

# Does Sheltered Housing offer a Roof for Your TARA?



**Notes from a Delegate Meeting held on Wednesday 9 April 2008 at Silverwood Miners Resource Centre**

## **Introduction**

**A**ndrew Roddison, Company Secretary did an introduction to Sheltered Housing, and the different types of scheme in operation, and saying we all cared about Social Housing, and needed to make it work. There are 60 schemes in Rotherham with a neighbourhood centre plus 4 indoor units. These schemes are a mixture of sheltered and aged person's properties. He outlined what bills needed to be paid including gas, electric, water, sewerage, electrical maintenance, PAT testing, cleaning, telephone, window cleaning, refuse collection and repairs.

**H**e gave an interesting breakdown of the costs that tenants pay, around £3.98 per week for on-site centres and the expense of keeping them going to the council. He gave two examples of cost – a scheme of 33 properties would have an income of £6,320.08 and expenditure of £6,479.80. A scheme of 27 properties has an income £5,170.97 and expenditure of £5,611.72.

**O**n average, the council lose about £500.00 per year on centres before any extra costs are incurred. Andrew referred to Janice Armstrong from RMBC, how she supports Rotherham centres and the roles that TARA's could and should play in ensuring maximum use of their centres.

The meeting then moved into workshops to discuss two questions.

1. What support do tenants of Sheltered Housing schemes need?
2. How can TARA's and Sheltered Housing Schemes work together?



*A summary of responses in workshops is given overleaf.*

# 1. What support do tenants of the sheltered housing schemes need?

## Physical

Protect from vandals, put fencing around centres. Put alleygates in. Better facilities – resources and refurbishment plan needs reinstating



## Social

How can you motivate people to come into your centre? Want to get rid of isolation. Communication and information through newsletters. Friendship and mobility assistance needed. Transport, motivation and encouragement.

Correct 'vetting' so appropriate people are offered places on schemes – this can help to reduce antisocial behaviour and make sure needs of tenants are met too. One community that recognises needs and differences.

## Costs

Clarification required of what we exactly pay for? Is it fair for some to pay a weekly charge for the scheme yet other use the centres and don't pay. Different areas pay for centres, some pay hire charges. Why? Hire charges are £10 per hour in each centre. Why when we already pay.

Value for money – younger disabled residents live there and pay but older residents grumble. Could bring young and old together, have fun activities such as cards, bingo or have young people help out such as planting flowers.

## Support from Partners

More consistent support from agencies. Support from RMBC and 2010 ie champions to be present at social events (bingo), they can promote TARAs and help deal with problems. Community Police Support Officers there also

help alleviate the fear of crime. PCT support also welcome. More help from neighbourhood champions and housing officers. More networking between 2010, RMBC, TARAs and various agencies. Need to have contacts - emergency health (Rother Care) and general health contacts (warden). RMBC needs to commit to these schemes ie no threat of closure.

### **Wardens**

**N**eed more resident wardens. Is the warden scheme resourced adequately? Need more direct support from wardens ie more contact. The role of the warden needs clarifying in relation to TARAs. Wardens to work with TARAs.

## **2. How can TARAs and sheltered housing schemes work together?**

### **TARAs as Advocates**

**E**ncourage all people in centres to take active part in TARAs. Expanding the role of TARAs acting as advocates for residents. TARAs to work together as one voice to have influence on RMBC.

**T**ARAs help the elderly in their area and provide amenities for them. Adds to centres usage. TARAs can add 'benefit' to sheltered schemes. – “use it or lose it”. More information for TARAs about requirements for them. CRB and insurance checks.

### **Communication**

**N**eed to support each other and clarify roles on how to work together. Must see both sides of the question and be professional in the way they work together. Build a two way relationship and



improve communications between both parties. Need to build good relationships between partners, tenants and the schemes.

## Working Together

Residents need to get together to discuss how to work together. Who organises and runs the social events – the TARA. There are both age and cultural differences that sometimes need to be overcome. Breakdown age barriers (us and them)

## Space

Sharing space and facilities. Neighbourhood centres need to be made available for TARA use. Centres open everyday but they are not always in use. – TARAs would like to see them used more often. In being able to raise more funding, the TARA can raise funds to give back to the sheltered housing residents eg:

- Pie and pea suppers
- Decorating
- Other social activities

TARAs could donate/contribute through pie and pea suppers for residents, bus trips and activities. Community centres not communal centres

## Costs

Breakdown the barriers for centre usage - £3.98 paid can use, no £3.98 cant. TARAs should not have to pay rent. If there are empty flats, TARAs should be able to use them to benefit community. A reasonable rent between peppercorn and commercial. Longer term futures for TARAs and assurance



of accommodation for them. Should be no charges applied for hire. Put in fundraising for additional facilities in centre

## Regeneration and Consultation

Understand the implications of regeneration changes for residents and

the future of the schemes. There needs to be consultation about what is happening and TARAs need to be involved. Clear responses need to be given when questions are asked, instead of walking away ignoring the problem.

## **Success Stories**

### **Ida Atkins, Peregrine Way TARA**

Peregrine Way TARA started around 5 years ago, to try and improve facilities and activities for the elderly residents. They have refurbished the centre, complete with new carpets, upholstery, curtains and kitchen, giving them a centre to be proud of. They undertake a wide range of activities now, including computer training, digital photography courses, indoor bowling, Darts, cards/dominoes, Craft classes, movie club, book club, functions, bingo and armchair aerobics. Their latest project is the creation of a sensory garden, working in conjunction with Groundwork Cresswell and 2010.

### **Wayne Henshaw, 2010 Champion.**

Wayne highlighted the work done by Peregrine Way TARA at Harthill, and how TARA's need to encourage support from their own Champions, ensuring they get involved. He had just finished setting up Kiveton Bungalow User Group (KBUG) and was proud of the work they had done together to address transport issues and getting computers for them.

### **Linda Sales, Rawmarsh Area TARA**

Linda thanked David Jackson who she thought gave them the start they needed to get Rawmarsh TARA up and running, because he was the person who at the time was in charge of the community centres for R.M.B.C. Linda met up with him at Greenfield Centre, talked about what the group was hoping to do and permission was given to use the room as an office and to share it with the warden. The group cleaned out the room which had been used for storage and painted it, office furniture was put in donated from the contractors R.O.K, and



computers from Rother Fed. The group has held coffee mornings, bingo, fish dinners, Easter and Christmas teas.

Many of the members are very supportive, attending the adult services meetings with Tom Sweetman, B.E.T.S Team who came and cleaned up the area round the centre. Rumours that the council want to take this facility away from the group, if it were to happen could be the end of some groups and would mean communities falling apart instead of pulling together.

*Thanks to all the TARA delegates for their contributions and workshop facilitators from 2010 Rotherham for their help at this delegates meeting.*