

REPORT TO: Health and Wellbeing Board
DATE: 6th July 2016
REPORTING OFFICER: Councillor Marie Wright
PORTFOLIO: Health and Wellbeing
SUBJECT: Discussion paper on the Management of Lettings within the Borough and the impact on Older People
WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To highlight to the Board the impact that some housing lettings can have on the health and wellbeing of older people within the Borough, and to create a discussion to move this agenda forward with a system-wide solution.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- i) The Board note the report.
- ii) The Board discuss the issues under *3.5 Options for Change* and develop a system-wide solution.
- iii) The Board adopt the National Pensioners Convention Dignity Code.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This report focusses on some of the potential issues that older people can face that impact on their health and wellbeing when in housing association properties. As way of introduction, the following are potential issues faced by older people:

- The older person's surroundings being changed without their prior knowledge;
- Experiencing anti-social behaviour and/or perceived anti-social behaviour, such as noisy children;
- Older people feeling frightened within their own surroundings and feeling that no-one respects their home/living space due to the above;
- The older person becoming isolated and lonely because of the above; and
- not feeling able to complain against fear of retribution.

4.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 Sub-Regional Choice Based Lettings Allocations Scheme

Halton Borough Council are members of a Sub-Regional Choice Based Letting Scheme, known as Property Pool Plus, and have adopted a common allocations scheme which is a requirement of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011. Five Councils in total are part of the Scheme, including Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Liverpool City Council, Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council and Wirral Council. 29 Housing Associations have agreed to participate in this Scheme, and are known as Scheme Landlords.

4.1.1 Under Unacceptable Behaviour, point 3.2.3 of the Property Pool Plus, it states that “.....partners of the scheme are committed to achieving stable, balanced and sustainable neighbourhoods and to tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and promoting good tenancy conduct”.

4.1.2 The Property Pool Plus mentions equality of opportunity within the housing allocation process and delivering a quality service without prejudice and discrimination. There is no specific mention of dignity.

4.1.3 Section 2.4 Sheltered Accommodation focusses on older applicants for housing, but again, there is no mention of dignity.

4.2 Dignity

4.2.1 The National Pensioners Convention has recently developed a national Dignity Code (attached at Appendix 1). Their Dignity Code is similar to the Dignity in Care principles (Appendix 2) that the Council is already signed up to, and therefore, the Council supports the values and principles of this Dignity Code, in line with Dignity in Care. This was taken to the Safeguarding Champions Group on 3rd May and has been shared with social care providers. The code recognises that certain practices and actions are unacceptable to older people. The actions that relate to this paper include:

- Treating older people as objects or speaking about them in their presence as if they were not there.
- Not informing older people of what is happening in a way that they can understand.
- Changing the older person's environment without their permission.

The code calls for positive action, including:

- Respect for an individual's habits, values, particular cultural background and any needs, linguistic or otherwise.
- Comfort, consideration, inclusion, participation, stimulation

- and a sense of purpose in all aspects of care.
- Respect for people's homes, living space and privacy.
 - Concerns to be dealt with thoroughly and the right to complain without fear of retribution.

4.3 Options for Change

4.3.1 In order to ensure that the health and wellbeing of older people in housing lettings is improved and maintained, the following options need to be considered by the Board:

i) The Board adopt the National Pensioner's Convention (NPC) Dignity Code.

ii) The Property Pool Plus Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Allocation Scheme focusses on the fair and equitable letting of houses/flats to new customers following certain criteria, but does not mention the dignity of current lettings, or older people specifically. The Board are asked to consider putting forward a recommendation to the Property Pool Plus to adopt the NPC's Dignity Code.

iii) The Board discuss how the health and wellbeing of older people within housing lettings can be brought to the fore and drawn attention to so that other older people do not have their lives affected by inappropriate lettings.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The adoption of the NPC's Dignity Code by the Health and Wellbeing Board, and potentially, the Sub-Regional Property Pool Plus.

6.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None identified.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**
N/A

7.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**
N/A

7.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The strategic theme under a Healthy Halton is “To improve the health and wellbeing of Halton people so they live longer, healthier and happier lives”.

7.4 A Safer Halton

The strategic theme under a Safer Halton is “To ensure safe and secure neighbourhood environments, with attractive, safe surroundings, good quality local amenities, and the ability of people *to enjoy life where they live*”.

7.5 Halton’s Urban Renewal

N/A

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 Older People within our housing lettings across the borough could be at risk to their health and wellbeing if this matter is not addressed soon. All agencies involved with housing lettings should work together to protect the health and wellbeing of vulnerable older people so that they can all enjoy life where they live.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 Whilst equality and diversity issues need to be considered by scheme landlords when approving housing letting applications, dignity for current residents also needs to be taken into consideration to ensure that new residents do not have a negative effect on current older residents.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Property Pool Plus		Emma Sutton-Thompson