

ADULT COMMUNITY CARE

VERY SHELTERED HOUSING

FAQs – from service users and their families

Q1. Are there staff on duty 24 hours a day?

A1. Staff are on duty round the clock at all the VSH schemes except for the ABC centre in Whitchurch (7am – 10pm, with additional visits for planned care at night). All other schemes have a care team on site 24 hrs plus support staff during the day time. Night-time care arrangements vary slightly from scheme to scheme, but basically planned and intermittent or unplanned care and emergency responses are all met by the on-site staff team.

Q2. Are meals provided?

A2. There is a hot meal available in the restaurant every lunchtime (this must be paid for as it is not charged as part of the rent). Lunches are a good opportunity for residents to get together every day, to meet with families and friends and with older people from the local community. The restaurants also put on special meals for particular events such as Valentine's Day, Easter, Hallowe'en and Christmas, when families and friends are particularly invited. For other meals: care and support staff can prepare food in residents' own kitchens or can assist residents to prepare their own meals, as appropriate.

Q3. Who are the carers?

A3. All carers are part of the on-site teams provided by the VSH schemes, working as Bristol VSH Partnership. The partnership consists of: Bristol City Council, Brunelcare, Guinness Trust, Hanover Housing, Housing21, The VSH providers all work in close partnership with Bristol City Council to provide high quality buildings, care and support. In 2006 we achieved the prestigious Beacon Award for Improving the Delivery of Services through Partnership. Care is provided by the on-site teams, who have long-term contracts for a minimum of three years.

Q4. What happens if my care needs change?

A4. This works in the same way as in residential care. If the changes are small then the care provider will make adjustments without having to carry out a formal review. However, if someone's care needs change substantially a social worker will be asked to carry out a reassessment to make sure that the care needs can still be met within the VSH scheme. This might involve arranging for extra care to be purchased to meet need, if this is appropriate.

Q5. How much will it cost?

A5. During the consultation, residents interested in VSH can request a preliminary financial assessment from the Fairer Charging Visiting Team. This team will look at all of your income, any savings you have and the likely costs involved in moving into VSH. They will then look at the benefits that you are entitled to claim and help you to claim them. The team says: 'We have never known anyone to experience financial hardship as a result of moving from residential care to VSH: in most cases, residents' weekly income increases.' Contact for a preliminary financial assessment: Lisa Bolton: 0117 903 7721.

Q6. What benefits would residents get to keep in VSH?

A6. Most people in VSH are entitled to Attendance Allowance and will receive an increase in Pension Credit.

Q7. What about utilities costs?

A7. You will be responsible for your utilities costs in VSH, but this will normally be covered by the increases in benefits claimed.

Q8. Can I take the furniture from my room at Bowmead?

A8. Yes – there is an agreement with Adult Community Care that residents can take their furniture with them if the home is closing and, in fact, we encourage them to take anything else from the home that will be useful to them - crockery, bedding, towels, ornaments and so on.

Q9. What if I have to buy more furniture/ furnishings or a fridge?

A9. It is possible to apply for a Community Care Grant through the Pensions Service if residents need to buy other furniture/furnishings, utensils or household appliances. Contact: Bill Wood: 0117 991 3841.

Q10. Are there cookers, washing machines, and fridges in the kitchens in VSH schemes?

A10. All the VSH schemes have cookers (hobs and ovens) as standard in the flats and washing machines are provided in the communal laundry facilities, but in some schemes residents have to buy their own fridge.

Q11. Who does the laundry?

A11. Laundry is washed by care workers.

Q12. And what about the shopping?

A12. Care workers can also do the shopping for you; some of the schemes have access to Internet shopping as well.

Q13. There are 'key workers' in residential care. Do VSH schemes have the same set-up?

A13. Yes, most of them do: the schemes in Bedminster and Westbury Fields, run by St Monica Trust; Colliers Gardens in Fishponds, run by Brunelcare; and Hillside Court, St George, run by Housing21 all have key workers for each resident.

Q14. Can I have visitors? What times can they come?

A14. Of course – your flat in a VSH scheme is your own home, with its own front door – so you can choose who visits you and when. Visitors are welcome at the schemes at any reasonable time. For visitors coming from further afield, each of the VSH schemes has a guest room available for rent.

Q14. Can I visit the VSH schemes before I decide anything?

A14. Yes, certainly. The VSH schemes are open to visitors on the first Monday of every month and they can make arrangements for you to visit at other times as well. There will be further opportunities for you to look at flats if you decide to go ahead. Please phone schemes directly to arrange visits (contact details are in the VSH newsletter).

Q15. How do I complain if I am dissatisfied with the service I receive in a VSH scheme?

A15. All the VSH providers have their own complaints procedures which they will be able to tell you about (contact details in the newsletter). You can also make a complaint through Bristol City Council's Adult Community Care department (www.bristol.gov.uk/adultcare) or directly to the Commission for Social Care Inspection (www.CSCI.org).

Q16. VSHs are quite big places – don't they get a bit lonely?

A16. Hopefully not! Although everyone has their own flat with their own front door, the schemes are easy to get around and there are plenty of activities going on – from art groups to tea dances and gentle exercise classes. You can decide for yourself how much you want to be involved in the life of the scheme.

Q17. What if I need a lot of care but my husband or wife doesn't?

A17. All the VSH schemes have some flats with two bedrooms. This means it is an ideal option for couples who want to stay together, particularly if one partner needs a lot of care but the other doesn't.

July 2007

