how well this represents the overall staff view. However, the feedback does provide a snapshot indication of opinion, points for comparison with tenant feedback, and in particular, section C of the questionnaire provides some rich qualitative data for discussion about Very Sheltered Housing.

3.4 Mapping exercise (allocations process)

- A 'picture' of the allocations process as it currently exists for allocating Very Sheltered Housing tenants was mapped out using a flow chart approach to illustrate the relationship between various functions and stages in the process as explained to the project researcher by stakeholders.
- Two flow charts are included in Appendix D: Map 1 showing the allocations process as it currently exists for Aberdeen City showing two interlinked routes for allocation via 'Housing' and 'Care'; and Map 2 showing the Castlehill Housing Association allocations route for applicants.
- Allocations and eligibility issues arising are fully discussed in Section Two of this report where key considerations and opportunities for improvement are identified.

3.5 Data analysis & interpretation

- The discussion that follows in Section Two is used as a tool to draw together all information including questionnaire results; staff and tenant comments from informal discussions, tenant 'walkabouts' and workshops; information from the Allocations and Eligibility mapping exercise; and general observations.

- The discussion identifies a series of key findings which are summarised in Section Three, where the report is drawn to a close with a series of conclusions and recommendations.

It should be noted that this study is a small scale, 'qualitative' research endeavour.

The data and information used is largely based on people's perceptions and descriptions that are subject to interpretation.

The report does however present a 'picture' of Very Sheltered Housing, based on the scope and remit of the study.

SECTION TWO: DISCUSSION

This section draws together in a discussion all the data and information collected for this review. This includes: questionnaire results; staff and tenant comments from informal discussions, tenant 'walkabouts' and workshops; information from the Allocations and Eligibility mapping exercise; and general observations. The information is discussed and key findings summarised.

4. Facilities

4.1 Tenant perception

When tenants were asked in the questionnaire about facilities provided at their establishment, their answers tell us about the tenants' *perception* of what exists, and what facilities feature most in people's everyday lives. However, these may not provide an accurate picture of what *actually* exists. For example, some tenants' answers suggested there was no communal bathroom, (perhaps because they have never needed to use it), whereas all establishments surveyed do provide such a facility.

'Sheltered Housing' Tenants in linked cottages were included in the 'Very Sheltered Housing' tenant questionnaire at three of the establishments surveyed (refer table 3.1) since these tenants make daily or regular use of the Very Sheltered Housing facilities provided in the attached main establishment.

With the above factors in mind, the top answers given by tenants are:-

1. Laundry facilities (100%)
2. Communal dining room (99%)
3. A lounge/common room (97%);
4. Guest room (97%);
5. Lifts between floors (97%)
6. Reception (96%)
7. Nearby car park (95%)

The facilities that feature to a lesser degree in tenants' perception of what is provided, and where there is more variation in provision of facilities across the Very Sheltered establishments, are:-

8. Access to garden (80%)
9. Conservatory or indoor sun lounge (58%).
10. Dedicated games/hobbies room (59%)
11. Communal bathroom (71%)
12. Balcony or outdoor sitting area (78%)

The lowest answers given by tenants tell us what facilities are least well provided for:-

13. Communal kitchen facilities (for dedicated tenant use) (36%)
14. Storage for mobility scooters and recharging of batteries (38%)

4.2 Tenant satisfaction

Tenant satisfaction levels with the facilities is generally high, as indicated through the questionnaire results. The highest satisfaction is:

- lounge/common room (96% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied), followed by
- communal dining area (92%) and lifts (91%).

The facilities with greatest tenant dissatisfaction are:

- reception, laundry, mobility scooter storage, and nearby car park (between 10-12% of tenants expressing dissatisfaction with these),
- followed by communal kitchen, conservatory, balcony/outdoor sitting area and access to garden (each 8% tenant dissatisfaction).

When comparing tenant and staff satisfaction with facilities, both are highly satisfied with the lounge/common room. A key point of difference is with the **communal dining area**: whereas only 6% of tenants are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, staff expressed 26% dissatisfaction. Staff dissatisfaction with other facilities otherwise are similar to tenants. Facilities are discussed more fully in **item 12** of this report.

4.3 Summary

The key findings about provision of facilities at the five establishments surveyed are:

- Tenant satisfaction with facilities overall is high, but dissatisfaction is expressed with reception, laundry, mobility scooter storage, nearby car park, communal kitchen for dedicated tenant use, conservatory, balcony/outdoor sitting area and access to garden;
- Tenant and staff satisfaction with facilities is largely similar, with the exception of communal dining room facilities which staff are more dissatisfied with than tenants;
- Facilities that feature most highly in tenants' everyday lives, and which are provided at all establishments are: laundry, communal dining room, lounge/common room, guest room, lifts, reception, and car park;
- There is varied provision of conservatory/sun lounge; dedicated games/hobbies room; communal bathroom; balcony or outdoor sitting area and garden;
- Facilities least well provided for are communal kitchen facilities (for dedicated tenant use) and storage for mobility scooters.

5. Support services

When tenants were given a list of the key activities provided by personal carers and asked to say how important these were, the **top 4 'very important' activities** are:

- 'assistance from staff in an emergencies' (86%)
- 'knowing staff are always available on site if needed' (83%)
- 'knowing personal care is on hand' (81%), and
- 'a daily call from staff' (78%).

5.1 Comparing tenant and staff perceptions

Key findings are:

- What the staff think is 'very important' to tenants is similar to what tenants say, this being: *'assistance in emergencies'* (100%), *'a daily call from staff'*, *'health and safety services'* (both 98%), *'knowing staff are always available on site if needed'*, and *'knowing that personal care is on hand when needed'*, (both 92%).
- When combining the 'very important' and 'important' categories of answers provided against all the listed activities, they all scored highly (over 80%) in both tenant and staff questionnaires, with *'support to organise social activities'*, *'reception service'*, *'support with letter/form filling'* and, *'help with relationships and neighbours'*, featuring only slightly less important than *assistance from staff in emergencies*.
- Approximately a quarter of respondents said that 'support with letters and filling in forms', and 'help with relationships and neighbours' were 'not applicable' or 'not important' against two different questions: whilst not all tenants need or use such support services, these answers do not necessarily mean that tenants do not appreciate such support being available if needed. For example this tenant commented: *'I have answered 'not applicable' because I have not had reason to call on these particular services, but the knowledge that they are there is still important,'* and another tenant commented *'...all services provided are important to my well-being'*.

5.2 Tenant satisfaction

When asked how satisfied they are with the services provided by personal carers, **the top 4 activities tenants say they are 'very satisfied' with are:-**

- 'assistance from staff in emergencies' (68%),
- 'knowing staff are always available if needed' (67%),
- 'a daily call from staff' (65%), and
- 'knowing that personal care is on hand when needed' (64%).

The top 3 items tenants are either 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with are:-

- 'help or support to organise social activities (8%)
- 'reception service' (6%), and
- 'ensuring communal areas are kept clean' (5%).

When tenants were asked to explain more about their dissatisfaction with the items above, the item triggering most comments was with regard to '**help or support to organise social activities**'. Whilst dissatisfaction with this does not seem especially high at 8%, the response should be considered in relation to the fact that 90% of respondents highlighted this activity as 'important', when combining the 'very important' and 'important' categories and that this item triggered the most response in terms of tenant comments.

Furthermore, when **staff** were asked about the level of support provided against all the key activities provided by personal carers staff respondents all agreed that provision of a daily call from staff is 'about right', and 88-96% of respondents agreed that all other listed activities were also 'about right'. The main exception is '**help or support to organise social activities**', where a third of staff respondents thought there was '**not enough**' support.

When **tenants** were asked further about social activities taking place, less than half agreed that '**there is plenty to do here in terms of activities**'. This is the case, even though over 80% of tenant respondents agreed they are 'encouraged by staff to attend any activities going on'.

Overall satisfaction with services

When asked about overall satisfaction to the Very Sheltered Housing support services received, tenants were 97% satisfied when combining 'very satisfied' with 'satisfied' responses. Nonetheless, for the reasons outlined above, provision of, and tenant involvement in, social activities stands out as a key area for improvement. This is discussed in more detail below (refer item 12.4).

5.3 Summary

The key findings about provision of support services are:

- the top 'very important' aspects of service from the tenants' perspective, and which tenants are highly satisfied with are: '*assistance from staff in emergencies*', '*knowing staff are always available on site if needed*', '*knowing personal care is on hand*' and a '*daily call from staff*';
- '*support to organise social activities*', '*reception service*', '*support with letter/form filling*' and '*help with relationships and neighbours*' are aspects of service that are only slightly less important to tenants than the more critical services such as '*assistance from staff in emergencies*';
- tenants expressed most dissatisfaction with '*support to organise social activities*', '*reception services*', and '*ensuring communal areas are kept clean*';

- what staff and tenants think is 'important' is similar, and both tenants and staff expressed dissatisfaction about lack of support with social activities with not enough going on, even though tenants feel that staff do encourage tenants.

6 Living in Very Sheltered Housing

6.1 Tenant point of view

When tenants were asked in the questionnaire to single out the most important thing of all from a series of statements given about living in VSH, the results show that the top 3 most important factors are:

- 'have a hot meal provided every day'
- 'be as independent as possible'
- 'can call staff for help anytime day or night if needed'

The nature of comments made by tenant respondents indicate that each of the above factors are in fact so interlinked, that it is hard to separate one from the other, for example:-

- *'Being as independent as possible but knowing help is at hand';*
- *'I like to be independent as much as possible but it's good to know there are staff if I need them. I want to hold onto my independence for as long as I can.'*
- *'It is very important to maintain independence as much as possible and having the correct care and support and a hot meal and to socialise with other tenants is very important.'*
- *'Having all the care that is needed but still being independent is most important, and having a hot meal every day is what very sheltered is all about.'*

By the fact that tenants selected '**can call staff for help anytime day or night if needed**' as one of the top 3 'single most important things' we can surmise that this broadly captures the other 'very' important items already highlighted above by tenants i.e. '*assistance from staff in emergencies*', '*knowing staff are always available on site if needed*', '*knowing personal care is on hand*' and a '*daily call from staff*'. This would also refer to staff being on site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (or '24/7').

The above comments also indicate that the presence of staff not only help tenants '*be*' independent, but their presence on site 24/7 helps tenants '*feel*' independent. This is explored in further detail later in this report (refer item 12.2).

6.2 Staff point of view

When staff were asked to single out the most important thing of all for tenants from their point of view, the results show that the top 3 most important factors are:

- **'can call staff for help anytime day or night if needed'**
- **'be as independent as possible'**
- **'have privacy respected'**

Thus, the main difference between the tenant and staff point of view on the top 3 'single most important thing' is that 'having privacy respected' is highlighted more by staff. This is perhaps because staff are more conscious of this in their daily work, whereas this was not highlighted by tenants as a key issue, so suggesting an aspect of service that works well.

Similar to the tenant point of view, staff comments tell us that key aspects of the Very Sheltered service are so interlinked it is difficult to prioritise one thing over another, for example:-

- *'it reassures the tenant that help is on hand at anytime, and helps them to live more independently'.*
- *'they live independently as possible, [with] individual dignity and privacy maintained.'*
- *'live in a well designed environment which enables and promotes independence, and self worth.'*

6.3 Summary

Tenant and staff questionnaire results highlight the following about everyday living in Very Sheltered Housing (i.e. the top 3 most important things to tenants):-

- **'to have a hot meal everyday'** is the most important thing of all to tenants;
- being **'as independent as possible'** features highly in everyday living for tenants; and
- tenants knowing they **'can call staff for help anytime day or night if needed'** is highly interlinked with 'feeling' independent.

7 The decision to move

7.1 Key Considerations

For the majority of tenant respondents from the questionnaire, the decision to move was **'a joint decision between myself and my family'** (44%). This is the perception of tenants even though in reality other professionals are almost always involved: this suggests a positive outcome if tenants felt they were included in the decision making process.

The 3 main reasons tenants gave for moving into Very Sheltered Housing (or a cottage linked to it) were:-

- ***'Even though I might need some help, I want to stay independent for as long as possible.'*** (57%),
- 'I needed somewhere to live that was designed to meet my needs' (43%), and
- 'I was worried about my health and needed a support service' (38%).

7.2 Summary

Key findings about tenants' decision to move into Very Sheltered Housing are:

- For the majority of tenants the decision to move was made jointly with family;
- There is a good indication that tenants feel suitably involved in the decision making process;
- To stay living independently as possible is a key consideration for tenants when deciding to move into Very Sheltered Housing.

8 Very Sheltered Housing – who is it for, what is it for?

8.1 Tenant point of view

When tenants were asked in the questionnaire to agree or disagree with a list of general statements concerning Very Sheltered Housing respondents showed clear agreement over the following statements:

- *'Very Sheltered housing and the support provided is a good service for older people'* (100%)
- *'Since moving to very sheltered housing, I find it easier to get other social care and health services if I need them'* (88%)
- *'I would not mind if non residents came into my very sheltered complex to receive day care/other services'* (71%), and
- *'Very Sheltered Housing could be used for residents other than older people, such as younger people with disabilities'* (69%)

The above results tell us that Very Sheltered Housing works well for older people, and that broadening out the age range to younger people with disabilities is not an issue for the majority of the tenant respondents.

Respondents also expressed agreement over the following series of statements regarding health and fitness:

- *'If your health fails, you should be able to stay in Very Sheltered Housing in the long term rather than go into a care home'* (90%).
- *'Very Sheltered housing works best for people who are in relatively good health and who are able to live quite active lives'* (61%)
- *'Very Sheltered Housing should include people with dementia or confusion'* (60%),

These results tell us that tenants expect Very Sheltered Housing to support their long term needs including dementia or confusion, but that it also works well for people who are currently healthy and active.

Agreement was fairly evenly divided over the statement *'I wish I had moved into very sheltered housing earlier than I did'*, giving some indication that the timing was likely to be about right for about half of the respondents, whilst the other half wished they had moved in sooner.

Through other informal discussions held with tenants, the point was invariably made that Very Sheltered Housing is for people with wide ranging and varied needs, and levels of independence – or as stated by these tenants in their own words:

- *'people who need extra care, but we are capable - not in deadly need'.*
- *'looked after if needed, but if not, left alone'.*

8.2 Staff point of view

When staff were asked to comment on who Very Sheltered Housing is for, their answers give us some indication of the nature of the client groups at each establishment, highlighting that different establishments can have different client 'profiles' determined by mix of age and abilities. For example, staff working at the complex with the most wide ranging age group (incorporating under 65's), responded with comments such as:

- *'for any one of all ages who fit the criteria.'*
- *'disabled people, with learning disabilities, using wheelchair.'*
- *'[people] who might need attention at any given time.'*

Contrasting with the above comments, at another complex where the client group appears typically older and frailer, staff said that Very Sheltered Housing is for:-

- *'very elderly who can still live independently'*
- *'over 65's, but most are over 80'*
- *'people who need more care'*
- *'frail, elderly'*

A further example of staff comments from another complex, suggested a mixed client group in terms of capabilities, even though all clients were over 65's, for example:

- *'people still partly able to do some things for themselves, but with back up on hand.'*
- *'vulnerable people'*
- *'people who require help with medication and personal care'*
- *'people who need it the most'*

A further point raised by both tenants and staff in terms of who Very Sheltered Housing is for, is that tenants' needs are often subject to constant change from day to day, and can change over time, often seeing an improvement in tenants' health and wellbeing.

Staff emphasised the importance of the daily call for providing immediate response to such changes, and also gave examples of tenants who greatly improve on moving into Very Sheltered Housing becoming more able, with increased levels of independence, for example because of improved health, nutrition or general well being.

8.3 Summary

The key findings about who and what Very Sheltered Housing is for, from both tenant and staff points of view, are:

- Existing tenants strongly agree that Very Sheltered Housing is a good service for older people;
- The majority of tenants would not mind if non-residents came into their complex to receive services, nor would they mind if younger people with disabilities became resident in their complex;
- Most tenants expect Very Sheltered Housing to support their long term needs including dementia or confusion, but it also works well for people who are currently healthy and active
- The timing of the move into Very Sheltered Housing appears to be about right for half of tenants, whilst the other half wished they had moved in sooner;
- Tenants' health and wellbeing can greatly improve on moving into a Very Sheltered Housing establishment.
- Tenants characteristically have wide ranging 'extra care' needs and levels of independence which are subject to constant change either over the long term, or changing on a daily basis;
- Establishments each have their own distinctive client profile determined by the mix of age and abilities of tenants.

9. Allocations & housing support eligibility

9.1 Allocation Criteria

Aberdeen City Council and Castlehill Housing Association ('Castlehill HA') adopt mainly similar criteria and/or 'factors taken into consideration' for applicants for Very Sheltered Housing. However, there are some key differences discussed as follows.

(i) Similarities

criteria that are mainly similar specify that applicants are: vulnerable, do not require continual or 24 hour nursing care, may have a moderate or severe disability but are stable on any prescribed medication and/or treatment, are able to cope with some independence, who are not a risk to themselves or others, and where social isolation is a factor.

(ii) Differences

Castlehill HA specifies that applicants are 'able to toilet independently without assistance from staff or others', whereas the Council are not prescriptive about this. The Council also appears to adopt a more flexible approach to age by taking applicants who are not elderly or over pensionable age.

9.2 Allocations assessment process

Map 1 and Map 2 in Appendix D, illustrate in flow charts the two processes in place at Aberdeen City Council ('ACC') and Castlehill Housing Association ('Castlehill HA') respectively.

Key features of the two illustrated processes are summarised as follows.

- A distinguishing feature of the ACC process is the dual approach illustrated by the 'housing' and 'care' routes (Map 1). The two routes are interlinked but separate entities: the housing responsibility is required to facilitate the contractual arrangement between tenant and landlord, and there is a duty of care responsibility for frail and vulnerable applicants from both Housing and a Care perspective.
- Referrals for Very Sheltered Housing may come from any professional referral through a Single Shared Assessment, or from the Care Home Assessment Panel (often referred to as the 'nursing panel'), or from the Accommodation Advice Team that deals with applicants from the general housing register.
- It should be noted that through a recent modernisation of the ACC Allocations process, the housing route for Very Sheltered accommodation has changed from being 'medical' based, to a 'needs based' approach: the previous approach made allocations based on a system of medical points, whereas the new improved system is based around assessment of a person's housing *needs*.

- Once a Very Sheltered Housing referral is approved, these are prioritised from a Housing perspective according to *need*, and categorised as ‘low’, ‘medium’, ‘high’ or ‘urgent support’. (‘Urgent support’ is mainly in instances of delayed discharge from hospital).
- Along the ‘care’ route an individual may pass through both a Care Home Assessment panel and a Very Sheltered Housing assessment panel.
- At the Care Home panel stage, if an individual is recommended for Very Sheltered Housing (or any other type of housing) they may have to go back through the Housing application route if a housing application has not already been made.
- At the Very Sheltered Housing Assessment Panel stage individuals for assessment are already housing applicants, with their housing application submitted.
- The Very Sheltered Housing Assessment panel is an opportunity for senior carers / managers at establishments to become directly involved with the assessment process.
- Whilst the single shared assessment form (‘SSA’) is the assessment mechanism through the ACC process, it appears to be the case that SSA’s can be out of date when they reach assessment panels, and/or they can become out of date if there is a significant gap between the assessment panel decision and a Very Sheltered property becoming available for the tenant to move in.
- At the Care Home Assessment panel a ‘fine line’ can exist when deciding between Very Sheltered Housing or Residential Care for certain individuals.
- With all of the above in mind, the most striking feature of the Aberdeen City Council allocations route illustrated in ‘map 1’ is that it is multi-layered with inbuilt complexity, largely due to the nature of Very Sheltered Housing which sits between ‘housing’ and ‘care’.
- Whilst the ACC allocations process for Very Sheltered Housing is intended to help ensure that places are allocated to those who most need it there is arguably some duplication, notably, a Very Sheltered Housing panel in addition to the care home panel.

Map 2 - Castlehill Housing Association (‘Castlehill HA’)

When comparing the Castehill HA allocations route with the Aberdeen City Council route, with reference to map 2 in Appendix D, the distinguishing features are summarised as follows:

- For Castlehill HA applicants the process appears a fairly straightforward route, but difficulties can arise for individuals, namely:

- Housing Support eligibility may not be confirmed until late in the process at the point at which a property is allocated, causing a delay. Occasionally Housing Support eligibility may be declined altogether.
- Delays for individuals being housed creates extended void periods with loss of rent for the landlord, and delay or disappointment for applicants.
- Delays can arise where the Supporting People team require additional information, for example if other professional involvement e.g. care management or a SSA is sought.
- Whilst care manager involvement is not a pre-requisite *per se* for confirming housing support eligibility when considering applicants from housing partners, it is the preferred route for ACC/Supporting People team: if no SSA is 'active' when assessing housing support eligibility, care manager involvement is automatically sought.
- A SSA or Castlehill HA's own Very Sheltered Housing application form may be used in the Castlehill HA allocations process.
- Castlehill HA's Very Sheltered applicants are not prioritised as per the ACC process: applicants are allocated a property according to the bidding process, and as long as they meet the landlord's criteria.

9.3 Summary and conclusions

9.3.1 Key findings about allocations and housing support eligibility, are:

- There is no common City wide route for Very Sheltered Housing applicants in Aberdeen;
- Multiple assessment forms are in use (Single Shared Assessment (SSA), ACC and housing partners' own landlord housing assessment forms with potential for duplication or discrepancy;
- Some differences exist in allocation criteria used by ACC and housing partners;
- Very Sheltered applicants are not prioritised by housing partners as per ACC process;
- Care management are not always involved in making referrals, allocations and assessments for all Very Sheltered Housing applicants city wide;
- SSA's can be out of date when they reach assessment panels, and when individuals are finally housed (there can be big gap between assessment decision and Very Sheltered property becoming available);
- Delays can occur for individuals in having their housing support eligibility confirmed where referrals come to ACC from housing partners, creating extended void periods with loss of rent for the landlord, and delay or disappointment for applicants.

9.3.2 In conclusion, the above findings suggest there is potential for enhanced joint working with housing partners to achieve greater consistency for Very Sheltered Housing applicants. Opportunities to facilitate a more consistent approach city-wide for all Very Sheltered Housing tenancies are:

- a) Working with housing partners to agree a joint referral and allocations route or 'pathway' for Very Sheltered Housing, facilitated by:
- b) Merging existing assessment panels to create one joint accommodation panel e.g. 'Care & Support Accommodation panel' to replace existing ACC 'care home' and 'Very Sheltered Housing panel,' and to include housing partners;
- c) Aligning ACC and housing partners' assessment mechanisms more closely for example:
 - consider a new hybrid Very Sheltered Housing application form for shared use by ACC and housing partners (suitably designed to factor in issues to do with the capacity of individual applicants);
 - align allocation criteria used by ACC and housing partners.
- d) Adopting a City wide 'front loading' approach to create a housing support 'passport' for Very Sheltered Housing applicants such that:
 - individuals have their housing support eligibility, care needs, personal financial assessment and eligibility confirmed at the *start* of the allocations process, such that:
 - each individual can progress their application and make their choices with the necessary confirmations in place up front, thereby:
 - avoiding situations where people may be waiting for something they may never get, and prevent properties sitting empty with loss of rent for landlords.

10 Choice of establishments

This review attempted to find out more about what makes each VSH establishment distinctive, or 'special', or whether places are all very similar. Whilst certain differences are immediately apparent e.g. having a community café, having a sea view, or by being central or out of town, other factors to do with 'look and feel' were identified and explored with tenants. Key considerations were identified as follows, grouped under two main themes: a) physical context and location, and b) 'look and feel'.

10.1 Key Considerations

a) Physical context & location

What goes on around outside the complex is important to tenants. For example at one establishment, tenants commented:

- *'nice to see and hear youngsters going past – makes you feel alive'*
- *'there's life around the place'*
- *'nice outlook'*
- *'nice to have view of greenery'*
- *'always somebody about'*

When staff were asked about the 'best things' to do with their scheme, some answers contradicted what tenants said with regard the importance of life going on outside (whereas staff emphasised the need for 'quiet'). Both staff and tenants highlighted appreciation of nice views, an outlook on greenspace or green areas being nearby, and that location matters in relation to shops, buses and accessibility e.g. being on the flat rather than a hill. For example when staff were asked what the 'worst things' about their particular complex, they said:

- *'long distance to city centre'*
- *'very far up hill from bus route'*
- *'bus service not good; no shops close by'*
- *'uphill home from shops'*

Each person has their own preferences in terms of location: whilst living a long distance from the city centre, on a hill or having no buses, might well a 'problem' to some, to others these things were not an issue, e.g. one tenant commented *'I can't use a bus anyway'*, or others liked being out in a 'village' as opposed to being 'in the heart of the city'.

b) 'Look and feel'

The ambience inside is important. For example, tenants at another establishment described their complex being 'homely', 'comfy', 'relaxing' and 'peaceful'.

It is apparent that each establishment also has its own distinctive attributes that give it a 'personality' of its own by the place and how it is run. Staff and tenants appeared to have differing views over whether each place should be the same or each unique. It would appear that each place is ultimately unique by the combination of factors that come together in terms of building, location, people and services, and overall management. These staff comments summarise the point:

- *'each establishment like each tenant should be provided with the service they require'*
- *'core services should be consistently the same, but need to allow for personalities of building and staff to shine through'*
- *'there should be a certain standard'*
- *'should always offer choice and diversity'*

- *'tenants change and so their likes and dislikes so things need to be versatile'*

These comments suggest that choice and diversity is a good thing coupled with versatility, but there should be a core standard of service consistently the same for all Very Sheltered Establishments.

10.2 Summary

Key findings about existing choice of establishments are:

- Choice and diversity of establishments is currently achieved by differences in location, and individual 'look and feel' of a place;
- Diversity across different establishments is a positive attribute created by each place having its own distinctive 'personality', but consistency can be achieved in provision of core services;
- Location is important in relation to easy access to shops and bus routes, and local geography e.g. being on the flat rather a hill;
- Tenants appreciate life going on around outside e.g. youngsters going to school: this makes tenants 'feel alive';
- A nice outlook with a view of greenery and/or 'nice green areas' nearby is important;
- Location in the 'heart of the city' versus 'out in a village' is a matter of personal preference;
- 'Look and feel' of an establishment is a combination of 'something going on' and 'homely' atmosphere;
- 'Something going on' makes the place 'feel alive', and
- 'Homely' ambience means a place is 'comfy', 'relaxing' and 'peaceful'.

11 Early tenancy

Moving into any type of Sheltered Housing usually means tenants have to come to terms with living in a very different physical and social environment from that previously experienced.⁵

Staff and tenant discussions highlight the following key issues that can arise during early tenancy for tenants and their relatives, and then perpetuate throughout a tenancy.

⁵ Love, John, G., (Nov 1992) *Very Sheltered Housing, Normal Sheltered Housing, Residential Care and Day Care. The experience and views of the users and immediate providers.* Dept of Education, University of Aberdeen.

11.1 Key issues

a) Meeting tenant expectations

- Discussions with staff and management suggest there can be problems when tenants first move in to Very Sheltered Housing because their (or their relatives') expectations are unrealistic, although this appeared to vary from place to place. For example, different interpretations and understandings of what the staff can and can't do, and the limitations that exist e.g. staff availability for escorting tenants to appointments, taking people out for walks, and what level support can and can't be provided in everyday matters, appears to be different across the board.
- There are some apparent differences across establishments in levels of support and encouragement given to organising social activities, doing tenants' laundry, and encouraging tenants to eat together in the communal dining room. In some cases this appeared to be staff 'caring too much', for example at one establishment, tenants rarely used the communal laundry since staff do tenants' washing for them.
- Staff comments in general suggest they themselves are not clear about where to 'draw the line' in terms of 'care' and 'support', and/or that lack of time was a key factor, in particular for social activities. Some staff said they were 'not allowed' to do certain things e.g. to help with social activities, or accompany tenants to appointments.

b) Housing support / Personal Care

- From a tenant perspective, it appears there are misunderstandings and confusion over provision of housing support and personal care in terms of what people are paying for. For example individuals talked about how unfair it was that people got different levels of support e.g. one person getting more showers than another, and also feeling disgruntled because they were 'paying for this'.
- There appears to be a common misunderstanding by tenants about the difference between 'personal care' being a service that is specific to each person and that there is no 'standard', and 'housing support' as a core service. Further confusion was apparent by the fact that the personal care element of their service is free for over 65's but they pay for housing support. The fact that staff are called 'personal carers' is perhaps adding to this confusion.
- Some staff also suggested that relatives and new tenants had trouble understanding the difference between being a 'tenant' in housing as opposed to being in residential care, particularly where people were becoming tenants for the first time.
- Staff also felt that complaints from new tenants could be avoided if everybody was clearer about what to expect before they moved in.

c) Communication and understanding

- The ‘problem’ that all of the above issues point to, strongly suggests a communication issue, with an apparent need for greater clarity and understanding about Very Sheltered Housing services.
- A simple practical point raised by staff is that there is no standardised welcome pack available for use by seniors and managers, and that this could help set out a clearer understanding for new tenants and their families about what to expect from the outset, combined with an induction session. This would also assist staff – in particular agency staff and new starts to reinforce understanding.
- It appears there is scope for improved communication across Council departments e.g. by ensuring pre-tenancy viewing is always a joint activity with housing officer together with senior personal carer/manager, as this is not currently *always* the case.
- Others suggest there is also a general lack of understanding in the wider community e.g. the local fire service, GPs, where Very Sheltered establishments are considered ‘care homes’.
- Tenant comments highlight situations where landlords could have engaged tenants more fully in decisions about furniture or property improvements e.g. new furniture appearing in lounges without tenants having been involved in the decision making. In this way tenants indicated they would like more direct engagement with their landlord throughout a tenancy. This suggests there is scope for more ‘tenant participation’ related activity.

11.2 Summary

The study identified the following issues that are particularly relevant during early tenancy period for new Very Sheltered Housing tenants, but that also have resonance throughout a tenancy:

- Issues can arise because of unrealistic expectations from tenants and relatives about the level of support staff can provide, and misunderstandings can perpetuate throughout a tenancy which could be avoided through improved communication e.g. ensuring pre-tenancy viewing is always a joint activity between housing officer and senior care staff.
- Tenants are unclear about what they are paying for, and confusion arises over ‘care’ and ‘support’, and there can be lack of appreciation that ‘personal care’ is specific to each individual (not a standard service);
- Staff themselves are often unclear where to ‘draw the line’ in terms of ‘care’ and ‘support’, and there is an apparent lack of understanding about what staff are ‘allowed’ to do;
- Different establishments appear to provide different interpretations of ‘housing support’;

- There is general scope for improved communication at all levels to help broader understanding to help set tenant expectations more clearly from the outset in terms of what 'housing support' service is, and how this differs from 'personal care';
- A new tenant information welcome pack would be beneficial combined with a tenant induction session to help clarify what it means to be a 'tenant' in Very Sheltered housing at settling in stage;
- Tenants would like more involvement with the landlord throughout their tenancy e.g. regular tenant meetings with housing officers and greater consultation of any planned improvements or furniture upgrades.

12 Support services and communal facilities in more detail

The discussion will now take a closer and more detailed look at some the key themes identified in this discussion so far, to help pinpoint where opportunities exist for service improvement, and to identify factors for consideration in future provision of Very Sheltered Housing.

The following five themes capture the main issues:-

1. **Having a hot meal provided every day**
2. **Being as independent as possible**
3. **Staff being available day or night (on site)**
4. **Social environment / activities**
5. **Physical environment / communal living**

Key considerations for each of the above are identified as follows.

12.1 Having a hot meal provided every day

As identified earlier, tenant questionnaire respondents felt the most important thing of all in Very Sheltered Housing is to **'have a hot meal provided every day'**. There are two key aspects of provision of meals that this discussion has not yet touched on, namely meal charging and the communal dining experience. Key considerations are outlined as follows.

a) Meal charging⁶

- Each establishment provides a hot meal 7 days a week. Meals are however charged differently across the VSH complexes – either an obligatory charge built in with the rent (two of the establishments) or charged on a 'pay as you go' system. The obligatory, built in charge is per property meaning that a couple will pay the same as a single person.
- In informal discussion with tenants at an establishment where the meal charge is built in with their rent, individuals expressed

⁶ Refer to separate, subsequent review of meal provision and charging at ACC Very Sheltered/Extra Care Housing Developments currently in progress (ref. 'Meal Provision Summary Report' by ACC): a new system of charging is proposed using the Accord Card Scheme.

disgruntlement about having to pay even if they do not take the meal e.g. if a tenant is on holiday, or for hospital stays, with no option to have the money credited back.

- Positive comments about meal charging built in with the rent were that 'it makes it easy for everybody'.
- The 'pay as you go' system is evidently an onerous administration task in terms of collecting money and taking lunch orders. However staff did not appear to view this negatively: staff who did comment on this thought it was fairer and cheaper for tenants this way and so were happy to provide this.
- Negative aspects of the service raised by staff were that tenants should be given more opportunity to be involved in menu planning, and lack of diversity in meals was commented on, e.g. '*some things are served over and over*'. However, it should be noted that tenant satisfaction with meals was not explored in detail as part of this review.

b) Communal dining

- For the majority of tenants, eating together is part of 'having a hot meal', but there are tenants who do not or cannot participate for different reasons. Generally these numbers are low, but at two establishments it appeared that numbers can fluctuate, with numbers cited as being as low as half of the tenants coming down to the dining room to eat the daily hot meal together. Staff at one of these establishments indicated that there was no reason why more of the tenants could not participate, and that more could be done to encourage this.
- Staff were asked in the questionnaire 'What are the best things about tenants having a hot meal served every day in the dining room'. Their answers point to one of 3 main factors:
 - a) **socialising** (talking, exchanging views, '*may be the only company they get that day*');
 - b) **a change of scene** ('*gets them out of their flats*');
 - c) **nutritional benefits** ('*more chance of them eating if join in*'; '*making it easier for staff to monitor eating habits*'). This suggests a 'whole experience' that is more than just having a hot meal.
- When staff were asked 'Is there anything not to like about the meal service or the dining room experience?' their answers tell us about social/behavioural issues that arise, for example:
 - '*some tenants clash with each other and it can erupt into problems.*'
 - '*tenants rush to get to tables ..*'
 - '*[some] may not like larger groups of people*'

- Tenants also commented on behavioural issues in the dining room. For example as described by this individual:
 - *‘very dissatisfied as everybody sits in the same place which means you can't choose where to sit. Tables are pushed together to make big tables so large groups sit together to the exclusion of others. Causes cliques to form’.*

This appears to be a recognisable pattern of behaviour in dining rooms and lounges where residents take ‘ownership’ of seats and tables, described at one of the Very Sheltered establishments as ‘season ticket seats’!

c) Dining room experience

When comparing tenant and staff satisfaction with *facilities* in the questionnaire, results indicate that staff are more dissatisfied with communal dining rooms than tenants are, although informal discussions and walkabouts with tenants highlight the importance of the dining room space, furniture, decoration and general ‘comfort’ factors of the dining room. Other environmental factors were also identified by tenants as having a negative impact on their dining experience, e.g. noise and heat. (These issues are discussed in more detail later– refer item 12).

It is also notable that inventive ways of making the most of a small dining space e.g. separate sittings appeared to work well if made into an enjoyable ‘event’ for tenants.

d) Summary

Key findings about how tenants are supported in **‘having a hot meal provided every day’** are:-

(i) Meal charging

- meal charging system varies across establishments
- tenants either have compulsory charge per property built in with rent payment, or pay as you go per person
- there is a lack of flexibility in the compulsory charging system e.g. no option for crediting back money where meals are not taken for holidays, hospital stays
- compulsory charging is unfair where tenants have to pay for meals not taken, and works out more expensive for tenants than a ‘pay as you go’ system
- compulsory charging is unfair on individuals e.g. a couple living in a property pays the same as single people in same building

- compulsory 'inbuilt' charging does however make it easy for tenants and is easier to administer
- opportunity exists for revising meal charging for more equitable and modernised approach across all Very Sheltered Housing – but needs to be easy for tenants, easy for staff to administer, and flexible

(ii) Communal dining

- more can be done to encourage tenants to participate in meal times in the dining room
- positive benefits of communal dining highlighted by staff emphasise the 'whole experience' for tenants, comprising socialising, 'change of scene' as well as nutritional benefits;
- negative aspects of communal dining includes conflicts and cliques caused by tenants taking 'ownership' of seats and tables.

(iii) Dining room experience

- physical and environmental 'comfort' factors are important considerations for encouraging tenant participation at meal times
- inventive ways of making the most of a small dining space e.g. separate sittings can work well if made into an enjoyable 'event' for tenants.

12.2 Being as independent as possible

As already highlighted in the questionnaire results, 'being as independent as possible' is very important to tenants. Promoting independence is also a key objective of the Supporting People programme (as set out in the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001). Defining what this actually means to tenants merits further discussion to help identify if and where improvements can be made.

a) Defining 'being independent': *Tenant perception*

As highlighted earlier, comments from the tenant questionnaire tell us that 'being independent' is highly interlinked with other 'very important' aspects of the service, notably having a hot meal provided, and being able to call on staff day or night: as such these things are mutually supportive. For example, having a hot meal provided helps maintain health which in turn helps maintain a level of independence; also, having a daily call and staff on hand day or night gives individuals confidence to live their lives with the security of knowing someone is checking up on them.

A sample of tenant comments define being independent as:

- *'achieving all you can'*
- *'helping you make your own decisions'*
- *'realising your full potential'*
- *'living with the security of knowing back up help is available if and when needed'*

At the same time tenants valued:

- *'freedom to do as you wish'*
- *'doing as much as you possibly can for yourself'*

We may conclude from the general nature of tenant comments and feedback that staff not only play a key role in tenants being able to live as independently as possible, but moreover that they help make tenants 'feel' independent.

b) Defining 'being' independent': *Staff perception*

From the staff perspective, when asked 'how would you describe what being independent means', their descriptions ranged from very specific ideas about what from a practical / personal care point of view, to more general comments about the quality of life, or 'feel good' factors. For example, the **practical** side of 'being independent' is:-

- *'able to mobilise with aids, and toilet self'*
- *'managing to be able to do things for yourself e.g. wash and dress.'*
- *'being able to manage by themselves'*
- *'being able to make a cup of tea, go to the toilet, choose what they want to do.'*

Whereas, **quality of life/'feel good'** part of 'being independent' is:-

- *'feeling able to be part of what is going on – and worth something'*
- *'having their choices and input.'*
- *'a high degree of self reliance'*
- *'confident and self-assured'*
- *'... staff to encourage and praise them.'*
- *'not to be treated like an invalid'*
- *'freedom to do what they like if able to make their own decisions'*
- *'still having a life.'*

Individual staff members and managers also raised an issue about the challenge of 'not doing too much' for tenants, if those tenants can manage. Key points are:

- striking a balance between providing 'care' and 'support' can be difficult to put into practice, in particular for staff who come into housing from a residential care work experience:
- the less clearly defined task of 'support' can be difficult to adjust to;

- it is not uncommon for staff to ‘care too much’ without realising it. This is especially challenging in a Very Sheltered Housing support working environment since personal care is delivered alongside housing support.
- Staff comments were also made about not always having enough time to provide tenants with the support and encouragement they really need.

c) Summary

Key findings about how tenants are supported in ‘**being as independent as possible**’:

- promoting independence involves staff combining practical, everyday support with ‘feel good’ support i.e. tenants feeling confident, reassured and ‘worth something’
- staff play a central role in helping tenants ‘feel’ independent;
- providing housing ‘support’ requires specialist understanding, and for new staff this can involve some adjustment, especially if coming from a residential care background, and:
- staff can ‘care too much’ without realising it, and:
- encouraging independence within the context of Very Sheltered housing support takes time.

12.3 Staff being available day or night (on site ‘24/7’)

The activities highlighted by tenants as being ‘**very important**’ in the questionnaire, tell us that it is both getting a daily call from staff and just knowing staff are there day or night in case of need, that is important to them.

These tenant comments summarise the main benefits of having staff on site:

- *‘Call on staff day or night is very reassuring. It is a great opportunity to chat to most of the tenants’*
- *‘Peace of mind, knowing that there is someone at hand if required’*
- *‘makes tenants feel safe and valued’.*
- *‘Friendship and kindness’*

In other words, more than just providing safety, protection and peace of mind for tenants, staff bring an added social dimension to people’s lives, in particular through the daily call and other personal visits for a chat and ‘friendship’.

a) Key considerations

i) Daily call

The daily call is part of the service that tenants have signed up for. Occasionally, a tenant was not happy about the way the daily call was delivered: for example one individual described the inconvenience it caused him to 'hang about all morning' waiting for the daily call. In another example, a different tenant wanted to see improvement in the way personal visits are carried as follows:

- 'Personally because I'm visually impaired I would like it if the carers who come in to my flat would just say who they are. It would be a great help'.

Whilst it is likely that individual members of staff will have their own 'style' of making contact with tenants, it also remains a fact that the daily call as a service is delivered slightly differently across the VSH establishments: whilst all establishments give tenants a morning call (usually through the Tunstall intercom system), with additional afternoon calls on an as required basis (depending on individual needs in accordance with their care plans), one scheme operates a scheduled second personal visit during the afternoon for everybody regardless (in addition to a morning intercom call) as part of the core service.

ii) Tenant's personal alarm ('buzzer')

The tenants' personal alarm (usually worn as a pendant or wrist watch), commonly referred to as 'the buzzer' is a key part of the support system. Whilst tenants frequently expressed what a comfort they find this, staff comments suggest that sometimes tenants used the buzzer too frequently: at one establishment in particular, staff commented that tenants use it 'like room service'. On the other hand, at other establishments tenants had to be encouraged to wear their pendants and use them at all. It is not clear whether this is an indication of frailty or a particular condition of tenants, or whether this an issue to do with over demanding tenants with unrealistic expectations.

When staff were asked more about what they thought the buzzer was for, answers suggested there is wide variation in the use of 'buzzers': some staff felt it was just for emergencies, some said it was for any request, whilst others said that a number of tenants prefer to seek out staff in person, if they are mobile enough to do so.

iii) Staffing considerations

Differences across existing Very Sheltered establishments were noted in relation to shift patterns, use of key worker system, and staffing structure.

Notably one establishment used 'long day' shifts, as opposed to 'early's' and 'lates'. One of the main reasons given for this was to help accommodate social activities in the afternoon time, so that shift

changes did not interfere with tenant activities. Also at this same establishment a 'key worker system' was being introduced where each tenant was allocated an individual member of staff (a personal carer).

Notably, at the time of this review, only one establishment was putting the key worker system in place. Also structural changes were being implemented to put in place a manager at each of the Council run establishments, to provide a tier above the senior personal carer. However, it remains the case that across Very Sheltered Housing variations occur in aspects of staffing including, for example, that the person in charge may be termed a 'manager', 'assistant manager', 'senior', or 'co-ordinator', suggesting differences in their working roles

b) Summary

Key findings about '**staff being available day or night' (on site '24/7')** are:

- The daily call from staff is really important to tenants, and is a key part of 'just knowing staff are there' day or night in case of need;
- Daily call from staff provides social contact and friendship, as well as reassurance of safety and protection;
- Daily call service is not delivered the same across establishments as a core service (can be one or two visits a day depending on establishment), and there is room for improvement in how staff deliver the call to meet individuals' needs;
- Use of tenant's 'buzzer' (personal alarm) widely varies across establishments, and by individual tenants: over-use of the buzzer at some establishments create problems for staff who feel this amounts to a culture of 'room service', whereas at other establishments this 'problem' does not exist;
- Establishments vary in their staffing and management practices, with differences in shift patterns, use of key worker system, senior staff roles and titles used.

12.4 Social environment / activities

The social environment is part of everyday living in Very Sheltered Housing since this type of housing is about communal living. For the purposes of this study, it is useful to think about social activities in the context of the 'social environment' as a way of capturing all the different social activities and interactions that occur in a Very Sheltered Housing complex, not just organised events. With this in mind, the social environment is important since social isolation can be a key reason for allocating tenants in the first instance.

As identified earlier, tenants and staff feel there is not enough support for social activities and not enough for tenants to do. Staff expressed concern

about the impact of this on tenants, whilst tenants expressed dissatisfaction about support provided for social activities.

a) Staff perspective on social activities

When staff were asked in their questionnaire what more could be done to enhance quality of life for tenants, all of the staff comments about quality of life related to social activities. Comments suggest the need for a proactive approach to encouraging tenants. For example:

- *'Take all tenants out of [their] rooms much more regularly to mix - there are lounges unused: use them. Stop them from sleeping so much in the day so they sleep better at night.'*
- *'... - more outings. They [tenants] sit far too long in their flats and get depressed sometimes (most times). They only get out of rooms to go for lunch. More volunteers [needed] to read papers to them and visit more tenants who are on their own.'*
- *'Someone to take them out more now and again on a day trip as many of our tenants don't get the chance to be taken out.'*

And when staff were asked about the main ways of addressing social isolation, responses highlight the importance of providing a range of opportunities for social interaction, not just organised activities but more everyday encounters:

- *'having their meals all together in the dining room and coming to activities if they wish.'*
- *'having coffee days, activities, entertainment, discussion days.'*
- *'encourage to mix with others'*

But perceived lack of time was frequently mentioned by staff as a limiting factor:

- *'Not enough staff rostered on duty to spend time with individual tenants to liaise and communicate, and organise, support in activities'*
- *'changing needs, care and support requires more time'*

When staff were asked about the benefits of having tenant activities, staff comments included:

- *'as with meal times, mixing with others keeps the brain active and gives the tenant something to look forward to'*
- *'helps provide a stimulating and social atmosphere; assists memory, orientation and happiness!'*

Another issue from the staff perspective is trying to balance respect for tenant choice and privacy, but on the other hand encouraging tenant involvement in social activities. When staff were asked what tenants should be expected to do themselves in relation to organising activities,

answers ranged from *'all of it'* to *'anything they can contribute'*, so suggesting that there are differing opinions about what tenants should be expected to do themselves. Staff also said of tenants it is *'good to get involved - makes them feel useful'*, and that in the very least all tenants need to do is *'turn up, communicate with one another'*.

The 'problem' appears to be that staff feel limited to what they can do to encourage social activities within their 'housing support' remit, whilst tenants in turn appear to feel that they are not able to organise activities themselves. Activities Co-ordinators are not provided by the Council in their Very Sheltered Housing as with residential care home homes, and the difficulty appears to be where staff feel unable or 'not allowed' to organise activities for tenants in their establishment.

It must be acknowledged that different establishments have different levels of staff involvement in helping organise tenant activities, sometimes with staff volunteering their own out of hours time to help tenants with activities and events. In addition, more recently the Council's 'Wellbeing' team have been promoting and encouraging tenants with a range of initiatives at the Council owned Very Sheltered Housing. It nonetheless remains the case that lack of social activities is a common theme for the tenants and staff who were spoken to as part of this review.

It is also notable that the establishment that appeared to have the greatest number of 'high needs' and frailer tenants appeared to have the least going on in terms of social activities, whereas other establishments with one or more 'active' tenants within a broader mix of clients, appeared to make a difference in terms of organising events e.g. a fish supper, and managing social funds, tenant committees, etc.

b) Tenant perspective on social activities

When tenants were asked to comment about anything they were dissatisfied with in a general comments section of the questionnaire, the subject of social activities formed the majority of responses.

Tenant comments tell us something about what a social environment in a Very Sheltered Housing should not be like:

- *Not enough social activities, particularly during the day. Could have more outings during the day'.*
- *'Don't think there are enough organised activities. Coffee mornings or afternoon teas would be nice for old people to have a chat. Nowadays I think it's encouraged that you stay in your own flat. Can be a very lonely existence...'*
- *'... on many occasions found out after the event that there was something I would enjoy going to. I'm visually impaired so can't read notices on board.'*
- *'Get togethers and social evenings are few and far between'.*

- *'There is nothing going on here. The staff would help if there was'.*
- *'Feel there could be more activities, and staff could encourage people more'.*

Reasons why it is difficult to organise social activities is expressed by these tenants:

- *'the problem is that residents state of health is such that very few are able to organise activities outside of the home'.*
- *'Tenants here are mostly wheelchair bound and are unable to organise much in the way of activities'.*

Additional comments made by respondents suggest that Church services are a frequent activity in the social life of Very Sheltered Housing and sometimes perhaps the only regular 'event'. For other tenants they are either not interested or not aware of social activities e.g. 'not sure if there is a tenant group'. Other observations and feedback from tenants suggest that on the whole people feel very limited by their health and/or age to take on the responsibility for organising tenant activities, but would very much like to get out and about more, and just generally have more to do and 'something going on'.

c) Summary

Key findings about provision of support in organising social activities, and creating a 'social environment' for tenants in a Very Sheltered Establishment are:

- staff identify a strong link between 'quality of life' and having social activities going on;
- staff expressed concern about lack of social activities and the impact on tenants but staff feel limited as to what they can do because of perceived lack of time, or because they are 'not allowed to';
- a good social environment for tenants is not just about organised activities, but also incidental or chance encounters with people, or just 'something going on';
- the small things in everyday life are important for stimulating people's minds and keep bodies active;
- creating different forms of stimulation e.g. inspiring people to stop and look at 'something going on', helps trigger social interactions;
- the indications are that staff would like to do more to actively create opportunities for social contact and mixing;
- tenants age, frailty and health impacts social activities, so suggesting a mix of ages and abilities makes a difference to the social life of an establishment.

12.5 Physical environment / communal living

Core facilities in the **communal** areas of Very Sheltered establishments (both indoor and outdoor) were considered in terms of what works well, and what doesn't work. Taking into consideration tenant and staff comments, together with general observations a summary of the key findings are presented as follows.

Summary findings

Findings are summarised as follows, grouped under three categories:

Category 1: Facilities featuring most highly in tenants' everyday lives, and that are provided across all establishments:-

a) Laundry

- Laundry plays a prominent role in tenants' lives and the facility is really important to them;
- The ideal laundry is like a 'laundrette' - a place for tenants to sit and chat, read, look out of the window while waiting for their washing;
- A well designed laundry promotes independent living, and is ideally one that is large, bright and airy, with a view from a window;
- When it works well, the laundry is part of the social scene of an establishment, and as such helps promote a healthy social environment.

b) Dining room

- environmental 'comfort' factors are important considerations for encouraging tenant participation at meal times;
- dining room comfort factors include: the size and design of the room; suitable furniture; nicely decorated room; comfortable heating and ventilation; and minimal noise disturbance
- a large dining room is important for allowing space for people to manoeuvre with zimmers and wheelchairs, but not one that is noisy
- greater consideration could be given to minimising noise impact on tenants from kitchens through dish clearing operations, extraction fans etc
- inventive ways of making the most of a small dining space e.g. separate sittings can work well if made into an enjoyable 'event' for tenants.

c) Lounge / common room

- The ideal common lounge is large, yet 'homely' and 'comfy', but not like a 'church hall';

- Lounges work best if large space 'zoned' by furniture arrangement e.g. small groupings of chairs to encourage 'ad hoc' activities such as cards and dominoes,
- 'Zoning' areas using furniture works well in large open plan lounges providing distinctive areas for multiple activities to take place, yet plenty of space for people to move around easily;
- Lounges should have continuous floor covering big enough for activities such as indoor skittles;
- Furniture arrangement matters – chairs pushed around edge of room makes the lounge feel 'like a care home'
- Attention to detail matters to tenants, especially where staff help arrange furniture thoughtfully.

d) Guest room

- Ideally the guest room is 'like a hotel room' and facilities should be of the same quality across all establishments if all are charged the same.⁷

e) Lifts between floors

- Tenants feel lift provision is inadequate – one is not enough for a large complex, and lifts should be larger.

f) Corridors, sitting nooks

- Corridors all looking the same make a place feel 'like a care home'
- Corridors could be brighter and more colourful with distinctive features to help orientation
- Sitting nooks with drab or 'hospital' furniture look like waiting rooms rather than sitting spaces
- Sitting nooks off corridors work best if 'small lounges' providing distinctive and pleasant sitting *places* rather than somewhere to sit with chairs lined up in a row

g) Reception

- Reception is important as both as a *facility* and a *service*
- Greater attention to detail can be given to providing a 'welcoming' reception to visitors;
- The ideal reception is where the staff office is by the front door, visible from the front door through glass;

⁷ Note: ACC has now amended its guest room policy to address this issue (two levels of charging have been introduced).

- A staffed reception/office by the front door provides ‘natural surveillance’ of the comings and goings of the building, and a personal welcome for visitors on arrival;
- Reception helps reinforce function of the building as a Very Sheltered Housing establishment that is a staffed facility, and ‘not a block of flats’;
- The foyer space inside is ideally a pleasant and roomy space for people to sit, wait and watch the comings and goings;
- The comings and goings of a reception area adds life and activity to an establishment, with opportunities for incidental social interactions, and therefore part of the social life of a building.

h) Nearby car park

- Car park design does not always take adequate consideration of noise and disturbance impact on tenants in their flats, in particular where parking occurs directly in front of bedroom and living room windows.

Category 2: Facilities where there is varied provision across existing Very Sheltered establishments.

(i) Conservatory or indoor sun lounge

- Conservatories add a positive dimension to a communal lounge/common room, for adding space and light;
- Tenant use of conservatories can be limited by heating and ventilation (either too hot or too cold), or because arrangement of furniture does not encourage tenants to spend time sitting.

(j) Dedicated games or hobbies room

- It is not clear how important it is for tenants to have a dedicated games or hobbies room;
- Main lounges/common rooms typically accommodate a range of activities
- Different activities going in the main lounge/common room adds to the ‘social scene’ of an establishment .

(k) Communal bathroom

- Facilities vary from place to place – each establishment provides something different in terms of bathroom space and bathing facilities e.g. may be a wet room with ceiling hoist, or traditional bath.

(l) Balcony or outdoor sitting area; and access to a garden

- Each establishment makes different provision on terms of balcony, outdoor sitting area and access to a garden;
- Opportunities exist at all establishments to improve access to the outdoors and/or a garden, to make it easier to get through heavy doors, or doors with high thresholds, and to encourage tenants spending time outdoors e.g. improved seating, paths and handrails;
- Tenants need to feel inspired to go outside in the first instance – unsightly weeding and overgrown shrubbery puts tenants off;

Category 3: Facilities least well provided for across existing Very Sheltered establishments.

(m) Communal kitchen facilities

- There is a lack of provision of communal kitchen facilities for dedicated tenant use;
- Where they do exist, tenant kitchenettes help support both organised social activities and 'ad hoc'/informal tenant socialising;
- Where tenants have created their own 'makeshift' tenant kitchen area with a kitchen table in a 'homely' space that is easy to access and next to the main lounge, this creates a sociable 'scene';
- Enabling people to join in and interact with each other around a communal 'kitchen table' helps improve the social environment.

(n) Storage for mobility scooters / re-charging batteries

- There is a lack of provision of storage space for mobility scooters and other mobility equipment that needs charging points e.g. standing aides.

13 Funding & budgets (service provision): an overview

The following provides an overview of how Very Sheltered Housing services are funded by Aberdeen City Council. This includes Castlehill Housing Association which provides Very Sheltered/Extra Care Housing places at Craigielea Gardens and Victoria Grange, where the service is commissioned by the Council, and delivered by ACC/BAC and Carewatch respectively.

VSA owned properties at Broomhill Park and Cloverfield Grove are not part of this study as they are commissioned separately and deliver all the services in their own establishments. However, allocations to these establishments are agreed by the existing Care Home Assessment panel⁸ and thus are part of the overall 'picture' of Very Sheltered Housing covered by this report.

This section concludes with a summary of opportunities to achieve greater consistency for tenants at the receiving end of the service.

13.1 Funding of establishments

The establishments included in the current review are listed in table 13.1 below.

Table 13.1: Very Sheltered/Extra Care' Housing establishments

Aberdeen City Council owned and managed*:-	Castlehill Housing Association (RSL owned/service provided by ACC/BAC*):-	VSA owned and managed (non RSL, private landlord):
4. Kingswood Court (40 + linked cottages)	4. Craigielea Gardens (50) – linked cottages not included in study	6. Broomhill Park 7. Cloverfield Grove
5. Denmore Court (37 + linked cottages)	Castlehill owned/support service provided by Carewatch/meal services provided by ACC/BAC*:-	
6. Coronation Court, (33 + linked cottages)	5. Victoria Grange, Dyce (39)	

* Since July 2013 these services have been provided on behalf of the Council by Bon Accord Care ('BAC' - an arms-length Local Authority Trading Company).

Rent Charges

The tenant charges for rent and meals in very sheltered housing is a 'housing' responsibility. The landlord (i.e. ACC, Castlehill or VSA) is responsible for setting rent levels and collection of monies owed. This is out-with the scope of this review.

Housing support charges

It should be noted that a complete review of the charging policy for the housing support element (i.e. tenant charges), is currently underway as a separate review.

Key points to note regarding housing support charging are:

⁸ Refer section 9 and appendix D of this report.

- The charge applied for housing support services in very sheltered housing across services 1 to 5 in Table 13.1 is the same. The current charge for 2013/14 is £29.26 per week. This is currently under review. It should also be noted that tenant contribution depends on individual financial assessments.
- The charge applied at VSA properties at Broomhill Park and Cloverfield Grove has historically been different due to higher levels of dependency and is currently set at £82.22 per week.
- The figures shown in the final column of table 13.2 below, (*'Weekly cost of housing support element per complex, per tenancy'*) are variable because this depends on tenant contributions.
- The tenant charge applied relates to the provision of housing support services only. Free Personal Care is available to those aged 65 and over and is delivered based on the assessment of needs.
- Aberdeen City Council retains overall responsibility for confirming the funding of Very Sheltered Housing places and undertaking assessment of needs for care and support services.
- The four services managed by BAC (establishments 1-4 in table 13.1 above) provide the following:
 - Personal care tasks 24 hours per day
 - Housing Support as prescribed in the 21 supporting people tasks⁹
 - Housing Management tasks
 - A cooked 3 course meal 7 days per week
- The remaining three services provided by Carewatch and VSA are provided in line with the contract that is managed by ACC (Social Care and Wellbeing), incorporating the same four core services as per the BAC establishments.

13.2 Budget for Very Sheltered Housing service

The total budgets for 2014/15, including share of administrative and management costs for providing the services outlined above, are summarised in table 13.2 below. It should be noted that historically there was a separately managed and ring-fenced 'housing support' (Supporting People) budget. This is no longer the case, although charges for housing support functions still apply and have to be paid for.

⁹ See Appendix E.

Table 13.2: 2014/15 Budget figures for Very Sheltered Housing

	Meals £	Housing Support £	Housing Manage- ment £	Personal Care £	Total £	No. of tenancies, including sheltered cottages	Weekly cost of housing support element per complex, per tenancy £
Coronation Court	131,746	217,161	41,647	432,453	823,007	48	86.77
Craigielea Gardens	56,597	181,651	45,636	287,580	571,464	50	69.67
Denmore Court	78,561	187,985	109,828 ¹⁰	413,239	789,613	49	73.58
Kingswood Court	77,916	145,461	79,630	557,287	860,294	55	50.72
Victoria Grange	96,034	-	-	-	96,034	39	-
Total	440,854	732,258	276,741	1,690,559	3,140,412	202	69.52

(Note: Care and support budgets for Victoria Grange and VSA complexes are not shown in the above table).

With reference to the table 13.2, key points to note regarding meal and care provision are as follows:-

Meal provision

- BAC provide the meal service at all the Council and Castlehill Housing Association complexes as an integral part of the overall service. However, meal delivery at Victoria Grange is not commissioned as part of the overall service from Carewatch, but delivered separately by ACC/BAC.
- Meal provision and charging methods and rates vary across establishments, either being collected along with the rent or on a 'pay as you go' approach. Meal charging is currently under review for ACC establishments. Communities, Housing & Infrastructure are working to identify a more equitable and consistent approach to tenant charging so that tenants are charged per individual, per meal, using a single system.
- Figures shown for 'meals' in table 13.2 above highlight a distinct variation at Coronation Court compared with other establishments of similar occupancy: this is because they provide additional weekend and evening meals.

¹⁰ This figure appears higher relative to other establishments as it includes additional maintenance costs such as cleaning.

Care Provision

Key points to note are:

- Personal care budgets are used to provide staffing to meet the assessed care needs of tenants. The amount of personal care time required varies from tenant to tenant, and day to day according to their individual levels of need.
- In Scotland, Free Personal Care is available to those aged 65 years and over. The majority of tenants in Very Sheltered Housing will generally have a higher level of personal care needs and fit within this age bracket. Due to allocation policies, Coronation Court has a higher proportion of people aged under 65 who may be subject to a charge for personal care services.
- A consistent well trained staffing team is required to provide the 24 hour care and support, based upon the overall level of needs of all service users in an establishment. The allocations policy has to ensure that the varying needs of tenants can be met within the resources available. The balance between staff resources and tenant needs therefore provides a direct link between allocations and funding.
- As highlighted earlier in Section 9 of this report (refer 'Allocations & Housing Support eligibility'), a more consistent way of allocating Very Sheltered Housing city-wide by improved joint working between housing partner landlords would help ensure all services providing support for service users with higher care needs receive sufficient funding for the personal care staff required.
- Service developments (including improved Telecare options) mean that Very Sheltered Housing offers a real alternative to residential care, empowering tenants to live safely and independently as possible for longer.

13.3 Summary - key opportunities for improvement

- Meal delivery at Victoria Grange should be commissioned as part of the overall service in order to achieve consistency in service delivery.¹¹
- Consistency in allocating Very Sheltered Housing city-wide by improved joint working between housing partner landlords. Care management assessment and review is a key part of the process (the mechanism) by which this can be achieved in order to meet the varying needs of tenants within the resources available.
- A review of the housing support charging policy together with a separate review of meal charging - both currently underway - will also help achieve consistency and equitability for tenants.

¹¹ Note: ACC Social Care and Wellbeing commissioning and contracts team intend to include meal provision in any future re-tendering exercise, any such action subject to the outcome of a separate internal review currently being completed.

14 Study methodology

The following provides a reflection on the study approach and methods used for the current study.

The main methods are discussed, followed by a correlation of tenant questionnaire results from this study with those from a previous survey conducted in the wider Sheltered Housing review in 2010.

14.1 Tenant workshop

The mixed method approach included informal discussions to help explore issues at a more detailed level than could be obtained through the questionnaire approach. Tenant workshop discussions using graphic facilitation method (a communication method using pictorial graphics) is a method that proved useful only in very small groups. However, it was a useful tool for focussing discussion, even if tenants could not see clearly, although such discussions were difficult for the hard of hearing, compared, for example, with a one-to-one interview approach.

The discussions were presented by asking tenants to imagine they were helping design a new information leaflet about Very Sheltered Housing, to help decide what it needs to say. Although for some this caused confusion, this generally appeared to give a useful 'structure' to the discussion. The main limiting aspects of the method were in 'recruiting' participants to come along, and to then join in with the group discussion.

14.2 Tenant 'walkabouts'

Tenant 'walkabouts' (accompanied walks with tenants in communal areas indoor & outdoor) proved a very simple and effective method. In particular, tenants appeared to enjoy this 'walking and talking' approach much more than a 'workshop' and this sense provided an added 'dimension' to the study. The 'walkabouts' became social events in themselves, including exercise and fresh air. It proved effective in prompting discussion about aspects of the building and how the physical environment supports or impacts on their every day lives, as well as general discussion about services received.

14.3 Staff questionnaire

The staff response to the questionnaire was very low. It was however useful to compare the staff view with the tenant view, and this helped with analysis and discussion of the tenant questionnaire results.

The staff questionnaire had an additional section (Section C) asking a lot of questions about issues to do with wider picture of Very Sheltered Housing, and exploring ideas about what it is and what it isn't. Respondents gave some 'rich' detail in their responses that were informative: although this 'data' was more difficult to analyse, it provided a rich source of material. Given the low response rate to the questionnaire, this helped add information about the staff perspective.

The original intention was that Section C of the questionnaire would directly correspond with questions explored in the tenant workshops. In reality, there were too many items for tenants to cope with in discussion, so there was limited correlation between 'Section C' of the staff questionnaire and the tenant workshops, as was the original intent.

14.4 Tenant questionnaire

The tenant questionnaire used for the current study was adapted from that used by Aberdeen City Council in a previous larger scale tenant survey for the Housing For Varying Needs ('HFVN') Review (report dated Dec 2011), carried out in 2010.

The original survey had covered 47 complexes in total, comprising 43 Sheltered and 4 'Very' Sheltered Housing complexes, with 1491 respondents in total, whereas the current study was very small scale, covering 5 'Very' Sheltered complexes with 107 respondents in total.

The original questionnaire had been developed in consultation with tenant representatives, and was devised for the purpose of providing some baseline satisfaction data that can be used to monitor and track satisfaction levels as services develop. It was therefore deemed important to try to retain core elements of the original. Adaptations were however required for the current study, taking account feedback from the HFVN report which highlighted problems with certain questions, and other changes necessary to suit the requirements of the current Very Sheltered Housing specific study, and to reduce the overall number of questions asked.

Although differences exist between the two tenant surveys in terms of scale of study, questions used, questionnaire wording and tick box answers provided, some useful correlation can be made nonetheless. This is summarised as follows:

a) Facilities provided (question 2, both surveys)

For the latest 'Very' Sheltered survey, tenants were given a more extensive list of facilities in their tick-box answers to this question, for example 'communal dining area' and 'communal bathroom' were added.

Comparable aspects of the survey results reveal that in both surveys the common lounge and laundry featured in the top answers, and that in each survey, storage for mobility scooters/recharging batteries was the facility least well provided for.

Differences in survey results include 'access to a garden' which features far more highly in the latest 'Very Sheltered' survey than the previous survey (80% for the current study compared with 43% previously), and for 'access to communal kitchen facilities', the latest survey results indicate there is far less provision for this than for respondents in the original survey (35% for the current study compared with 72% previously).

b) Tenant satisfaction with facilities (question 3, both surveys)

Satisfaction with facilities is generally high in both surveys. For the 'Very Sheltered tenants in the current study, the facility showing highest satisfaction overall is the lounge, whereas in the original larger survey it was the laundry; however both facilities feature very highly in both surveys.

Both surveys reveal low satisfaction with 'access to a garden', and 'storage for mobility scooters'. Another notable feature of the results is that 'Very Sheltered tenants in the current study are more dissatisfied with the communal kitchen than the scooter storage.

c) About the services (question 7 / question 5)¹² :-

'How important are the following support services ...'

For this question, changes were made to the wording of 12 tasks listed with tick box answers to suit the purpose of the current survey. For example 'knowing the senior personal carer is available...8am – 6pm' was changed to 'knowing that staff are always available on site if needed'. Also, for some answers, items were separated out, e.g. 'providing reception and health and safety services', was changed to two separate answers for 'reception service' and 'health and safety services'. Similarly 'Help to access other services e.g. repairs, medical and other social work services' was separated out to distinguish 'housing related e.g. repairs' from 'medical/social' services. Finally, for the recent survey, an additional 'not applicable' option was added.

In each survey, the results show the same top two 'very important activities' as: **'assistance from staff in emergencies'** and **'knowing staff are always available on site if needed'** (or equivalent answer in the original survey). However, these items were given greater emphasis in the latest survey (86% and 83% respectively), compared with these two same answers in the earlier survey (63% and 60% respectively).

'Knowing personal care is on hand' and receiving **'a daily call from staff'** also featured in the top answers in both surveys, although **'ensuring communal areas are kept clean and tidy'** was more important to respondents than receiving **'a daily call from staff'** in the earlier survey (whereas in the latest survey a daily call was more important than keeping communal areas clean).

Both surveys identified within their top 3 'not important' activities housing support type tasks, notably **'help with relationships and neighbours'** and **'support with letters/form filling'**.

One notable difference between survey results is that **'help or support to organise social activities'** in the original survey 39% of respondents ticked the 'not important' box, compared with just 4% in the latest survey. And when combining 'very important' with 'important' categories, 91% of respondents in the current study thought **'help or support to organise social activities'** was important, compared with 71% in the original survey. However, in both surveys both groups of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with this activity, as follows.

¹² The first question number stated above refers to that from the 2010 survey, the second number refers to the corresponding question in the current survey.

d) Tenant satisfaction with services (question 8 / question 6):-

'...how satisfied are you with the services you have received whilst living here?

In both surveys, when combining the 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied' categories, all items in each survey achieved minimum 73% satisfaction rate.

In both surveys, when combining the 'dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied' categories, respondents expressed greatest dissatisfaction with **'help or support to organise social activities'** (8% in current study, 15% in the earlier survey).

e) Social activities (question 11 / question 8):-

'Please provide information about social activities. Please tick all the boxes that apply to your own very sheltered housing complex'.

In both surveys, approximately three quarters of respondents or more said there are activities and entertainment organised in the complex, and that they have social get-togethers.

In relation to **'we have exercise sessions and receive information about keeping well'**, the results show a distinct difference: 73% of respondents in the current survey say they do receive this, whereas in the original survey this was less than a third of respondents (29%). This is not wholly surprising since 'wellbeing co-ordinators' have since been introduced, and are currently active in the 'Very' Sheltered Housing complexes.

f) Agreement with statements about everyday living in Sheltered / Very Sheltered Housing (question 12 / question 9)

In each survey, tenant participants were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements. With some changes to wording, seven of these statements still correspond sufficiently for the purpose of this comparison, for example **'I can be independent' was changed to 'I can be as independent as possible'**. There were also additional 'Very' Sheltered specific statements included in the latest survey e.g. **'to have a hot meal provided every day'**, and there were also additional statements about socialising and organising activities to explore more about this.

When comparing results in the two questionnaires, In the original survey, respondents' most strongly agreed with **'my privacy is respected'**, followed very closely by **'I can be independent'** and **'my home is warm enough'** (ranging 47-50%).

In the latest survey, respondents most 'strongly' agreed with **'my home is warm enough'**, followed closely by **'to have a hot meal provided every day'**, and **'I can call staff for help anytime'** (ranging 55-62%). We might interpret from this comparison of results that having a hot meal and being able to call on staff for help anytime take a greater priority to 'Very' Sheltered

tenants than having privacy respected and being independent. On the other hand, for the 'Very' Sheltered tenants surveyed, independence appears to be a recurring theme identified within this report, and is inextricably linked with having staff on site 24/7, and having a daily hot meal provided.

When combining 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' answers, If we consider the statements that we can compare between both surveys, both groups of respondents disagree with the statement **'there is always someone to talk to if I feel lonely'** (15% in the earlier survey and 12% in the current study when combining 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'). Whilst it may be said that a high percentage of respondents remain in agreement with the statement, it is relevant to consider a point made in a much earlier study about the issue of loneliness in an evaluation of Very Sheltered and Sheltered Housing (ref. Love, J, 1992 report – see footnote 1 above).

It is notable that in Love's study, whilst few participants identified themselves as being lonely, the study highlighted that it is wrong to conclude that loneliness was not a problem: Love identified the interview methods (and presumably the questions used) as being the limiting factor in addressing the issue. Similarly for the current study, the issue is likely to be more broad ranging than a single question can capture, nonetheless, loneliness and social isolation are important considerations.

g) Additional question (question 10 – recent tenant survey only)

In the current 'Very' Sheltered survey an additional question was inserted asking tenants to think again about the list of statements provided in the previous question, asking **'...if you had to pick ONE THING ONLY what is the most important thing of all?'** Although the response rate for this question was 67% out of the total number of respondents who returned the questionnaire, the results give a useful snapshot overview of what tenants felt was most important of all, distinguishing 3 items over all others by a clear majority in this instance, which helped reinforce findings from other corresponding questions.

h) About the decision to move into Sheltered / Very Sheltered Housing (question 16 / question 12)

Tenants were asked about the decision to move. In the previous survey the question was worded **'how did you make the decision to move'**; in the most recent survey this was asked slightly differently as **'who decided that you should move.'** However, these are sufficiently comparable for the purposes of this discussion, and the tick box choices were broadly the same.

The main difference between the two survey results is that for a clear majority of respondents in the latest survey, the decision to move was **'a joint decision between myself and my family'**. This compares with the earlier survey where there was an almost equal split between **'it was solely my decision to move'** and **'a joint decision between myself and my family'**. This suggests that for the broader 'Sheltered' housing tenant group in the earlier survey, tenants were far more likely to be independent and able to make a decision on their own than the tenants entering 'Very' Sheltered Housing.

For each survey it should be noted that respondents were asked to tick one box only for this question. In both surveys, results may be skewed because on occasion tenants ticked more than one box; results should therefore be read with this caveat attached.

i) About the reason for moving into Sheltered / Very Sheltered Housing (question 17 / 13)

Respondents were asked to give 3 main reasons for moving. For each survey an identical list of tick box answers were provided. In both surveys, the most popular response was ***'Even though I might need some help, I wanted to stay independent for as long as possible'***.

In both surveys one of the items least likely to get ticked was ***'I was lonely and wanted the company of people my own age'***, although this was slightly more so in the original survey, and for the reasons already highlighted above (that people are unlikely to admit loneliness), we should not interpret this too literally. Finally, for this question in the recent survey ***'I needed somewhere warmer/in better condition than my previous home'*** was the item least ticked of all.

j) Agreement with general statements about Sheltered / Very Sheltered Housing (question 12 / question 22)

In both surveys tenants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements.

In both surveys there is almost unanimous agreement with the statement that ***'Very Sheltered housing and the support provided is a good service for older people'*** (98% in the earlier survey, 100% in the latest results).

There was an additional item included for the current 'Very' Sheltered survey, which was: ***'if my health fails, I should be able to stay in Very Sheltered Housing in the long term rather than go into a care home'***, which 90% of respondents agreed with, followed closely by ***'Since moving to very sheltered housing, I find it easier to get other social care and health services if I need them'*** (88%).

In the original survey, highest disagreement was seen in relation to statements about using Sheltered Housing for other user groups and users, namely: ***'Sheltered housing could be used for residents other than older people such as younger people with disabilities'*** (53%), and ***'I would find it difficult to share sheltered housing with people with dementia or confusion'*** (53%) and ***'I would not mind if non residents came into my sheltered complex to receive day care/ other services'*** (52%).

In the latest survey, the results suggest that 'Very' Sheltered housing tenants are more accommodating of other user groups in, or attached to, their complexes. Notably, in the more recent 'Very' Sheltered survey there was only 29% disagreement, (but 71% agreement) that ***'I would not mind if non residents came into my very sheltered complex to receive day care/other services'***

On the issue of dementia and confusion, although the wording of the statement used in the questionnaire was changed, results suggest that 'Very Sheltered tenants are more accommodating of people with dementia and confusion in their complexes than the broader group of Sheltered tenants in the earlier survey, although there was mixed agreement over this. In this respect 58% of respondents in the latest survey agreed (42% disagreed) with the statement that '**Very Sheltered Housing should include people with severe dementia or confusion**'. In comparison, in the earlier survey 47% agreed (53% disagreed) that '**I would find it difficult to share sheltered housing with people with dementia or confusion**'.

14.5 Summary

Key conclusions about the study approach, methods used, and correlation of questionnaire results with the previous 2010 tenant survey, are:

- The mixed method approach using informal discussion together with questionnaire survey approach helped 'enrich' the study by adding depth and detail;
- Tenant 'walkabouts' proved particularly effective both as a survey method and an enjoyable social event for tenants, and it was easier for tenants to participate in than 'workshop' based discussion groups;
- It is useful to compare the staff view with the tenant view of services received;
- When correlating the current tenant questionnaire results with the previous 2010 survey, there were key **similarities** about what tenants feel is 'most important' i.e. assistance from staff in emergencies and knowing staff are always available;
- Both tenant survey results showed high overall tenant satisfaction; and both survey results highlight dissatisfaction with 'help or support to organise social activities',
- Key **differences** identified when comparing the current tenant questionnaire results with the previous 2010 survey are in relation to: making the decision to move; and including residents in Sheltered Housing other than older people e.g. younger people with disabilities;
- 'Very' Sheltered housing tenants in the current study appear more accommodating of other users e.g. people with dementia, although in both tenant surveys the response was mixed;
- In terms of communal facilities, provision of a communal kitchen featured more highly in the previous tenant survey than the current study; and 'access to a garden' featured more highly in the current survey than the previous, although both survey results highlight dissatisfaction with 'access to a garden';
- Loneliness is an important issue, but difficult to explore with tenants.

SECTION THREE: SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

Key findings of this report are now summarised, followed by a series of conclusions and recommendations.

15 Summary of key findings

15.1 Facilities: overview

- Tenant satisfaction with facilities overall is high, but dissatisfaction is expressed with reception, laundry, mobility scooter storage, nearby car park, communal kitchen for dedicated tenant use, conservatory, balcony/outdoor sitting area and access to garden;
- Tenant and staff satisfaction with facilities is largely similar, with the exception of communal dining room facilities which staff are more dissatisfied with than tenants;
- Facilities that feature most highly in tenants' everyday lives, and which are provided at all establishments are: laundry, communal dining room, lounge/common room, guest room, lifts, reception, and car park;
- There is varied provision of conservatory/sun lounge; dedicated games/hobbies room; communal bathroom; balcony or outdoor sitting area and garden;
- Facilities least well provided for are communal kitchen facilities (for dedicated tenant use) and storage for mobility scooters.

15.2 Support services - overview

The tenant questionnaire results tell us that:

- the top 'very important' aspects of service from the tenants' perspective, and which tenants are highly satisfied with are: **'assistance from staff in emergencies', 'knowing staff are always available on site if needed', 'knowing personal care is on hand'** and a **'daily call from staff'**;
- **'support to organise social activities', 'reception service', support with letter/form filling'** and **'help with relationships and neighbours'** are aspects of service that are only slightly less important to tenants than the more critical services such as **'assistance from staff in emergencies'**;
- tenants expressed most dissatisfaction with **'support to organise social activities', 'reception services', and 'ensuring communal areas are kept clean'**;

Staff and tenant questionnaires tell us that:

- what staff and tenants think is 'important' is similar, and both tenants and staff expressed dissatisfaction about lack of support with social activities

with not enough going on, even though tenants feel that staff do encourage tenants.

15.3 Top 3 'Most important' things about living in Very Sheltered Housing

Tenant questionnaire results strongly indicate that:

- **'to have a hot meal everyday'** is the most important thing of all to tenants;
- being **'as independent as possible'** features highly in everyday living for tenants; and
- tenants knowing they **'can call staff for help anytime day or night if needed'** is highly interlinked with 'feeling' independent.

15.4 The decision to move

- For the majority of tenants questioned, the decision to move was made jointly with family;
- There is a good indication that tenants feel suitably involved in the decision making process;
- To stay living independently as possible is a key consideration for tenants when deciding to move into Very Sheltered Housing.

15.5 Very Sheltered Housing – who is it for, what is it for?

- Existing tenants strongly agree that Very Sheltered Housing is a good service for older people;
- The majority of tenants would not mind if non-residents came into their complex to receive services, nor would they mind if younger people with disabilities became resident in their complex;
- Most tenants expect Very Sheltered Housing to support their long term needs including dementia or confusion, but it also works well for people who are currently healthy and active
- The timing of the move into Very Sheltered Housing appears to be about right for half of tenants, whilst the other half wished they had moved in sooner;
- Tenants' health and wellbeing can greatly improve on moving into a Very Sheltered Housing establishment.
- Tenants characteristically have wide ranging 'extra care' needs and levels of independence which are subject to constant change either over the long term, or changing on a daily basis;

- Establishments each have their own distinctive client profile determined by the mix of age and abilities of tenants.

15.6 Allocations & housing support eligibility

15.6.1 Key findings are:

- There is no common City wide route for Very Sheltered Housing applicants in Aberdeen;
- Multiple assessment forms are in use (Single Shared Assessment (SSA), ACC and housing partners' own landlord housing assessment forms with potential for duplication or discrepancy);
- Some differences exist in allocation criteria used by ACC and housing partners;
- Very Sheltered applicants are not prioritised by housing partners as per ACC process;
- Care management are not always involved in making referrals, allocations and assessments for all Very Sheltered Housing applicants city wide;
- SSA's can be out of date when they reach assessment panels, and when individuals are finally housed (there can be big gap between assessment decision and Very Sheltered property becoming available);
- Delays can occur for individuals in having their housing support eligibility confirmed where referrals come to ACC from housing partners, creating extended void periods with loss of rent for the landlord, and delay or disappointment for applicants.

15.6.2 In conclusion:

There is potential for enhanced joint working with housing partners to achieve greater consistency for Very Sheltered Housing applicants. Opportunities to facilitate a more consistent approach city-wide for all Very Sheltered Housing tenancies are:

- e) Working with housing partners to agree a joint referral and allocations pathway for Very Sheltered Housing, facilitated by:
- f) Merging existing assessment panels to create one joint accommodation panel e.g. 'Care & Support Accommodation panel' to replace existing ACC 'care home' and 'Very Sheltered Housing panel,' and to include housing partners;
- g) Aligning ACC and housing partners' assessment mechanisms more closely for example:
 - consider a new hybrid Very Sheltered Housing application form for shared use by ACC and housing partners (suitably

designed to factor in issues to do with the capacity of individual applicants);

- align allocation criteria used by ACC and housing partners.
- h) Adopting a City wide 'front loading' approach to create a housing support 'passport' for Very Sheltered Housing applicants such that:
- individuals have their housing support eligibility, care needs, personal financial assessment and eligibility confirmed at the *start* of the allocations process, such that:
 - each individual can progress their application and make their choices with the necessary confirmations in place up front, thereby:
 - avoiding situations where people may be waiting for something they may never get, and prevent properties sitting empty with loss of rent for landlords.

15.7 Choice of establishments

- Choice and diversity of establishments is currently achieved by differences in location, and individual 'look and feel' of a place;
- Diversity across different establishments is a positive attribute created by each place having its own distinctive 'personality', but consistency can be achieved in provision of core services;
- Location is important in relation to easy access to shops and bus routes, and local geography e.g. being on the flat rather than a hill:
- Tenants appreciate life going on around outside e.g. youngsters going to school: this makes tenants 'feel alive';
- A nice outlook with a view of greenery and/or 'nice green areas' nearby is important;
- Location in the 'heart of the city' versus 'out in a village' is a matter of personal preference;
- 'Look and feel' of an establishment is a combination of 'something going on' and 'homely' atmosphere;
- 'Something going on' makes the place 'feel alive', and
- 'Homely' ambience means a place is 'comfy', 'relaxing' and 'peaceful'.

15.8 Early tenancy

The study identified the following issues that are particularly relevant during early tenancy period for new Very Sheltered Housing tenants, but that also have resonance throughout a tenancy:

- Issues can arise during early tenancy because of unrealistic expectations from tenants and relatives about the level of support staff can provide, and misunderstandings can perpetuate throughout a tenancy which could be avoided through improved communication e.g. ensuring pre-tenancy viewing is always a joint activity between housing officer and senior care staff.
- Tenants are unclear about what they are paying for, and confusion arises over 'care' and 'support', and there can be lack of appreciation that 'personal care' is specific to each individual (not a standard service);
- Staff themselves are often unclear where to 'draw the line' in terms of 'care' and 'support', and there is an apparent lack of understanding about what staff are 'allowed' to do;
- Different establishments appear to provide different interpretations of 'housing support';
- There is general scope for improved communication at all levels to help broader understanding to help set tenant expectations more clearly from the outset in terms of what 'housing support' service is, and how this differs from 'personal care';
- A new tenant information welcome pack would be beneficial combined with a tenant induction session to help clarify what it means to be a 'tenant' in Very Sheltered housing at settling in stage;
- Tenants would like more involvement with the landlord throughout their tenancy e.g. regular tenant meetings with housing officers and greater consultation of any planned improvements or furniture upgrades.

15.9 Support services in more detail

15.9.1 Key findings about how tenants are supported in '**having a hot meal provided every day**' are:-

(i) Meal charging¹³:

- meal charging system varies across establishments
- tenants either have compulsory charge per property built in with rent payment, or pay as you go per person

¹³ Refer to separate current review of meal provision and charging at ACC Very Sheltered/Extra Care Housing Developments currently in progress (ref. 'Meal Provision Summary Report' by ACC)

- there is a lack of flexibility in the compulsory charging system e.g. no option for crediting back money where meals are not taken for holidays, hospital stays
- compulsory charging is unfair where tenants have to pay for meals not taken, and works out more expensive for tenants than a 'pay as you go' system
- compulsory charging is unfair on individuals e.g. a couple living in a property pays the same as single people in same building
- compulsory 'inbuilt' charging does however make it easy for tenants and is easier to administer
- opportunity exists for revising meal charging for more equitable and modernised approach across all Very Sheltered Housing – but needs to be easy for tenants, easy for staff to administer, and flexible

(ii) Communal dining

- more can be done to encourage tenants to participate in meal times in the dining room;
- positive benefits of communal dining highlighted by staff emphasise the 'whole experience' for tenants, comprising socialising, 'change of scene' as well as nutritional benefits;
- negative aspects of communal dining includes conflicts and cliques caused by tenants taking 'ownership' of seats and tables.

(iii) Dining room experience

- physical and environmental 'comfort' factors are important considerations for encouraging tenant participation at meal times
- inventive ways of making the most of a small dining space e.g. separate sittings can work well if made into an enjoyable 'event' for tenants.

15.9.2 Key findings about how tenants are supported in 'being as independent as possible':

- promoting independence involves staff combining practical, everyday support with 'feel good' support i.e. tenants feeling confident, reassured and 'worth something'
- staff play a central role in helping tenants **'feel' independent;**
- providing housing 'support' requires specialist understanding, and for new staff this can involve some adjustment, especially if coming from a residential care background, and:

- staff can 'care too much' without realising it, and:
- encouraging independence within the context of Very Sheltered housing support takes time.

15.9.3 Key findings about issues related to 'staff being available day or night' (on site '24/7') are:

- The daily call from staff is really important to tenants, and is a key part of 'just knowing staff are there' day or night in case of need;
- Daily call from staff provides social contact and friendship, as well as reassurance of safety and protection;
- Daily call service is not delivered the same across establishments as a core service (can be one or two visits a day depending on establishment), and there is room for improvement in how staff deliver the call to meet individuals' needs;
- Use of tenant's 'buzzer' (personal alarm) widely varies across establishments, and by individual tenants: over-use of the buzzer at some establishments create problems for staff who feel this amounts to a culture of 'room service', whereas at other establishments this 'problem' does not exist;
- Establishments vary in their staffing and management practices, with differences in shift patterns, use of key worker system, senior staff roles and titles used.

15.10 Social environment / tenant activities

- staff identify a strong link between 'quality of life' and having social activities going on;
- staff expressed concern about lack of social activities and the impact on tenants but staff feel limited as to what they can do because of perceived lack of time, or because they are 'not allowed to';
- a good social environment for tenants is not just about organised activities, but also incidental or chance encounters with people, or just 'something going on';
- the small things in everyday life are important for stimulating people's minds and keep bodies active;
- creating different forms of stimulation e.g. inspiring people to stop and look at 'something going on', helps trigger social interactions;
- the indications are that staff would like to do more to actively create opportunities for social contact and mixing;

- tenants age, frailty and health impacts social activities, so suggesting a mix of ages and abilities makes a difference to the social life of an establishment

15.11 Facilities in more detail

The following conclusions are drawn about current provision of communal facilities and the role they play in supporting tenants and staff. Key findings are summarised as follows, grouped under three categories, described as follows:

Category 1: Facilities featuring most highly in tenants' everyday lives, and that are provided across all establishments were:-

a) Laundry

- Laundry plays a prominent role in tenants' lives and the facility is really important to them;
- The ideal laundry is like a 'laundrette' - a place for tenants to sit and chat, read, look out of the window while waiting for their washing;
- A well designed laundry promotes independent living, and is ideally one that is large, bright and airy, with a view from a window;
- When it works well, the laundry is part of the social scene of an establishment, and as such helps promote a healthy social environment.

b) Dining room

- environmental 'comfort' factors are important considerations for encouraging tenant participation at meal times;
- dining room comfort factors include: the size and design of the room; suitable furniture; nicely decorated room; comfortable heating and ventilation; and minimal noise disturbance
- a large dining room is important for allowing space for people to manoeuvre with zimmers and wheelchairs, but not one that is noisy
- greater consideration could be given to minimising noise impact on tenants from kitchens through dish clearing operations, extraction fans etc

c) Lounge / common room

- The ideal common lounge is large, yet 'homely' and 'comfy', but not like a 'church hall';

- Lounges work best if large space 'zoned' by furniture arrangement e.g. small groupings of chairs to encourage 'ad hoc' activities such as cards and dominoes,
- 'Zoning' areas using furniture works well in large open plan lounges providing distinctive areas for multiple activities to take place, yet plenty of space for people to move around easily;
- Lounges should have continuous floor covering big enough for activities such as indoor skittles;
- Furniture arrangement matters – chairs pushed around edge of room makes the lounge feel 'like a care home'
- Attention to detail matters to tenants, especially where staff help arrange furniture thoughtfully.

d) Guest room

- Ideally the guest room is 'like a hotel room' and facilities should be of the same quality across all establishments if all are charged the same.¹⁴

e) Lifts between floors

- Tenants feel lift provision is inadequate – one is not enough for a large complex, and lifts should be larger.

f) Corridors, sitting nooks

- Corridors all looking the same make a place feel 'like a care home'
- Corridors could be brighter and more colourful with distinctive features to help orientation
- Sitting nooks with drab or 'hospital' furniture look like waiting rooms rather than sitting spaces
- Sitting nooks off corridors work best if 'small lounges' providing distinctive and pleasant sitting *places* rather than somewhere to sit with chairs lined up in a row

g) Reception

- Reception is important as both as a *facility* and a *service*
- Greater attention to detail can be given to providing a 'welcoming' reception to visitors;

¹⁴ Note: ACC has now amended its guest room policy to address this issue (two levels of charging have been introduced).

- The ideal reception is where the staff office is by the front door, visible from the front door through glass;
- A staffed reception/office by the front door provides 'natural surveillance' of the comings and goings of the building, and a personal welcome for visitors on arrival;
- Reception helps reinforce function of the building as a Very Sheltered Housing establishment that is a staffed facility, and 'not a block of flats';
- The foyer space inside is ideally a pleasant and roomy space for people to sit, wait and watch the comings and goings;
- The comings and goings of a reception area adds life and activity to an establishment, with opportunities for incidental social interactions, and therefore part of the social life of a building.

h) Nearby car park

- Car park design does not always take adequate consideration of noise and disturbance impact on tenants in their flats, in particular where parking occurs directly in front of bedroom and living room windows.

Category 2: Facilities where there is varied provision across existing Very Sheltered establishments were:

i) Conservatory or indoor sun lounge

- Conservatories add a positive dimension to a communal lounge/common room, for adding space and light;
- Tenant use of conservatories can be limited by heating and ventilation (either too hot or too cold), or because arrangement of furniture does not encourage tenants to spend time sitting.

j) Dedicated games or hobbies room

- It is not clear how important it is for tenants to have a dedicated games or hobbies room;
- Main lounges/common rooms typically accommodate a range of activities
- Different activities going in the main lounge/common room rather than in a separate games room adds to the 'social scene' of an establishment .

k) Communal bathroom

- Facilities vary from place to place – each establishment provides something different in terms of bathroom space and bathing facilities e.g. may be a wet room with ceiling hoist, or traditional bath.

l) Balcony or outdoor sitting area; and access to a garden

- Each establishment makes different provision on terms of balcony, outdoor sitting area and access to a garden;
- Opportunities exist at all establishments to improve access to the outdoors and/or a garden, to make it easier to get through heavy doors, or doors with high thresholds, and to encourage tenants spending time outdoors e.g. improved seating, paths and handrails;
- Tenants need to feel inspired to go outside in the first instance – unsightly weeding and overgrown shrubbery puts tenants off;

Category 3: Facilities least well provided for across existing Very Sheltered establishments were:

m) Communal kitchen facilities

- There is a lack of provision of communal kitchen facilities for dedicated tenant use;
- Where they do exist, tenant kitchenettes help support both organised social activities and ‘ad hoc’/informal tenant socialising;
- Where tenants have created their own ‘makeshift’ tenant kitchen area with a kitchen table in a ‘homely’ space that is easy to access and next to the main lounge, this creates a sociable ‘scene’;
- Enabling people to join in and interact with each other around a communal ‘kitchen table’ helps improve the social environment.

n) Storage for mobility scooters / re-charging batteries

- There is a lack of provision of storage space for mobility scooters and other mobility equipment that needs charging points e.g. standing aides.

15.12 Funding & budgets (service provision)

Key opportunities for improvement identified were:

- Meal delivery at Victoria Grange should be commissioned as part of the overall service in order to achieve consistency in service delivery.¹⁵

¹⁵ Note: ACC Social Care and Wellbeing commissioning and contracts team intend to include meal provision in any future re-tendering exercise, any such action subject to the outcome of a separate internal review currently being completed.

- Consistency in allocating Very Sheltered Housing city-wide by improved joint working between housing partner landlords. Care management assessment and review is a key part of the process (the mechanism) by which this can be achieved in order to meet the varying needs of tenants within the resources available.
- A review of the housing support charging policy together with a separate review of meal charging - both currently underway - will also help achieve consistency and equitability for tenants.

15.13 Study Methodology

Regarding the overall study approach, methods used, and correlation of questionnaire results with the previous 2010 tenant survey, it was found that:

- The mixed method approach using informal discussion together with questionnaire survey approach helped 'enrich' the study by adding depth and detail;
- Tenant 'walkabouts' proved particularly effective both as a survey method and an enjoyable social event for tenants, and it was easier for tenants to participate in than 'workshop' based discussion groups;
- It is useful to compare the staff view with the tenant view of services received;
- When correlating the current tenant questionnaire results with the previous 2010 survey, there were key **similarities** about what tenants feel is 'most important' i.e. assistance from staff in emergencies and knowing staff are always available;
- Both tenant survey results showed high overall tenant satisfaction; and both survey results highlight dissatisfaction with 'help or support to organise social activities'.
- Key **differences** identified when comparing the current tenant questionnaire results with the previous 2010 survey are in relation to: making the decision to move; and including residents in Sheltered Housing other than older people e.g. younger people with disabilities;
- 'Very' Sheltered housing tenants in the current study appear more accommodating of other users e.g. people with dementia, although in both tenant surveys the response was mixed;
- In terms of communal facilities, provision of a communal kitchen featured more highly in the previous tenant survey than the current study; and 'access to a garden' featured more highly in the current survey than the previous, although both survey results highlight dissatisfaction with 'access to a garden'.
- Loneliness is an important issue, but difficult to explore with tenants.

16 Study conclusions

16.1 Overview of housing support services and facilities

- Tenant questionnaire results show high tenant satisfaction with Very Sheltered Housing services and facilities, but this does not fully reflect the potential that exists for improvement.
- There is potential to achieve greater consistency in delivery of core services and provision of facilities to an agreed 'standard', without compromising the unique characteristics and 'personalities' of individual establishments.
- Maintaining and enhancing the unique characteristics of individual establishments helps retain a level of choice and diversity for Very Sheltered Housing applicants, but should be achievable without compromising on consistency in service delivery;
- Aspects of service that tenants appear to value most highly, and where service delivery should be most consistently applied, is in relation to three distinct areas:
 - 1) **Having a hot meal every day;**
 - 2) **Being as independent as possible, with staff enabling tenants to 'feel' independent; and**
 - 3) **Knowing that staff are on site and can be called day or night as needed '24/7'.**
- Establishments vary in their staffing and management practices, with differences in the way the daily call is delivered, different shift patterns, use of key worker system, senior staff roles and titles used;
- Aspects of service that both tenants and staff are dissatisfied with, and where there is most scope for improvement in terms of overall quality of life, is in relation to social activities;
- Levels of social activity in an establishment appear to be impacted by a frailer 'higher needs' client group, compared with a more diverse mix of tenants who are more likely to be proactive in organising social events;
- Opportunities exist for improving facilities to maximise opportunities for 'everyday' informal social interaction and supporting independence, and the importance of such facilities and should not be overlooked e.g. communal kitchen facilities for dedicated tenant use; laundry as laundrette/meeting place; and reception as convivial hub of activity.
- Services and facilities are strongly interlinked, and attention to small detail matters to tenants, e.g. furniture arrangement in communal lounges to encourage tenant activities; or noise from kitchens impacting on communal dining areas adding to tenant discomfort;

- To inform future design and provision of Very Sheltered Housing services and facilities, the full range of opportunities for improvement identified by this review provide a framework for further consultation with staff and tenant involvement to identify an ideal model, or 'template'.

16.2 Allocations, housing support eligibility and funding

- There is no common city wide route (or 'pathway') for Very Sheltered Housing applicants in Aberdeen;
- Joint working opportunities with housing partners exist to streamline, particularly where existing processes and mechanisms can merge e.g. a potential new joint care & supported accommodation panel;
- Care management involvement early on in the allocations process for confirming housing support eligibility 'up front' could provide a housing support 'passport' approach for individuals, and so prevent delays to individuals being housed;
- Discrepancies created by use of different criteria and multiple assessment forms in use could be overcome by closer alignment between ACC and housing partners;
- A more consistent way of allocating Very Sheltered Housing city wide would help ensure all services providing for service users with higher care needs receive sufficient funding for the personal care staff required: care management assessment and review is key to this process.

16.3 Meal charging¹⁶ and meal service:

- Current meal charging system is highly inequitable and inconsistent across all establishments surveyed.
- A modernised system for charging is required, but this needs to be easy for tenants, easy to administer, and flexible enough to accommodate tenants with changing and often unpredictable needs.
- To achieve consistency of meal provision within ACC establishments, Victoria Grange should be reviewed to have meals commissioned integral to the overall service.

16.4 Communication and understanding

- Improved communications are required at all levels, to promote general awareness and understanding about Very Sheltered Housing
- Improved communication would primarily benefit pre and early tenancy stages to clarify to prospective and new tenants and their relatives what

¹⁶ Refer to separate current review of meal provision and charging at ACC Very Sheltered/Extra Care Housing Developments currently in progress (ref. 'Meal Provision Summary Report' by ACC)

the Very Sheltered Housing service is before tenants sign up and to establish tenant expectations early on;

- Tenants and their relatives can confuse 'housing support' with 'care', and 'Very Sheltered Housing' with 'Residential Care';
- Personal carers need ongoing support themselves for maintaining and improving best practice in terms of where to 'draw the line' between support and care;
- There is scope for improved communication between housing and care staff e.g. ensuring pre-tenancy viewing is always a joint activity between the housing officer and senior carer and to ensure ongoing tenant/landlord relations are maintained throughout a tenancy e.g. landlord organised tenant participation meetings.

17 Recommendations

17.1 Next steps / implementation

- Arrange stakeholder consensus meeting to discuss study findings and agree next steps as a task list of actions based on the study findings and conclusions outlined above.
- Engage Council's 'Rapid Improvement' team to facilitate working group including housing and care partners, together with tenant and staff representatives (personal carers), to streamline allocation assessment process, including review of criteria;
- Consider trialling a new payment scheme for meals using pre-payment card similar to laundry system, per tenant;¹⁷
- Set up working group to agree a 'standard' for core services, using key findings and conclusions of this review as an initial framework;
- Set up 'sharing best practice' workshops for personal carers to help roll out standardised services, to include all VSH establishments across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire (including Councils and partner agencies).

17.2 Future possibilities - promoting communication and understanding

- Produce new leaflet & welcome pack, and consider induction session for all new tenants/relatives as standard practice.
- Introduce 'taster' sessions, to invite potential future tenants (and relatives) for lunch, activities session, etc
- Tailor each welcome pack to promote individual differences across each establishment, and use material prior to tenant sign-up

¹⁷ Work in progress by ACC – see footnotes 1 & 3 above.

- Hold promotional 'open day' sessions at VSH establishments for Health & Housing partners, community members, and Fire, Police etc
- Tenant Participation through Sheltered Housing forum – consider engaging local members to act as 'link' tenants to the Forum to act as 'voice' for Very Sheltered Housing.

17.3 Concluding statement

Very Sheltered Housing provides an important service for 'bridging the gap' between Sheltered Housing and Residential Care. The current review indicates that this is a service that tenants value and benefit from. What the study is not able to evidence at this time is whether by providing the right level of support in Very Sheltered Housing, it is possible to reduce the need for residential care. However, the current situation strongly indicates that the more housing and accommodation options that exist for people who are on the cusp of needing a care home, and the more flexible the support (and associated funding for it) is, the more likely it is that such individuals are able to maintain independent living.

This study also highlights the need for greater understanding about the Very Sheltered Housing service. In view of the fact that ACC are currently expanding provision of the Very Sheltered Housing service by upgrading existing 'Sheltered' housing to this enhanced service, and needing to deliver the new integrated social health and care agenda, it is hoped that the current report will help communicate the benefits of the Very Sheltered Housing model, as well as help inform and shape future service provision.

Finally, the current review provides an opportunity to achieve greater consistency for all Very Sheltered Housing tenancies city-wide, and it is intended that this review will provide a platform on which to progress joint working with housing, health and care stakeholders and partners to achieve equitability for service users.

If you have any questions on the content of this report please contact:

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Many thanks go to all those who contributed to the development of this report.
Visit Aberdeen City Council's Web-site at www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

APPENDIX A: TENANT QUESTIONNAIRE

Key steps in the survey process were:

1. Tenant questionnaire drafted and adapted from 2010 customer survey (HFVN Review report, Dec 2011).
2. Draft questionnaire circulated to senior personal carers/managers/co-ordinators at Very Sheltered establishments.
3. Questionnaire content and presentation finalized with input from ACC research team who also set up a 'survey monkey' online template for data input and synthesis.
4. All tenants sent a pre-survey letter, explaining purpose of study, and inviting additional involvement through workshops and walkabouts.
5. Pre-survey tenant meetings were held where practical to do so, prior to, or at the same as, distributing questionnaires. Relatives as well as tenants were invited to these meetings held in the very sheltered housing complexes. The aims of the survey were explained and tenants were encouraged to return the questionnaires and get involved with workshops or walkabouts.
6. Questionnaires were distributed for anonymous reply with only the name of the establishment on the paperwork, not individual tenant names or addresses.
7. Tenants were all provided with sealable reply envelopes gathered by seniors on site and collected by the project researcher. This was deemed the most convenient and easiest method for tenants.
8. Data input was carried out by the project researcher and the ACC team collated the 'survey monkey' data once completed, ready for the researcher to analyse and interpret as presented in section two and three of this report.

Tenant Feedback Survey [template]

Your views on Very Sheltered Housing

Aberdeen City Council would like to find out what you think of the Very Sheltered or Extra Care Housing support service you receive, including your opinion of the building and facilities provided in your complex.

Your feedback is valued and will help us understand what we are doing right, and what we need to improve.

The information provided will be used to inform future policy on the development of high quality accommodation, care and housing support services that meet the needs and expectations of tenants as efficiently and effectively as possible.

This survey is **anonymous** so please feel free to comment openly and honestly. All responses will be kept strictly confidential and only used in accordance with this study.

If you need any assistance to complete this survey, or have any other queries about this, please contact **Kathy Southwell on 01224 346002**.

This survey should take no more than 20 minutes to complete. **Please return your completed questionnaires by [.....]** using the enclosed envelope, sealing it and handing it in at your Senior Personal carer's office from where they will be collected.

1. Name of your very sheltered housing complex :
[name of establishment]

SECTION A: VERY SHELTERED HOUSING FACILITIES

2. What facilities does your Very Sheltered Housing complex provide? (Please tick all that apply)

a) A reception area at main entrance to building	
b) A lounge/ common room	
c) A dedicated games or hobbies room	
d) Guest room(s)	
e) Laundry facilities	
f) Communal bathroom for tenants use	
g) Communal kitchen facilities for tenants use.	
h) Communal dining area	
i) A conservatory or indoor sun lounge	
j) A balcony or outdoor sitting terrace	
k) Access to a garden	
l) Lift(s) between floors	
m) Storage for Mobility Scooters and re-charging of batteries	
n) A nearby car park	
o) Other (Please specify)	

3. Thinking about the facilities listed above in Question 2, how satisfied are you with these?

	Not Applicable	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Very Dis-satisfied
a) A reception area at main entrance to building					
b) A lounge/ common room					
c) A dedicated games or hobbies room					
d) Guest room(s)					
e) Laundry facilities					
f) Communal bathroom for tenants use					
g) Communal kitchen facilities for tenants use.					
h) Communal dining area					
i) A conservatory or indoor sun lounge					
j) A balcony or outdoor sitting terrace					
k) Access to a garden					
l) Lift(s) between floors					
m) Storage for Mobility Scooters and re-charging of batteries					
n) A nearby car park					
o) Other (Please specify)					

4. If you said 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' to any part of Question 3 above, can you tell us why that is?

SECTION B:

ABOUT THE SERVICES IN MY VERY SHELTERED HOUSING COMPLEX

5. **Very Sheltered Housing provides a variety of services to tenants. How important are the following support services provided by the personal carers in making it a good place for you to live in.**

		Not applicable	Very Important	Important	Not Important
a)	A daily call from staff				
b)	Knowing that staff are always available on site if needed				
c)	Knowing that personal care is on hand, when needed				
d)	Providing a reception service				
e)	Health and safety services				
f)	Assistance from staff in emergencies				
g)	Help or support to organise social activities				
h)	Help to access other services e.g. medical and other social work services				
i)	Managing housing related issues and appointments e.g. repairs				
j)	Support with letters and filling in forms				
k)	Ensuring communal areas are kept clean and tidy				
l)	Help with relationships and neighbours				

6. **Thinking again about the options you ticked in Question 5 above, how satisfied are you with the services you have received whilst living here?**

		Not applicable	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Very Dis-satisfied
a)	A daily call from staff					
b)	Knowing that staff are always available on site if needed					
c)	Knowing that personal care is on hand, when needed					
d)	Providing a reception service					
e)	Health and safety services					
f)	Assistance from staff in emergencies					
g)	Help or support to organise social activities					

		Not applicable	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Very Dis-satisfied
... /Continued						
h)	Help to access other services e.g. medical and other social work services					
i)	Managing housing related issues and appointments e.g. repairs					
j)	Support with letters and filling in forms					
k)	Ensuring communal areas are kept clean and tidy					
l)	Help with relationships and neighbours					

7. If you said 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' to any part of Question 6 above, can you tell us why that is?

8. Please provide information about social activities. Please tick all the boxes that apply to your own very sheltered housing complex:

a) We have social get togethers e.g. morning coffee, afternoon tea	
b) There are activities and entertainment organised in the complex	
c) We have exercise sessions and receive information about keeping well	
d) I am encouraged and supported by staff to attend any activities going on	
e) There is a tenants group operating in my very sheltered housing complex	
f) There is plenty to do here in terms of activities	
g) Other activities or comments (Please tell us about them)	

--	--

9. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about living in your very sheltered housing complex?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) I can be as independent as possible				
b) My privacy is respected				
c) My home is well designed for my needs				
d) My home is warm enough				
e) I can call staff for help anytime day or night, if needed				
f) My rent costs are reasonable				
g) There is always someone to talk to if I feel lonely				
h) Staff encourage tenants to mix and socialise				
i) Organising activities should be done by tenants mostly, but with help from staff if needed				
j) To have a hot meal provided every day				
k) To have the opportunity to eat in a communal dining room with other tenants				

10. Thinking again about the items listed above in question 9, if you had to pick one thing only what is the most important thing of all? Please state below and give any other comments:-

--

11. In summary, how satisfied are you overall with the Very Sheltered Housing support service you receive (please tick ONE box only).

a) Very satisfied	
b) Satisfied	
c) Dissatisfied	
d) Very dissatisfied	

SECTION C: ABOUT YOUR DECISION TO MOVE TO A VERY SHELTERED HOUSING COMPLEX

12. Who decided that you should move here? Please tick one box only:

a) It was solely my decision to move	
b) While other people/professionals were involved, I took the decision myself	
c) It was a joint decision between myself and my family	
d) It was more the decision of my family than myself that I should move	
e) It was more the decision of doctors/social services that I should move	
f) It was more the decision of the housing department that I should move	
g) Other (please specify)	

(Please make sure only ONE box was ticked above).

13. Can you please tell us your main reasons for moving into Very Sheltered Housing (or a cottage linked to it)? Please tick up to 3 boxes only.

a) I was worried about my health and needed a support service	
b) I needed somewhere to live that was designed to meet my needs	
c) I wanted to downsize my home as the upkeep of my previous home was getting too much for me to manage	
d) I wanted to feel safer	
e) I needed somewhere warmer/in better condition than my previous home	
f) I was lonely and wanted the company of people my own age	
g) Even though I might need some help, I want to stay independent for as long as possible	
h) I decided to move now rather than face upheaval in later years	
i) I wanted to live closer to my relatives/friends	
j) My relatives/friends wanted me to live in a supported environment	
k) I moved to very sheltered housing because my spouse/partner needed the support	
l) Other: please specify.	

(Please make sure you have only ticked up to 3 options above)

14. Below is a list of general statements about Very Sheltered Housing. We are interested in finding out whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Agree	Disagree
a) Very Sheltered Housing and the support provided is a good service for older people		
b) Very Sheltered Housing could be used for residents other than older people, such as younger people with disabilities		
c) Since moving to Very Sheltered Housing, I find it easier to get other social care and health services if I need them		
d) I wish I had moved into Very Sheltered Housing earlier than I did		
e) Very Sheltered Housing should include people with dementia or confusion		
f) I would not mind if non-residents came into my Very Sheltered complex to receive day care/other services		
g) Very Sheltered housing works best for people who are in relatively good health and who are able to live quite active lives		
h) If my health fails, I should be able to stay in Very Sheltered Housing in the long term rather than go into a care home		

15. Do you have any further comments you wish to make with regard to Very Sheltered Housing and housing support services you receive, or the building you live in?

Thank you for completing this survey

APPENDIX B – STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

Staff Feedback Survey

Your views on Very Sheltered Housing

Aberdeen City Council would like to find out what staff think of the Very Sheltered (also known as Extra Care) Housing support service provided, including your opinion of the building and the facilities provided in the complex you work in.

Your feedback is valued and will help us understand what we are doing right, and what we need to improve.

The information provided will be used to inform future policy on the development of high quality accommodation, care and housing support services that meet the needs and expectations of residents as efficiently and effectively as possible.

This survey is **anonymous** so please feel free to comment openly and honestly. All responses will be kept strictly confidential and only used in accordance with this study.

This survey should take about 20 minutes to complete and it can be returned free of charge in the Freepost envelope provided. **Please return your completed questionnaires by [insert date].** If you have any questions about this survey, please do not hesitate to contact Kathy Southwell on **01224 346002**.

- 1. Insert the name of the very sheltered / extra care housing complex where you work:**

[insert name of complex]

SECTION A: VERY SHELTERED HOUSING FACILITIES

- 2. Regarding the list of typical facilities below, how satisfied are you with these at your complex in terms of how well they enable on-site staff to go about their work supporting tenants in their daily living?**

	Not applicable	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Very Dissatisfied
a) A reception area at main entrance to building					
b) A lounge/ common room					
c) A dedicated games or hobbies room					
d) Guest room(s)					
e) Laundry facilities					
f) Communal bathroom for tenants use					
g) Communal kitchen facilities for tenants use.					

	Not applicable	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Very Dissatisfied
...Continued					
h) Communal dining area					
i) A conservatory or indoor sun lounge					
j) A balcony or outdoor sitting terrace					
k) Access to a garden					
l) Lift(s) between floors					
m) Storage for Mobility Scooters and re-charging of batteries					
n) A nearby car park					
o) Other (Please specify)					

3. If you said 'very dissatisfied' or 'dissatisfied' to any part of Question 2 above, can you tell us why that is?

SECTION B:

ABOUT THE SERVICES PROVIDED IN YOUR VERY SHELTERED HOUSING COMPLEX

4. In your own opinion, how important to tenants do you think the following support services are, from their point of view? (Please tick below)

		Not applicable	Very important	Important	Not important
a)	A daily call from staff				
b)	Knowing that staff are always available on site if needed				
c)	Knowing that personal care is on hand, when needed				

		Not applicable	Very important	Important	Not important
d)	Providing a reception service				
.../Continued					
e)	Health and safety services				
f)	Assistance from staff in emergencies				
g)	Help or support to organise social activities				
h)	Help to access other services e.g. medical and other social work services				
i)	Managing housing related issues and appointments e.g. repairs				
j)	Support with letters and filling in forms				
k)	Ensuring communal areas are kept clean and tidy				
l)	Help with relationships and neighbours				

5. Thinking again about the items listed above in question 4, how would you describe the current level of support provided in your complex?

		Not applicable	Over-provision	About right	Not enough
a)	A daily call from staff				
b)	Knowing that staff are always available on site if needed				
c)	Knowing that personal care is on hand, when needed				
d)	Providing a reception service				
e)	Health and safety services				
f)	Assistance from staff in emergencies				
g)	Help or support to organise social activities				
h)	Help to access other services e.g. medical and other social work services				
i)	Managing housing related issues and appointments e.g. repairs				
j)	Support with letters and filling in forms				

		Not applicable	Over-provision	About right	Not enough
k)	Ensuring communal areas are kept clean and tidy				
l)	Help with relationships and neighbours				

6. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Tenants should:-				
a)	Be encouraged to be as independent as possible				
b)	Have their privacy respected				
c)	Live in a well designed home that meets their needs				
d)	Live in a warm home				
e)	Be able to call a member of staff for help anytime day or night if help is needed				
f)	Pay rent costs that are reasonable				
g)	Always have someone to talk to if they feel lonely				
h)	Be encouraged to mix and socialise with other people				
i)	Organise activities all organised for them by staff / others				
j)	Get help from staff in organising activities for themselves, as far as possible				
k)	Have a hot meal provided every day				
l)	Have the opportunity to eat in a communal dining room with other tenants				
Your additional comments:					

7. Thinking again about the items listed above in question 6, if you had to pick one thing only what do you believe is the most important thing of all to tenants? Please state below and give any other comments:-

8. Is there anything not already mentioned above that you feel could enhance the quality of living for tenants here in this particular place, in day to day life?

9. Do you have any further comments you wish to make in regard to Very Sheltered/Extra Care Housing and housing support services in Aberdeen City in general?

SECTION C

PROMOTING VERY SHELTERED/EXTRA CARE HOUSING

10. This final section is about how best to explain to prospective new tenants and their relatives what Very Sheltered/Extra Care Housing is (and what it is not). in a few words only for each item below, how would you describe the following:

	About....	Your description, in a few words:-		
a)	Very Sheltered / Extra Care Housing in general – what is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is it, and how does it differ from regular Sheltered Housing? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is it for? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the most important things tenants can expect from the service? 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should tenants <u>not</u> expect to get? 		
b)	Promoting your own Very Sheltered / Extra Care Housing complex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main benefits of living here in this building? <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"><u>Best things:</u></td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"><u>Worst things:</u></td> </tr> </table>	<u>Best things:</u>	<u>Worst things:</u>
		<u>Best things:</u>	<u>Worst things:</u>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main benefits of living in this part of Aberdeen, in this location? <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"><u>Best things:</u></td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"><u>Worst things:</u></td> </tr> </table>	<u>Best things:</u>	<u>Worst things:</u>
<u>Best things:</u>	<u>Worst things:</u>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you summarise in a few words anything that makes this particular Very Sheltered complex special, or distinctive? 				
c)	Staff being available on site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this mean on a day to day basis? 		

	About....	Your description, in a few words:-
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the call button meant for?
d)	Housing support service provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is this and how is it different from personal care?
e)	Meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the best things about tenants having a hot meal served every day in the dining room?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything not to like about the meal service or the dining room experience?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any comments to make about the way meals are charged to tenants?
f)	Tenant activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main benefits of having tenant activities?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should tenants be expected to do themselves in terms of organising activities?
g)	Independence and isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe what being independent means?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main ways in which living in Very Sheltered Housing can help address social isolation?

	About....	Your description, in a few words:-
h)	Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does your building or service provide to make tenants feel safe?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think tenants are over-protected, or under-protected? Please explain:
i)	The 'bigger picture'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think this establishment is well connected with the local community – please explain why or why not?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel there are good working relations with external partners in Health, GP, Dentist, and Fire, Police? Please explain.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel there is good communication within the Council between different departments, e.g. Housing, Social work, (or between the landlord and care agency running this place)? Please explain.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it a good thing if Very Sheltered establishments do things differently to provide choice and diversity, or should all places provide exactly the same service?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Very Sheltered Housing' is also referred to as 'Extra Care, or 'Housing with support': do you have any comments to make about this?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

APPENDIX C: TENANT AND STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS (DATA & ANALYSIS)

Contents:	Page no.
(1) Tenant Questionnaire results	2
(2) Staff Questionnaire results	14

1. Tenant Questionnaire results

A summary of tenant responses to questions are examined as follows. Some of the results have to be read with caution as a number of respondents to some questions ticked more than the one box requested, and/or missed questions out. It must also be borne in mind that results incorporate some 'Sheltered Housing' tenants in linked cottages where they had daily or regular access to Very Sheltered Housing facilities.

Question 1 – 'What is the name of your very sheltered housing complex?'

The table below in figure 1 tells us where respondents live and the number of respondents as a percentage of total respondents. This shows a fairly even spread of respondents across the five establishments where questionnaires were distributed.

Figure TQ1: Very Sheltered Housing respondents (by complex)

	No. of questionnaires distributed	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Coronation Court*	33 flats; 13 cottages	23	21%
Craigieia	50 flats	19	18%
Denmore Court*	38 flats; 11 cottages	20	19%
Kingswood Court*	40 flats; 15 cottages	25	23%
Victoria Grange	39 flats	20	19%
Total	200 flats + 39 cottages	107	

The questionnaire was divided into three sections – Section A contained questions about the facilities provided, Section B was about the services provided, and Section C contained questions about the decision to move to Very Sheltered Housing (or a cottage linked to it).

TENANT QUESTIONNAIRE - SECTION A: VERY SHELTERED HOUSING FACILITIES

Question 2 – 'What facilities does your Very Sheltered Housing complex provide? (Please tick all that apply).'

The main purpose of asking this question was to prompt tenants to think about what facilities they have access to in the communal areas of the building, before moving onto the next question about their satisfaction of these. At the same time, results provide an overview of the main facilities that the vast majority of residents have access to in their complex.

Figure 2 below tells us that the vast majority of tenants (80-100%) have, or are aware they have access to and/or use of:-a laundry, communal dining area, a lounge/common room, guest room/s, lift/s between floors, a reception, a nearby car park, access to a garden.

To a slightly lesser degree tenants have access to (or are aware they have access to) a balcony or outdoor sitting area (78%), a communal bathroom (71%), a dedicated games/hobbies room (59%), a conservatory or indoor sun lounge (58%).

The facilities featuring the least are storage for mobility scooters (38%), and lowest of all, a communal kitchen facility for dedicated tenant use (36%).

Figure TQ2:

	Response Percent	Response Count
a) A reception area at main entrance to building	96.2%	101
b) A lounge/ common room	97.1%	102
c) A dedicated games or hobbies room	59.0%	62
d) Guest room(s)	97.1%	102
e) Laundry facilities	100.0%	105
f) Communal bathroom for tenants use	70.5%	74
g) Communal kitchen facilities for tenants use	36.2%	38
h) Communal dining area	99.0%	104
i) A conservatory or indoor sun lounge	58.1%	61
j) A balcony or outdoor sitting terrace	78.1%	82
k) Access to a garden	80.0%	84
l) Lift(s) between floors	97.1%	102
m) Storage for Mobility Scooters and re-charging of batteries	38.1%	40
n) A nearby car park	95.2%	100
o) Other (please specify):-	1.9%	2
Two respondents made reference to their individual flats and hairdressing facility.		
skipped question		2
answered question		105

Question 3 – ‘Thinking about the facilities listed above in Question 2, how satisfied are you with these?’

Figure 3 below tells us that generally, tenant satisfaction with facilities is high with over 80% of respondents either very satisfied or satisfied with lounge/common room, communal dining area, lifts between floors, laundry, car park, guest room, access to a garden, reception, communal bathroom, balcony/sitting terrace.

The highest satisfaction is with the lounge/common room (96% were either satisfied or very satisfied), followed by communal dining area (92%) and lifts (91%).

The facilities with greatest dissatisfaction were reception, laundry, mobility scooter storage, and nearby car park (between 10-12% of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with these), followed by communal kitchen, conservatory, balcony and garden (each 8%).

It is notable that more people stated dissatisfaction with mobility scooter storage and communal kitchen in particular than indicated they had access to in question 2,

suggesting people's dissatisfaction was to do with the fact that did not have access to such facilities. This is reinforced by the fact that a high number of respondents ticked 'not applicable' against communal kitchen for tenant use (51%) and mobility scooter storage (33%).

Figure TQ3:

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not Applicable	Rating Count
a) Reception area at main entrance to building	25.3% (25)	57.6% (57)	11.1% (11)	1.0% (1)	5.1% (5)	99
b) Lounge/ common room	35.0% (35)	61.0% (61)	3.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	1.0% (1)	100
c) Dedicated games or hobbies room	24.3% (18)	50.0% (37)	5.4% (4)	0.0% (0)	20.3% (15)	74
d) Guest room(s)	32.6% (30)	52.2% (48)	0.0% (0)	1.1% (1)	14.1% (13)	92
e) Laundry facilities	42.4% (42)	44.4% (44)	9.1% (9)	1.0% (1)	3.0% (3)	99
f) Communal bathroom for tenants use	30.8% (24)	48.7% (38)	2.6% (2)	0.0% (0)	17.9% (14)	78
g) Communal kitchen facilities for tenants use	17.5% (11)	23.8% (15)	6.3% (4)	1.6% (1)	50.8% (32)	63
h) Communal dining area	41.5% (39)	50.0% (47)	5.3% (5)	1.1% (1)	2.1% (2)	94
i) Conservatory or indoor sun lounge	24.0% (18)	41.3% (31)	8.0% (6)	0.0% (0)	26.7% (20)	75
j) Balcony or outdoor sitting terrace	30.1% (25)	49.4% (41)	8.4% (7)	0.0% (0)	12.0% (10)	83
k) Access to a garden	31.3% (25)	53.8% (43)	7.5% (6)	0.0% (0)	7.5% (6)	80
l) Lift(s) between floors	37.9% (36)	53.7% (51)	3.2% (3)	2.1% (2)	3.2% (3)	95
m) Storage for Mobility Scooters and re-charging of batteries	29.4% (15)	27.5% (14)	5.9% (3)	3.9% (2)	33.3% (17)	51
n) Nearby car park	33.3% (32)	53.1% (51)	9.4% (9)	1.0% (1)	3.1% (3)	96
o) Other (as specified above)	100.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2
answered question						103
skipped question						4

Question 4 – ‘If you said ‘dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’ to any part of Question 3 above, can you tell us why that is?’

There were 37 tenant responses to this question. Items that triggered most comments were the reception, laundry, conservatory, balcony/outdoor sitting area, garden access, car park. The tenants’ comments were grouped together and are considered within the discussion section of this report.

**TENANT QUESTIONNAIRE - SECTION B:
ABOUT THE SERVICES IN MY VERY SHELTERED HOUSING COMPLEX**

Question 5 – ‘Very Sheltered Housing provides a variety of services to tenants. How important are the following support services provided by the personal carers in making it a good place for you to live in’.

Figure TQ5 below tells us which activities provided by personal carers are rated as ‘most important’ by respondents. When comparing percentages of total respondents answering each question, **the top four ‘very important’ activities** are: ‘assistance from staff in an emergencies’ (86%) ‘knowing staff are always available on site if needed’ (83%) ‘knowing personal care is on hand’ (81%), and ‘a daily call from staff’ (78%).

When combining the ‘very important’ and ‘important’ categories, all the listed activities scored highly (over 80%), with the top four activities being: ‘health and safety services’ (100%), followed by ‘knowing staff are always available on site if needed’, ‘knowing personal care is on hand’ and ‘assistance from staff in emergencies’, (each 99%).

The top 3 activities identified as ‘not important’ were ‘providing a reception service’ (8%), ‘help with relationships and neighbours’ (7%), ‘support with letters/form filling’ (6%).

Figure TQ5

	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Not Applicable	Rating Count
a) A daily call from staff	78.1% (82)	19.0% (20)	2.9% (3)	0.0% (0)	105
b) Knowing that staff are always available on site if needed	82.9% (87)	16.2% (17)	0.0% (0)	1.0% (1)	105
c) Knowing that personal care is on hand when needed	80.6% (83)	18.4% (19)	1.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	103
d) Providing a reception service	54.3% (50)	35.9% (33)	7.6% (7)	2.2% (2)	92
e) Health and safety services	66.7% (64)	33.3% (32)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	96
f) Assistance from staff in	85.7% (90)	13.3% (14)	1.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	105

emergencies					
g) Help or support to organise social activities	49.5% (48)	41.2% (40)	4.1% (4)	5.2% (5)	97
h) Help to access other services e.g. medical and other social work services	68.3% (69)	29.7% (30)	1.0% (1)	1.0% (1)	101
i) Managing housing-related issues and appointments, e.g. repairs	63.6% (63)	32.3% (32)	0.0% (0)	4.0% (4)	99
j) Support with letters and filling in forms	44.7% (42)	36.2% (34)	6.4% (6)	12.8% (12)	94
k) Ensuring communal areas are kept clean and tidy	67.0% (67)	31.0% (31)	1.0% (1)	1.0% (1)	100
l) Help with relationships and neighbours	46.3% (44)	34.7% (33)	7.4% (7)	11.6% (11)	95
			answered question		106
			skipped question		1

Question 6 – ‘Thinking again about the options you ticked in Question 5 above, how satisfied are you with the services you have received whilst living here?’

Figure TQ6 below tells us how satisfied respondents are with the services provided by personal carers. When comparing percentages of total respondents answering each question, **the top four activities tenants are ‘very satisfied’ with are:-** ‘assistance from staff in emergencies’ (68%), followed by ‘knowing staff are always available if needed’ (67%), ‘a daily call from staff’ (65%), and ‘knowing that personal care is on hand when needed’ (64%).

When combining the ‘very satisfied’ and ‘satisfied’ categories, the figures tell us that with the exception of ‘support with letters and filling in forms’ and ‘help with relationships and neighbours’, all categories have **over 80% satisfaction** rates.

When combining ‘dissatisfied’ with ‘very dissatisfied’, the top 3 items are ‘help or support to organize social activities’ (8%) ‘reception service’ (6%), and ‘ensuring communal areas are kept clean’ (5%).

Figure TQ6:

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not Applicable	Rating Count
a) A daily call from staff	65.1% (69)	33.0% (35)	1.9% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	106
b) Knowing that staff are always available onsite if needed	67.3% (70)	30.8% (32)	1.9% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	104
c) Knowing that personal care is on hand when needed	63.8% (67)	35.2% (37)	1.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	105
d) Providing a reception service	43.6% (41)	43.6% (41)	5.3% (5)	1.1% (1)	6.4% (6)	94
e) Health and safety services	53.2% (50)	44.7% (42)	1.1% (1)	1.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	94
f) Assistance from staff in emergencies	68.3% (71)	26.9% (28)	1.9% (2)	0.0% (0)	2.9% (3)	104
g) Help or support to organise social activities	36.4% (36)	47.5% (47)	7.1% (7)	1.0% (1)	8.1% (8)	99
h) Help to access other services e.g. medical and other social work services	47.5% (47)	42.4% (42)	1.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	9.1% (9)	99
i) Managing housing-related issues and appointments, e.g. repairs	42.6% (43)	46.5% (47)	1.0% (1)	1.0% (1)	8.9% (9)	101
j) Support with letters and filling in forms	35.1% (33)	38.3% (36)	1.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	25.5% (24)	94
k) Ensuring communal areas are kept clean	45.0% (45)	47.0% (47)	3.0% (3)	2.0% (2)	3.0% (3)	100

and tidy						
l) Help with relationships and neighbours	32.3% (31)	45.8% (44)	1.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	20.8% (20)	96
					answered question	106
					skipped question	1

Question 7 – ‘If you said ‘dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’ to any part of Question 6 above, can you tell us why that is?’

It is notable that the item triggering most response to this question was with regard to **‘help or support to organize social activities’**. This is discussed more fully within the discussion section of this report.

Question 8 – ‘Please provide information about social activities. Please tick all the boxes that apply to your own very sheltered housing complex’.

Results summarized in figure TQ8 below tell us that although tenants agree that social activities do take place, less than half agreed that **‘there is plenty to do here in terms of activities’**. This is the case, even though over 80% of respondents feel encouraged by staff to attend any activities going on. Tenant comments are discussed in Section Two of this report.

Figure TQ8:

	Response Percent	Response Count
a) We have social get togethers, e.g. morning coffee, afternoon tea	78.8%	78
b) There are activities and entertainment organised in the complex	84.8%	84
c) We have exercise sessions and receive information about keeping well	72.7%	72
d) I am encouraged and supported by staff to attend any activities going on	83.8%	83
e) There is a tenants group operating in my very sheltered housing complex	55.6%	55
f) There is plenty to do here in terms of activities	45.5%	45
g) Other activities or comments (Please tell us about them)	19.2%	19
Replies (19)		
	answered question	99
	skipped question	8

Question 9– ‘How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about living in your very sheltered housing complex?’

Respondents were asked to tell us how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements. The results summarized in figure TQ9 below tell us that respondents

most 'strongly' agreed with 'my home is warm enough' (62%), 'to have a hot meal provided every day' (59%), followed by 'I can call staff for help anytime' (55%).

Other statements strongly agreed with (by between 51-53% of respondents) were 'opportunity to eat in communal dining room', 'I can be as independent as possible', 'my privacy is respected' and 'my home is well designed'.

In general, agreement with the statements was very strong with all statements attracting more than 90% agreement when combining the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' columns.

When combining 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' columns, most disagreement was over the statements:- 'there is always someone to talk to if I feel lonely' (12%); 'Organising activities should be done by tenants mostly' (10%); 'My rent costs are reasonable' (9%); and 'Staff encourage tenants to mix and socialise' (6%).

Figure TQ9:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Count
a) I can be as independent as possible	52.9% (55)	46.2% (48)	0.0% (0)	1.0% (1)	104
b) My privacy is respected	52.4% (54)	43.7% (45)	2.9% (3)	1.0% (1)	103
c) My home is well designed for my needs	51.0% (52)	47.1% (48)	1.0% (1)	1.0% (1)	102
d) My home is warm enough	62.1% (64)	36.9% (38)	0.0% (0)	1.0% (1)	103
e) I can call staff for help anytime day or night, if needed	55.3% (57)	42.7% (44)	0.0% (0)	1.9% (2)	103
f) My rent costs are reasonable	35.3% (36)	55.9% (57)	6.9% (7)	2.0% (2)	102
g) There is always someone to talk to if I feel lonely	35.8% (34)	52.6% (50)	8.4% (8)	3.2% (3)	95
h) Staff encourage tenants to mix and socialise	38.3% (36)	55.3% (52)	5.3% (5)	1.1% (1)	94
i) Organising activities should be done by tenants mostly, but with help from staff if needed	29.8% (28)	60.6% (57)	6.4% (6)	3.2% (3)	94
j) To have a hot meal provided every day	58.9% (56)	37.9% (36)	2.1% (2)	1.1% (1)	95
k) To have the opportunity to eat in a communal dining room with other tenants	53.3% (49)	44.6% (41)	0.0% (0)	2.2% (2)	92
				answered question	105
				skipped question	2

Question 10 - ‘Thinking again about the items listed above in Question 9, if you had to pick ONE THING ONLY what is the most important thing of all? Please state below and give any other comments’.

Tenants were asked to single out one thing of most importance to them. Some respondents identified more than one item: where answers clearly distinguished one item this was used as the answer, but where answers were unclear and/or did not answer the question these are not included. With this in mind, the scores in figure TQ10 tell us that **‘to have a hot meal provided every day’ is the most important thing to respondents (N=24)**, followed closely by **‘I can be as independent as possible’ (N=20)**, and **‘I can call staff anytime day or night’ (N=17)**.

It is notable that having a warm home did not feature highly in this question (N=2), whereas in question 9 above the statement tenants most ‘strongly’ agreed with was ‘my home is warm enough’ (N=64 or 62%). What this tells us is that whilst tenants can easily agree with the statement about their home being warm (since all Sheltered Housing complexes are typically very warm), when asked to single out the most important thing of all, ‘having a hot meal’, ‘being as independent as possible’, and ‘staff being available day or night’, took greater priority.

The nature of some of the additional comments made by respondents in the comments box of this question indicate that the issue of independence, a daily hot meal, opportunities to socialize, physical aspects of the building, the staff on hand, plus other aspects of the VSH service, are so interlinked, that it is hard to separate one from the other. This is considered more fully within the discussion section of this report.

Figure TQ10
Replies (Total N=77):-

Item:-	Total scores for each:-
a) I can be as independent as possible	20
b) My privacy is respected	3
c) My home is well designed for my needs	3
d) My home is warm enough	2
e) I can call staff for help anytime day or night, if needed	17
f) My rent costs are reasonable	0
g) There is always someone to talk to if I feel lonely	2
h) Staff encourage tenants to mix and socialize	0
i) Organising activities should be done by tenants mostly, but with help from staff if needed	0
j) To have a hot meal provided every day	24
k) To have the opportunity to eat in a communal dining room with other tenants	1
Total answering question	72

Question 11 - 'In summary, how satisfied are you overall with the Very Sheltered Housing support service you receive? Please tick ONE box only'.

The results shown below in Figure TQ11 tell us that overall, 97% of tenants are satisfied with services received when combining 'very satisfied' with 'satisfied' responses.

Figure TQ11:

	Response Percent	Response Count
Very Satisfied	54.4%	56
Satisfied	42.7%	44
Dissatisfied	2.9%	3
Very Dissatisfied	0.0%	0
	answered question	103
	skipped question	4

TENANT QUESTIONNAIRE - SECTION C: ABOUT YOUR DECISION TO MOVE TO A VERY SHELTERED HOUSING/ EXTRA CARE COMPLEX

Question 12- 'Who decided that you should move here? Please tick ONE BOX ONLY.'

Figure TQ12 tells us that for the majority of respondents, the decision for tenants to move was 'a joint decision between myself and my family' (44%). This suggests that even though other professionals are almost always involved, for nearly half of the respondents, their perception is that the decision was in the hands of them and their family.

Figure TQ12:

	Response Percent	Response Count
a) It was solely my decision to move	13.0%	13
b) While other people/professionals were involved, I took the decision myself	17.0%	17
c) It was a joint decision between myself and my family	44.0%	44
d) It was more the decision of my family than myself that I should move	7.0%	7
e) It was more the decision of doctors/social services that I should move	18.0%	18
f) It was more the decision of the housing department that I should move	1.0%	1
	answered question	100
	skipped question	7

Question 13 - 'Can you please tell us your main reasons for moving into Very Sheltered Housing (or a cottage linked to it)? Please tick up to 3 BOXES ONLY.'

The results tabled in Figure TQ13 below tell us that for respondents the 3 main reasons for moving into Very Sheltered Housing (or a cottage linked to it) were:- 'Even though I might need some help, I want to stay independent for as long as possible.' (57%), 'I needed somewhere to live that was designed to meet my needs' (43%), and 'I was worried about my health and needed a support service' (38%).

Figure TQ13

	Response Percent	Response Count
a) I was worried about my health and needed a support service	38%	36
b) I needed somewhere to live that was designed to meet my needs	43%	41
c) I wanted to downsize my home as the upkeep of my previous home was getting too much for me to manage	12%	11
d) I wanted to feel safer	28%	27
e) I needed somewhere warmer/in better condition than my previous home	6%	6
f) I was lonely and wanted the company of people my own age	9%	9
g) Even though I might need some help, I want to stay independent for as long as possible	57%	55
h) I decided to move now rather than face upheaval in later years	12%	11
i) I wanted to live closer to my relatives/friends	15%	14
j) My relatives/friends wanted me to live in a supported environment	26%	25
k) I moved to very sheltered housing because my spouse/partner needed the support	24%	23
l) Other (please specify)	5%	5
Replies (4):		
• I moved here because my social worker thought it was a good idea.		
• Could not manage stairs in my old house.		
• Husband had massive stroke and was in hospital for over a year.		
• I like moving.		
answered question		96
skipped question		11

Question 14 - 'Below is a list of general statements about Very Sheltered Housing. We are interested in finding out whether you agree or disagree with each of these statements'.

The results tabled below in figure TQ14 tell us that respondents showed clear agreement over statements (a) 'Very Sheltered housing and the support provided is a good service for older people' (100%), and (h) 'If your health fails, you should be able to stay in Very Sheltered Housing in the long term rather than go into a care home' (90%).

Also, 88% of respondents agreed that (c) ‘Since moving to very sheltered housing, I find it easier to get other social care and health services if I need them’.

The highest disagreement was seen in ‘I wish I had moved into very sheltered housing earlier than I did’ (46%) . There was some disagreement over ‘Very Sheltered Housing should include people with severe dementia or confusion’ (42%), and ‘Sheltered housing works best for people who are in relatively good health and who are able to live quite active lives’ (39%). On the other hand, there was strong agreement that ‘I would not mind if non residents came into my very sheltered complex to receive day care/other services’ (71%) and that ‘Very Sheltered housing works best for people who are in relatively good health and who are able to live quite active lives’ (61%).

Figure TQ14:

	Agree	Disagree	Rating Count
a) Very Sheltered housing and the support provided is a good service for older people	100.0% (97)	0.0% (0)	97
b) Very Sheltered housing could be used for residents other than older people, such as younger people with disabilities	68.9% (62)	31.1% (28)	90
c) Since moving to very sheltered housing, I find it easier to get other social care and health services if I need them	88.0% (73)	12.0% (10)	83
d) I wish I had moved into very sheltered housing earlier than I did	53.8% (42)	46.2% (36)	78
e) Very Sheltered Housing should include people with severe dementia or confusion	58.5% (48)	41.5% (34)	82
f) I would not mind if non residents came into my very sheltered complex to receive day care/other services	70.7% (58)	29.3% (24)	82
g) Very Sheltered housing works best for people who are in relatively good health and who are able to live quite active lives	61.1% (55)	38.9% (35)	90
h) If your health fails, you should be able to stay in Very Sheltered Housing in the long term rather than go into a care home	90.4% (85)	9.6% (9)	94
	answered question		97
	skipped question		10

Question 15 – ‘Do you have any further comments you wish to make with regard to Very Sheltered Housing and housing support services you receive, or the building you live in?’

Tenant comments received (N=25) are grouped together and considered with all other tenant comments within the discussion section of this report (refer Section Two).

End of tenant questionnaire.

2. Staff Questionnaire results

There was a low response rate to the staff questionnaire. The results presently as follows must therefore be read with caution in terms of how well this represents the overall staff view.

SECTION A – VERY SHELTERED HOUSING FACILITIES

Question 1. Name of complex you work in.

Figure SQ1:

	No. staff questionnaires	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Coronation Court		3	
Craigielea		10	
Denmore Court		6	
Kingswood Court		1	
Victoria Grange		5	
TOTAL		25	

STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE - SECTION B: SERVICES PROVIDED IN YOUR VERY SHELTERED HOUSING COMPLEX

[check all question wording as per final questionnaire]

Question 2 - *Regarding the list of typical facilities below, how satisfied are you with these at your complex in terms of how well they enable on-site staff to go about your work supporting tenants in their daily living?*

Figure SQ2 below tells us that generally, staff appear reasonably satisfied with typical facilities, with over 70% of respondents either very satisfied or satisfied with reception, lounge/common room, guest room, laundry, communal bathroom, communal dining area, balcony/sitting terrace, access to garden, storage for mobility scooters, and car park.

The highest satisfaction is with the lounge/common room and communal bathroom (for each 100% were either satisfied or very satisfied), followed closely by guest room, laundry and lifts (92-96%).

The facilities with greatest dissatisfaction were: communal dining area, and storage for mobility scooters (22% were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with each of these), followed by games/hobbies room, car park, reception, communal kitchen for tenant use (ranging between 12-17% either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with these). Between 21-36% of respondents ticked ‘not applicable’ against communal kitchen, conservatory, games/hobbies room, balcony/outdoor sitting area and access to garden, telling us that these facilities are not a feature of all complexes.

Figure SQ2

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not Applicable	Rating Count
a) A reception area at main entrance to building	21.7% (5)	60.9% (14)	13.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	4.3% (1)	23
b) A lounge/ common room	33.3% (8)	66.7% (16)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	24
c) A dedicated games or hobbies room	8.3% (2)	50.0% (12)	12.5% (3)/ 17%	4.2% (1)	25.0% (6)	24
d) Guest room(s)	25.0% (6)	70.8% (17)	4.2% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	24
e) Laundry facilities=91.6%	20.8% (5)	70.8% (17)	4.2% (1)	0.0% (0)	4.2% (1)	24
f) Communal bathroom for tenants use=100%	29.2% (7)	70.8% (17)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	24
g) Communal kitchen facilities for tenants use	8.0% (2)	44.0% (11)	12.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	36.0% (9)	25
h) Communal dining area	34.8% (8)	43.5% (10)	17.4% (4)/ 22%	4.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	23
i) conservatory or indoor sun lounge	17.4% (4)	43.5% (10)	0.0% (0)	4.3% (1)	34.8% (8)	23
j) A balcony or outdoor sitting terrace	21.7% (5)	52.2% (12)	4.3% (1)	4.3% (1)	17.4% (4)	23
k) Access to a garden	16.7% (4)	54.2% (13)	8.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	20.8% (5)	24
l) Lift(s) between floors	20.8% (5)	70.8% (17)	8.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	24
m) Storage for Mobility Scooters and re-charging of batteries	17.4% (4)	52.2% (12)	17.4% (4) 22%	4.3% (1)	8.7% (2)	23
n) A nearby car park	34.8% (8)	43.5% (10)	17.4% (4)	0.0% (0)	4.3% (1)	23
o) Other	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0
Please specify 'Other' answered question						25
skipped question						0

Question 3 – If you said ‘very dissatisfied’ or ‘dissatisfied’ to any part of Question 2 above, can you tell us why that is?

There were 9 responses to this question which related mainly to outdoor areas (garden and car park), communal lounge and games room, lifts, dining room and storage for mobility scooters. These, together with other staff feedback and comments are considered more fully in the discussion section of this report.

Question 4 – In your own opinion, how important to tenants do you think the following support services are, from their point of view? (Please tick below)

When comparing percentages of total respondents answering each question, the top ‘very important’ activities’ shown in Figure SQ4 tell us that staff think the most important service they provide to tenants is *assistance in emergencies* (100%). This is followed very closely by ‘*a daily call from staff*’, ‘*health and safety services*’ (both 98%), ‘*knowing staff are always available onsite*’, and ‘*knowing that personal care is on hand when needed*’, (both 92%).

When combining the ‘very important’ and ‘important’ categories, in fact all the listed activities score over 90%, telling us that in the opinion of staff, all the support services listed in figure 4 are very important to tenants, with activities such as *reception service*, *support to organize social activities*, *support with letter/form filling* and, *help with relationships and neighbours*, as only slightly less important than *assistance from staff in emergencies*.

Figure SQ4:

	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Not Applicable	Rating Count
a) A daily call from staff	88.0% (22)	12.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25
b) Knowing staff are always available onsite if needed	92.0% (23)	8.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25
c) Knowing that personal care is on hand, when needed	92.0% (23)	8.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25
d) Providing a reception service	56.0% (14)	36.0% (9)	4.0% (1)	4.0% (1)	25
e) Health and safety services	88.0% (22)	8.0% (2)	4.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	25
f) Assistance from staff in emergencies	100.0% (25)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25
g) Help or support to organise social activities	34.8% (8)	60.9% (14)	4.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	23
h) Help to access other services e.g. medical and other social work services	76.0% (19)	24.0% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25
i) Managing housing related issues and	60.0% (15)	40.0% (10)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25

appointments, e.g.
repairs

j) Support with letters and filling in forms	48.0% (12)	44.0% (11)	4.0% (1)	4.0% (1)	25
k) Ensuring communal areas are kept clean and tidy	76.0% (19)	24.0% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25
l) Help with relationships and neighbours	56.0% (14)	36.0% (9)	8.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	25
				answered question	25
				skipped question	0

Question 5 – Thinking again about the items listed above in Question 4, how would you describe the current level of support provided in your complex?

The results shown in figure SQ5 tell us that staff respondents all agreed that provision of a daily call from staff is 'about right', and 88%-96% of respondents agreed that all other listed activities were also 'about right', except 'help or support to organize social activities where a third of the respondents thought there was 'not enough' support.

Figure SQ5

	Over-Provision	About Right	Not Enough	Not Applicable	Rating Count
a) A daily call from staff	0.0% (0)	100.0% (25)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25
b) Knowing staff are always available onsite if needed	0.0% (0)	92.0% (23)	8.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	25
c) Knowing that personal care is on hand, when needed	0.0% (0)	92.0% (23)	8.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	25
d) Providing a reception service	8.0% (2)	80.0% (20)	4.0% (1)	8.0% (2)	25
e) Health and safety services	0.0% (0)	96.0% (24)	4.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	25
f) Assistance from staff in emergencies	4.0% (1)	88.0% (22)	8.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	25
g) Help or support to organise social activities	0.0% (0)	66.7% (16)	29.2% (7)	4.2% (1)	24
h) Help to access other services e.g. medical and other social work services	0.0% (0)	96.0% (24)	4.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	25
i) Managing housing related issues and appointments, e.g. repairs	0.0% (0)	92.0% (23)	8.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	25
j) Support with letters and filling in forms	0.0% (0)	84.0% (21)	16.0% (4)	0.0% (0)	25
k) Ensuring communal areas are kept clean and	0.0% (0)	96.0% (24)	4.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	25

tidy

l) Help with relationships and neighbours	0.0% (0)	92.0% (23)	8.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	25
				answered question	25
				skipped question	0

Question 6 – How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The results shown in figure SQ6 tell us that the top 3 statements respondents most 'strongly' agreed with were that tenants should: 'have their privacy respected' (88%), 'live in a warm home' (84%) and 'be able to call a member of staff for help anytime day or night if help is needed' (84%).

In general, agreement with the statements was strong with most respondents agreeing with most statements when combining 'strongly agree' and 'agree',

Figure SQ6:

Tenants should :-.....	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Count
a) Be encouraged to be as independent as possible	64.0% (16)	32.0% (8)	4.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	25
b) Have their privacy respected	88.0% (22)	8.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	4.0% (1)	25
c) Live in a well designed home that meets their needs	80.0% (20)	20.0% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25
d) Live in a warm home	84.0% (21)	16.0% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25
e) Be able to call a member of staff for help anytime day or night if help is needed	84.0% (21)	16.0% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25
f) Pay rent costs that are reasonable	56.5% (13)	43.5% (10)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	23
g) Always have someone to talk to if they feel lonely	56.0% (14)	40.0% (10)	4.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	25
h) Be encouraged to mix and socialise with other people	48.0% (12)	48.0% (12)	0.0% (0)	4.0% (1)	25
i) Organise activities themselves mostly, but get help from staff if needed	32.0% (8)	64.0% (16)	4.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	25
j) Have a hot meal provided every day	76.0% (19)	24.0% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25
k) Have the opportunity to eat in a communal dining room with other tenants	68.0% (17)	32.0% (8)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25
				answered question	25
				skipped question	0

Question 7 – Thinking again about the items listed above in Question 6, if you had to pick ONE THING ONLY what do you believe is the most important thing of all to tenants? Please state below and give any other comments:

The responses shown below in figures 10 tell us that staff respondents feel the most important thing to tenants is that they ‘**can call staff for help anytime, if needed**’ (N=9). This is followed by ‘I can be as independent as possible’ and ‘my privacy is respected’ (each N=4).

Only one respondent thought that to have a hot meal everyday was important, as compared with the tenant questionnaire where this was the most important thing to tenant respondents.

Figure SQ7:

Replies (Total N=23):-

a) I can be as independent as possible	4
b) My privacy is respected	4
c) My home is well designed for my needs	2
d) My home is warm enough	
e) I can call staff for help anytime day or night, if needed	9
f) My rent costs are reasonable	
g) There is always someone to talk to if I feel lonely	
h) Staff encourage tenants to mix and socialize	2
i) Organising activities should be done by tenants mostly, but with help from staff if needed	
j) To have a hot meal provided every day	1
k) To have the opportunity to eat in a communal dining room with other tenants	
Total answering question = 22	

Staff comments are considered within the discussion section of this report (refer Section Three).

Question 8 – Is there anything not already mentioned above that you feel could enhance the quality of living for tenants here in this particular place, in day to day life?

Respondents comments (N=13) were, in the main, concerned with the need to do more to get tenants out and about, and socialising. These comments are considered together with all other staff feedback within the discussion section of this report (section 3).

Question 9 – *Do you have any further comments you wish to make in regard to Very Sheltered/Extra Care Housing and housing support services in Aberdeen City in general?*

Just 3 comments received about staffing. These are discussed together with all other staff comments within the body of the discussion in Section Three.

STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE - SECTION C: PROMOTING VERY SHELTERED / EXTRA CARE HOUSING

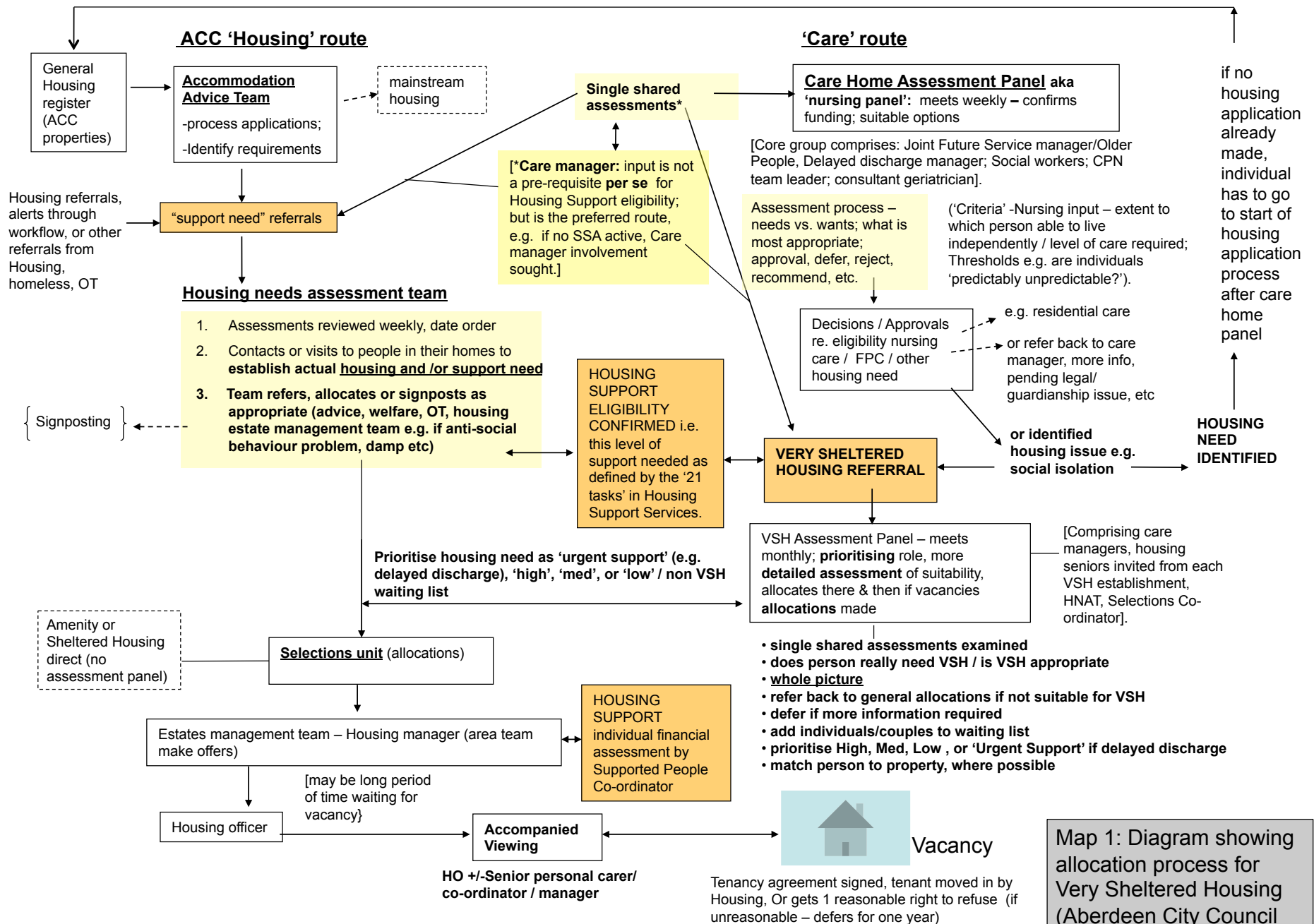
Question 10 – *'This final section is about how best to explain to prospective new tenants and their relatives what Very Sheltered/Extra Care Housing is (and what it is not). in a few words only for each item below, how would you describe....'*

Staff were asked to answer questions about

- a) Staff being available on site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- b) Housing support service provided
- c) Tenant activities
- d) Independence and isolation
- e) Security
- f) The 'bigger picture'

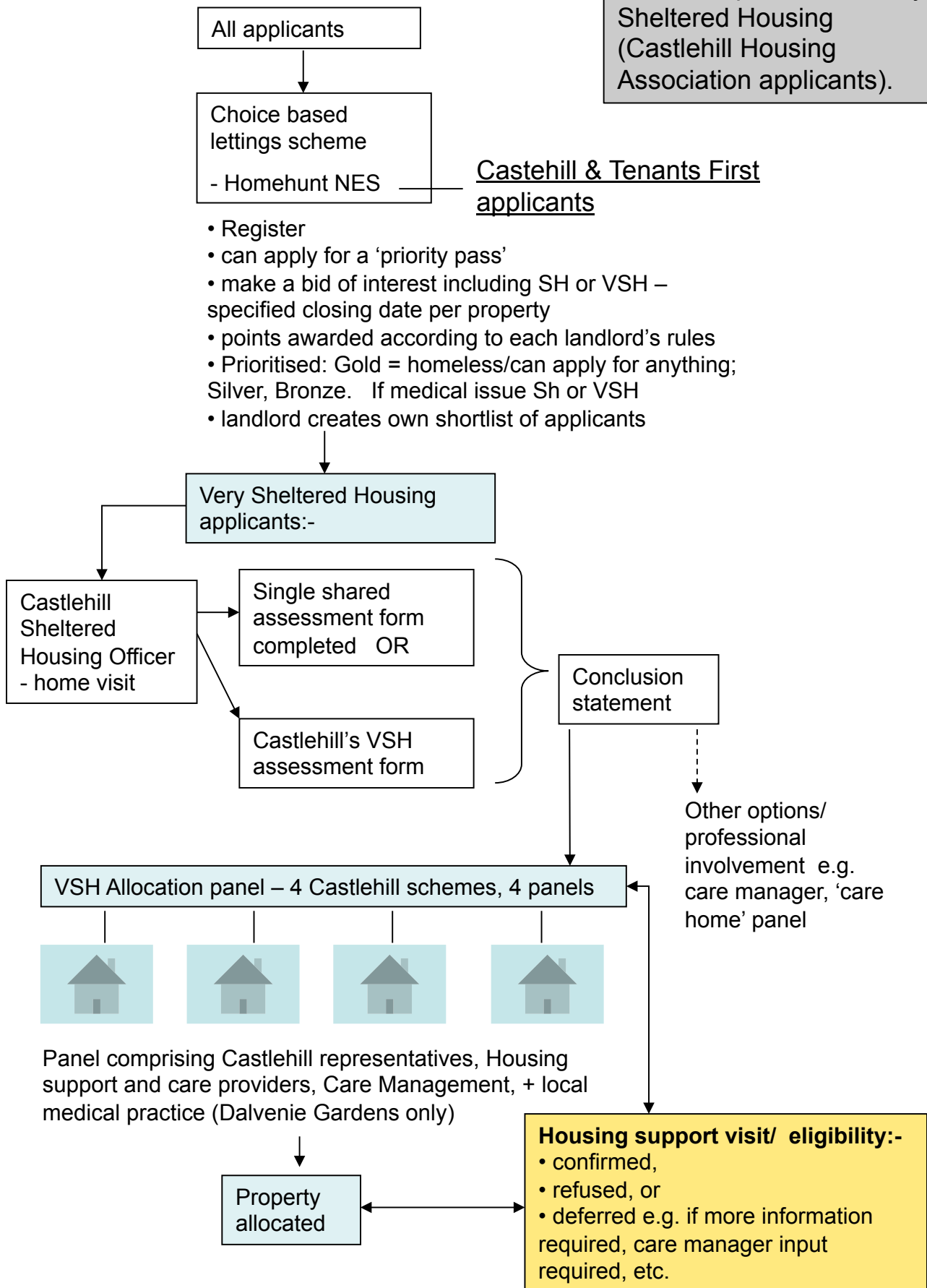
Out of 25 respondents 23 filled in this section. This provided material that is included in the discussion section of the main report (Section Two).

End of Staff Questionnaire.



Map 1: Diagram showing allocation process for Very Sheltered Housing (Aberdeen City Council applicants).

Map 2: Diagram showing allocation process for Very Sheltered Housing (Castlehill Housing Association applicants).



APPENDIX E: Prescribed 21 Supporting People Tasks

Supporting People - List of Housing Support Tasks:

The guidance on the application of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (Housing Support Services) Regulations 2002 sets out a list of 21 prescribed housing support tasks that are eligible for Supporting People Funding.

Prescribed tasks:

- 1 General counselling and support including befriending, advising on food preparation, reminding and non-specialist counselling where this does not overlap with similar services provided as personal care or personal support.
- 2 Assisting with the security of the dwelling required because of the needs of the service user.
- 3 Assisting with the maintenance of the safety of the dwelling.
- 4 Advising and supervising service users on the use of domestic equipment and appliances.
- 5 Assisting with arranging minor repairs to and servicing of a service user's own domestic equipment and appliances.
- 6 Providing life skills training in maintaining the dwelling and curtilage in appropriate condition.
- 7 Assisting the service user to engage with individuals, professionals and other bodies with an interest in the welfare of the service user.
- 8 Arranging adaptations to enable the service user to cope with disability.
- 9 Advising or assisting the service user with personal budgeting and debt counselling.
- 10 Advising or assisting the service user in dealing with relationships and disputes with neighbours.
- 11 Advising or assisting the service user in dealing with benefit claims and other official correspondence relevant to sustaining occupancy of the dwelling.
- 12 Advising or assisting with resettlement of the service user.
- 13 Advising or assisting the service user to enable him or her to move on to accommodation where less intense support is required.

- 14 Assisting with shopping and errands where this does not overlap with similar services provided as personal care or personal support.
- 15 Providing and maintaining emergency alarm and call systems in accommodation designed or adapted for and occupied by elderly, sick or disabled people.
- 16 Responding to emergency alarm calls where such calls relate to any of the housing support services prescribed in the Regulations, in accommodation designed or adapted for and occupied by elderly, sick or disabled people.
- 17 Controlling access to individual service users' rooms
- 18 Cleaning of service users' own rooms and windows.
- 19 Providing for the costs of resettlement services.
- 20 Encouraging social intercourse and welfare checks for residents of accommodation supported by either a resident warden or a non-resident warden with a system for calling that warden where this does not overlap with similar services provided as personal care or personal support.
- 21 Arranging social events for residents of accommodation supported by either a resident warden or a non-resident warden with a system for calling that warden.