



## Services for Vulnerable People Policy

Ocean is committed to providing suitable housing for those persons with special accommodation needs. It will establish and maintain links with both statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure a comprehensive housing service provision for those vulnerable tenants in need of care and support.

In this respect it will:-

- a) Establish and maintain membership of any relevant forums for Older Persons, clients with Learning Disabilities and other vulnerable groups.
- b) Carry out adaptations to its own dwellings to cater for the needs of people with disabilities and ensure that tenants are made aware of grant aid through the Disabled Facilities Grant Scheme.
- c) Provide facilities that enable people to live independently in their existing homes.
- d) Develop "Lifetime Homes" for new schemes, wherever possible, not only catering for the existing needs of housing applicants but future special needs should they arise.
- e) Assist any local authority in co-ordinating a housing strategy in relation to special needs groups
- f) Assist Cornwall County Council in meeting its targets for Community Care.
- g) Assist in the formulation of joint strategies for people with disabilities.
- h) Maintain effective relationships with statutory authorities and with other agencies working in the community care field.
- i) Promote awareness of special needs and community care issues.
- j) Use Homefinder Direct to identify applicants with special needs.
- k) Ensure that such applicants are referred to Oceans' Welfare Assessment Panel where appropriate.
- l) Ensure that all matters relating to the needs of individual clients are treated in strictest confidence.
- m) Seek to maximise the use of floating support.
- n) Ensure that Supporting People legislation is complied with, contracts have been agreed and are in place
- o) Ensure that Ocean staff are fully trained in identifying and responding to the needs of vulnerable people.

### SHELTERED HOUSING

Sheltered accommodation is designed to provide an independent living environment for persons, either at or approaching retirement age or who may be frail or have some other vulnerability. The service provides lowlevel support in the form of a 24-hour Lifeline alarm service and regular support officer visits.

Ocean will aim to:

- a) provide the service in a sympathetic and caring manner tailored to meet individual needs
- b) provide a range of housing related services for elderly people
- c) introduce an effective, responsive, mobile, visiting support officer service
- d) liaise and jointly plan services with other agencies providing services for elderly people
- e) facilitate awareness of and access to the services provided to both tenants and the wider public
- f) obtain formal accreditation of the sheltered housing service
- g) ensure a successful review of the service by the Supporting People Team

A comprehensive, caring, safe and secure sheltered housing service will be provided to enable people to live independently and share communal facilities with the knowledge that help is on hand if required. Ocean will develop services at sheltered housing schemes by providing communal lounges and facilities, where practicable.

Ocean will consider making facilities at the schemes available to the wider community with the aim of providing more integration between elderly people living in sheltered housing schemes and those in other dwellings. This will include the use of any special care facilities, making lounges available for appropriate activities and where practicable, basing community facilities at schemes.

Ocean will seek to introduce a mobile, visiting support officer service for all of its' sheltered housing residents and will work with the Supporting People Team to expand this service, on a "floating support" basis, to other elderly or vulnerable tenants and residents.

Ocean will encourage the formation of Residents' Groups.

Ocean will provide a caring environment for residents with regular contact with a Warden and an effective emergency alarm system.

The right of tenants to privacy will be respected and confidential matters concerning individual tenants will not be discussed except when necessary with professional staff and with the permission of the individual concerned.

Ocean will maintain accreditation for its' sheltered housing service from the Centre for Sheltered Housing Studies and will ensure that accredited service standards, where necessary are improved.

Ocean will seek to obtain a successful review of its' sheltered housing service from the Cornwall Supporting People Team and ensure that the service is maintained to the necessary standards, in accordance with the Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework.

#### GENERAL NEEDS ACCOMMODATION

Vulnerable persons may also be accommodated in Ocean's general-needs accommodation. Where this occurs, Ocean will ensure that there is a suitable, on-going care or support package in place before the allocation is made.

Where an existing Ocean tenant is identified as being vulnerable, Ocean will ensure that an appropriate Support agency, (e.g. Adult Social Care), is advised, in writing and help facilitate the introduction of an appropriate care or support package.

Where a vulnerable tenant is receiving floating support, Ocean will seek to maintain a regular review, with the floating support service provider, of the tenant's support progress.

Where a vulnerable tenant causes, or is the victim of, anti-social behaviour or is involved in any other breach of their tenancy conditions, Ocean will advise the tenant's support agency, Adult Social Care and the local authority's Housing Options team, in writing, as a matter of urgency. Ocean will also report the matter to the local Anti-Social Behaviour Group.

Where Ocean is aware that a tenant suffers with literacy problems, e.g. cannot read or write, Ocean will endeavour to ensure that all communication with the tenant is either through face-to-face interviews or via the telephone.

Where Ocean becomes aware that a vulnerable tenant has disengaged from their support agency, Ocean will advise Adult Social Care, in writing, as a matter of urgency.

#### EMERGENCY ALARM SERVICE

The "Lifeline" alarm service is a monitoring alarm service that provides 24-hour cover to all sheltered housing residents and other vulnerable tenants.

All tenants are provided with an alarm unit, which links into their telephone system. The unit enables the call centre staff to communicate with individual residents either via their telephone or, in the event of an emergency, directly through the speech facility in each unit. Residents are also provided with an alarm pendant, which can be worn around their neck or wrist. The pendant allows the tenant to move around their home and if required, to activate the alarm remotely.

Ocean will continue to offer the emergency alarm system to Ocean dwellings occupied by elderly people, those with disabilities and vulnerable persons, at reasonable cost. Ocean will also seek to offer the alarm service to other vulnerable persons occupying private sector accommodation or owner-occupiers.

Ocean will ensure that the well being of the users of its service is monitored together with their need for other services and will act as necessary.

Equipment will be maintained to a high standard and updated as necessary.

Close liaison will be maintained with GPs, Social Workers and other care professionals.

Ocean will co-operate in publicising and promoting the service, not only to those in most need, but also for the benefit of elderly people who might wish to subscribe to the service.

#### OTHER SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE

##### Disabled Facilities Grants

Where a tenant is disabled and would benefit from having some form of adaptation carried out to their home to improve their quality of life, the cost of such adaptations may be met in one of two ways. Firstly, by Ocean itself, as part of its' repair and maintenance programme or by way of a Disabled Facilities Grant obtained from the local authority.

Where the cost of adaptation is less than £500, Ocean may carry out the work, funded from a designated, internal budget. Adaptations costing in excess of £500 need first to be prioritised by a Social Services Occupational Therapist and then authorised by Restormel Borough Council.

Ocean will carry out adaptations to its dwellings to cater for the needs of those with physical disabilities or frailty, subject to practical considerations concerning the adaptability of the home and the availability of more appropriate solutions to the problem.

##### Decorating of Void Tenancies

Ocean Housing will consider redecorating a property for a vulnerable person, as part of the void process, if it is accepted that the incoming tenant is unable to do it themselves and the tenant has no other means of carrying out such work.

##### Floating Support

Through the introduction of its' visiting support officer service, Ocean will seek to offer this service to other vulnerable members of the public in both private-rented and owner-occupied properties. Ocean will seek to continue its' partnership with the appointed Floating Support Contractor to provide floating support to a total of eight vulnerable tenants, with the aim of assisting them to properly maintain their tenancies.

##### Welfare Assessment Panel.

In partnership with Adult and Children's Social Services and the Health Service, Ocean will continue to provide a Welfare Assessment Panel, that will assess

applicants housing need in relation to their medical condition.

The Panel will also review self-assessment applications for Ocean Housings sheltered accommodation and review high-costing DFG applications, in accordance with established procedures.

#### HOMELESS APPLICANTS

Ocean will endeavour to co-operate, as fully as is reasonable in the circumstances, with Restormel Borough Council, in assisting the Council to discharge its duties towards homeless persons accepted under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.

To this end, Ocean will seek to provide temporary accommodation for homeless applicants and in accordance with an agreed service contract, will manage the Councils' portfolio of Private Sector Leased properties.

#### MOVE-ON ACCOMMODATION

Ocean recognises that, as part of its commitment, it will need to develop the provision of move-on accommodation to meet the needs of people who may be seeking to move out of some form of institutionalised care or needing to develop lifeskills to maintain a home of their own. It will seek to work in partnership with Restormel Borough Council and other authorities/agencies to provide both temporary and permanent accommodation, where possible, to aid those in need.