

# Applicant's Guide to Sheltered Housing



## Sheltered Housing

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## **Introduction**

Castle Point Borough Council has eight sheltered schemes within the Borough which offer self-contained accommodation for the over 60's who are capable of independent living with some support. There are just under 300 such units of supported accommodation, with three schemes in Benfleet, one in Hadleigh and four on Canvey Island. The Council employs Sheltered Housing & Community Officers who each have a primary responsibility for a scheme.

This booklet explains what sheltered accommodation is, how you can apply for such a property and the assessment criteria we follow to make sure that you are eligible to be allocated a property. It also explains what happens when you move into the property.

## **What is Sheltered Housing?**

Sheltered housing was developed to accommodate the increasing elderly population. Sheltered housing provides a safe, secure and supportive environment for people aged over 60 to live independently in their own homes. Generally it comprises of a group of flats and / or bungalows which are connected to the Sheltered Housing & Community Officer's office via a warden-call communication system. This is in the form of pull cords. This system is also connected to Careline at Southend, who handle the emergency out of hours calls for the Council, so that each resident can contact somebody in the event of an accident or emergency.

Sheltered schemes also typically have communal facilities such as a laundry room, communal lounge and kitchen. Security door entry systems restrict access to the schemes and most schemes also have a communal area for parking and charging up mobility scooters. Places are limited so a waiting list may be in place.

## **What is the role of the Sheltered Housing & Community Officer?**

Each sheltered scheme has a full time Sheltered Housing & Community Officer, who is on duty during normal office hours of the Council (37 hours per week, Monday to Friday), with provision made for out of hours emergency calls. SH&CO's used to be called Wardens. In previous years this role has been seen as a "good neighbour" for residents, calling on each person daily to check their well-being. With the introduction of Supporting People however, in 2003, this role has changed.

Sheltered Housing & Community Officers are there for the times when the residents need extra help. Many residents require assistance with daily living from Social Services or Health Services. The SH&CO will complete a support plan for each resident to identify their support needs, and will arrange for such services to engage with the resident.

The Sheltered Housing & Community Officer is also responsible for dealing with general enquiries and responding to any emergencies. They encourage social activities for residents and are responsible for the general supervision and management of the communal areas of the scheme. In addition, they will work in partnerships with external organisations to encourage a range of interest and support group sessions within the scheme for both our own tenants, and the wider elderly community.

The Sheltered Housing & Community Officer is not there to administer medicines or carry out any nursing duties. They are not permitted to collect pensions for residents or pay their bills. They will also not go shopping for residents or carry out any type of domestic duties such as cooking or cleaning.

The Sheltered Housing & Community Officer will offer equal opportunities and fair treatment to all residents, and will act honestly and with integrity at all times, ensuring that all information about a resident is treated confidentially.

## Where are the Council's Sheltered Schemes?

The Council has eight sheltered schemes within the Borough:



**Stansfield Court**  
Stansfield Road  
Benfleet  
Essex  
SS7 4NJ

Tel: 01268 758985

**Stansfield Court** comprises of 18 studio flats and 10 1-bed flats. The scheme has a communal lounge, Laundry room, mobility scooter store and a lift is available at this scheme.



**Gowan Court**  
Gowan Close  
Benfleet  
Essex  
SS7 5SD

Tel: 01268 758869

**Gowan Court** comprises of 32 properties, of which 24 are studio flats. There are also 8 one-bedroom flats. There is a communal lounge, laundry room, and lifts are available at this scheme.



**Lawns Court**

The Lawns  
Benfleet  
Essex  
SS7 4LG

Tel: 01268 758813

**Lawns Court** comprises of 29 properties, of which 25 are one bedroom bungalows, the remainder are two bedroom flats. There is a communal lounge, laundry room, and mobility scooter store available at this scheme.

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**Westwood Court**

Beresford Close  
Hadleigh  
Essex  
SS7 2SU

Tel: 01702 551541

**Westwood Court** comprises of 55 properties, of which 50 are one-bedroom flats and there are five two-bedroom bungalows. There are 2 communal lounges, and an IT room, laundry room, mobility scooter store, and a lift available at this scheme.

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**Sweetbriar Lodge**

Link Road  
Canvey Island  
Essex  
SS8 9LA

Tel: 01268 694087

**Sweetbriar Lodge** comprises of 40 properties, of which six are one bedroom flats and 34 are studio flats. There is a communal lounge, laundry room, mobility scooter store, and a lift available at this scheme.



**Amelia Blackwell House**

Link Road  
Canvey Island  
Essex  
SS8 9JZ

Tel: 01268 683957

**Amelia Blackwell House** comprises of 28 studio flats. There is a communal lounge, laundry, and a mobility scooter store available at this scheme.



**Willalla House**

Poplar Road  
Canvey Island  
Essex  
SS8 7DZ

Tel: 01268 693422

**Willalla House** comprises of 39 properties, of which 20 are one bedroom flats, 12 are studio flats and seven are one bedroom bungalows. There is a communal lounge, a mobility scooter store, and a lift available at this scheme.

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**Beatrice Littlewood House**

Kitkatts Road  
Canvey Island  
Essex  
SS8 0DP

Tel: 01268 683300

**Beatrice Littlewood House** comprises of 31 properties. There are eight studio flats and eight one bedroom flats in the main building. Some of these properties have shared bathroom facilities. In the grounds there are four one bedroom bungalows and 11 studio bungalows. There is a communal lounge but no lift available at this scheme.

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## **Am I allowed to keep a pet in a Sheltered Scheme?**

In general the Council does not allow residents of a sheltered scheme to keep pets such as cats or dogs. Rarely this might be possibly in accordance with our pets policy, but certainly not in any circumstance where you enter the scheme through a communal front entrance door.

## **Who can join the Housing Register?**

Anyone can apply to the Council for housing. This includes people applying for Council housing for the first time and also current council tenants seeking a transfer to alternative accommodation. However, not everyone will be eligible for housing. The Council will not register applicants who are not eligible to be housed. Full eligibility details are contained in the allocations policy but those who are not eligible include:

- People subject to immigration control as classified by the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996
- Perpetrators of anti-social behaviour

If you are considered ineligible to join the Housing Register, you will be written to, explaining the reasons why. You will be able to ask for a review of the decision if you do not agree with it.



## How can I apply to join the Housing Register?

Demand for accommodation is very high in this Borough, but we only make approximately 100 - 120 lettings per year for all kinds of accommodation. Approximately 30 - 40 of these lettings each year are to sheltered housing units. We therefore hold a Housing Register to make sure that there is a fair allocation of properties. The Housing Register is a list of all households who are waiting to be housed in Council (or Housing Association) properties.

To join the Housing Register you need to fill in an application form. You can do this online at [www.castlepointhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.castlepointhomechoice.org.uk) or get an application form either by:

- Collecting one from the Housing Services Reception at the Council Offices, Kiln Road, Benfleet or
- Telephoning the Applications Officers on 01268 882321 and asking for a form to be sent to you or
- E-mailing us at [HAPPS@castlepoint.gov.uk](mailto:HAPPS@castlepoint.gov.uk)

**If you need any help to complete the application form, please ask at the Housing Services Reception desk, or telephone 01268 882321 and ask for assistance.**

*Please note that joining the Housing Needs Register does not mean that the Council will necessarily be able to rehouse you.*

## **Do I have to fill in a different form to apply for sheltered housing?**

Yes.

To be considered for sheltered housing, you have to demonstrate that you have a need to live in this type of supported accommodation. There is an extra form that you will have to complete called an "Assessment of the need for sheltered accommodation", which asks about your personal and support needs. All information provided in this form is treated in complete confidence, and is passed to the Services Sheltered Housing & Community Officer when you are allocated a property so that they can use the information to help plan for your support needs.

You may also need to fill in a medical form which will be used to assess any priority that may apply due to your health issues.

## **How is my application assessed?**

When we receive your application for housing, it is assessed to see if you are eligible to join the register. We aim to do the assessment within 30 working days of receiving your form and any documents requested to support your application. This could also involve a visit to you at home to check your circumstances.

## **Why does an application for sheltered housing have to have an assessment of my needs?**

The reason that there has to be an assessment of your need for this type of accommodation is that the sheltered housing service is monitored by Supporting People teams at the County Council. To qualify for sheltered housing you have to have a need for some support. There is a support charge in addition to the weekly rental charge. The Supporting People teams monitor that tenants are receiving value for money and that they are receiving the support they are paying for, by carrying out regular reviews of the service.

## **What happens if my application for sheltered housing is refused?**

Your application and your needs are assessed by Applications Officers and the Senior Sheltered Housing & Community Officer. If they decide that you are not eligible for sheltered housing because you do not have a support need, they will notify you in writing. If you do not qualify for sheltered housing, provided that you are eligible to join the Housing Needs Register, you will be added to the list for general needs accommodation.

## **The Choice Based Letting System**

Properties are advertised every week. You will be able to express your interest or bid, as it is known, for a maximum of 3 properties during the time they are advertised. This can be done in one of the following ways:

- Online through [www.castlepointhomechoice.org.uk](http://www.castlepointhomechoice.org.uk)
- By telephoning our 24hr automated bidding line on 0333 9000 910 (typically 3p per minute)
- By sending a text message to 07537 402601

Sheltered accommodation is listed alongside other social housing properties and you can bid for them using the same system. You can also register interest for a Housing Association property on the website.

If you decide to refuse the property it will be offered to the next person on the priority list. You will not normally be penalised for refusing a property and will continue to be able to bid for properties advertised.

You will only be eligible for properties that are suitable for the size of your family. Under "How to use the service" on the website, there is a table that tells you how we normally decide on the number of bedrooms that you are eligible for.

The law states that we must give priority to people who have the greatest need to move. To make sure this is done fairly, the Council uses a banding scheme to prioritise applications. For more information on the banding scheme, please look on the Castle Point HomeChoice website.

## **What if I don't agree with a decision made on my Housing Register application?**

You can ask for a review if you do not agree with a decision made by the Council on your Housing application. Things you may not agree with are:

- A decision not to accept you onto the housing register
- A decision that you are not eligible for sheltered accommodation
- A decision to remove you from the Housing Register other than when you have requested that this is done
- A decision to lower your priority because of your unacceptable behaviour
- If you are homeless and you do not think that the accommodation offered to you is suitable

## **How do I appeal against a decision?**

- When you are notified of a decision on your Housing Register application, you will also be told that you have a right to request a review if you do not agree with any part of the decision made. You must make this request within 21 days from the day when the decision was notified.
- The review will be carried out by a Senior Officer who has not been involved in your case
- You have the right to be represented during a review
- You will be notified in writing of the review decision and the reasons for it

## **Other things you need to know**

### **Equal Opportunities**

All applicants are treated equally. The Council does not treat anyone differently because of their class, race, gender, age, etc.

Your right to see what information is being held about your Application

Under the Housing Act 1996 and the Data Protection Act 1998, you have a right to see what information is held about you by the Council. If you want to do this you need to write to the Tenancy Services Manager at the Council Offices.

### **What happens if I am accepted onto the Housing Register and my circumstances change?**

If your circumstances change after you have applied for accommodation, you must notify the Applications Officers immediately. You can do this by writing to us, telephoning us, calling into the Council Offices or sending an email to [HAPPS@castlepoint.gov.uk](mailto:HAPPS@castlepoint.gov.uk)

You must notify this department of all changes as it may affect your banding. If you move, you will need to contact us for a change of address form.

### **What other housing options are there available to me?**

The Council offers a free Housing Advice Service, where you can obtain help with a housing query or advice on a problem. You can contact the Housing Options Team on 01268 882200 option 6. If you live in a Housing Association property or outside our Borough, you can apply to us for housing, but you should contact your own landlord for help in the first instance. They may be able to help you with a mutual exchange, transfer or nomination to another area.

If you have sufficient capital, for example from the sale of a property, you may wish to consider purchasing a leasehold property for the elderly. Our housing advice service will be able to advise you of any such local schemes.

