

# A guide for Hammersmith & Fulham residents



# Sheltered Housing

## ● What is sheltered housing?

Sheltered housing, also known as retirement housing or community living, is specially designed for older residents. Most blocks, or schemes, have extra communal facilities not available in general council properties.

Sheltered flats are self-contained and have their own front doors, bathrooms and kitchens.

The schemes in Hammersmith & Fulham vary, but most provide:

- a self-service launderette
- a communal lounge
- communal gardens
- security and safety features
- a specialist housing officer (also known as a scheme manager)
- careline 24-hour emergency alarm service
- a 'handyman' service for minor repairs

Additionally, some schemes have:

- regular tea and coffee afternoons
- gardening clubs
- activities for residents
- residents' parking
- video entry phone systems
- flats adapted for disability
- lifts for access to flats above the ground floor
- residents' allotments



## ● Who can apply for sheltered housing?

To be eligible for sheltered housing in Hammersmith & Fulham you have to be aged 60 or over. Some housing association schemes will accept people aged 55 or over, but you'll need to apply to them directly.

We'll consider all applications in line with our scheme of allocations. If you already live in a council property with a secure tenancy, you'll almost certainly be eligible for sheltered housing. Higher priority is given to people giving up larger properties but you can still apply if you're in a one bedroom or studio property.

If you're 60 or over and live in a housing association property you should speak to your landlord if you're interested in sheltered housing. Most housing associations have their own sheltered schemes. You may still be eligible to join the council's housing list if you live in a housing association property.

If you're a private tenant, you may be able to join the housing list for sheltered housing depending on your circumstances.

A link to the council's scheme of allocations is available at the end of this booklet.

## ● I own my own property – can I move into sheltered housing?

Possibly. We'll sometimes consider allowing private home owners to move into our sheltered housing in exchange for you allowing the council to rent out your property to homeless families waiting for permanent housing. You would still have the option to move back into your own home if you wished.

If you are interested in this as an option, please contact us.



### ● What does the specialist housing officer (SHO) do?

The SHO is responsible for the day to day running of the sheltered schemes in terms of security, fire safety issues, and monitoring the maintenance and repair of communal areas.

They usually manage two schemes so they'll not be there all day. The SHOs work normal office hours and aren't available 24 hours a day. In an emergency you can pull one of the Careline cords in your flat or in a communal area. Someone will be available to respond to this 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The SHO has all the same duties as a normal housing officer, helping with tenancy related issues including rent arrears, and dealing with any complaints of anti-social behaviour.

They'll also help make sure you have the right level of support for your needs. Some people need a lot of help, and others don't need or want assistance very often.

SHOs are responsible for monitoring the well-being of individual residents and they deal with any emergencies that arise. This is done



through weekly 'welfare checks'. This doesn't mean that the SHOs knock on your door and bother you every week, they will only do this if they haven't seen you during the week to check that you're okay.

SHOs also work with residents to encourage the best use of the communal facilities, helping them in organising social activities of their choice, encouraging residents to be part of the social club or tenants' association (if there is one), and opening up these facilities to older people in the wider local community.

Although SHOs are unable to provide help with nursing, caring, household tasks, or the companionship that might be expected from friends or relatives, they can help residents to access care and other support services to meet their needs.

## ● Can I opt out of welfare checks?

Yes, you can opt out of welfare checks. If you choose to opt out this will be reviewed from time to time in case your needs have changed, but they aren't compulsory.

## ● Can I have pets in sheltered housing?

You can have pets in most sheltered schemes. Most operate a policy that you can move in with a pet if you already have one, but you can't replace it when it dies.

There may be exceptions to this so you should check with the SHO before you move in.



## ● Are there any sheltered schemes with a garden?

Nearly all the sheltered schemes have communal gardens and it's up to the residents in a scheme to maintain them. Some have gardening clubs and at others one or two individuals may do most of the gardening.

In some schemes no one has taken responsibility for maintaining the communal gardens, so if you have green-fingers and fancy a project one of them could be the scheme for you!

In some of the schemes the flats have private gardens or outside space to do with as you wish. You can see which schemes have private gardens in 'A guide to sheltered housing schemes in Hammersmith & Fulham'. You can ask for this guide at your local housing office or by calling 020 8753 4390.

### ● Can I have a two bedroom sheltered property?

Very few of the schemes have two bedroom properties. Of those that do you might only be eligible if you regularly require an overnight carer or cannot share a room with your partner or spouse. If you do think you need a second bedroom for medical reasons, your application will be assessed by our community medical advisor

Because there are very few schemes with two bedroom properties you may find you wait a very long time for one.



### ● Do the sheltered schemes have a guest room?

Not many of the schemes have guest rooms any more. Often this is because, due to the high demand for sheltered housing, they were phased out to provide more accommodation for older residents. In some schemes the tenants specifically asked for the guest rooms to be converted into sheltered flats.

Some of the schemes still have a guest room however. This is useful for when friends and family come to stay. There is a small daily charge for using one. You should ask the SHO before accepting a property in a scheme if you want to know whether there is a guest room.

### ● Are meals provided?

No. You can still access meals on wheels if you're unable to prepare meals for yourself. If you haven't received meals on wheels before your SHO can help you to arrange this with social services.



### ● Are there communal events?

Communal events are arranged by the residents in a scheme with the help of the SHO. Lots of schemes have residents' associations that organise regular events and trips. In other schemes this is done more informally.

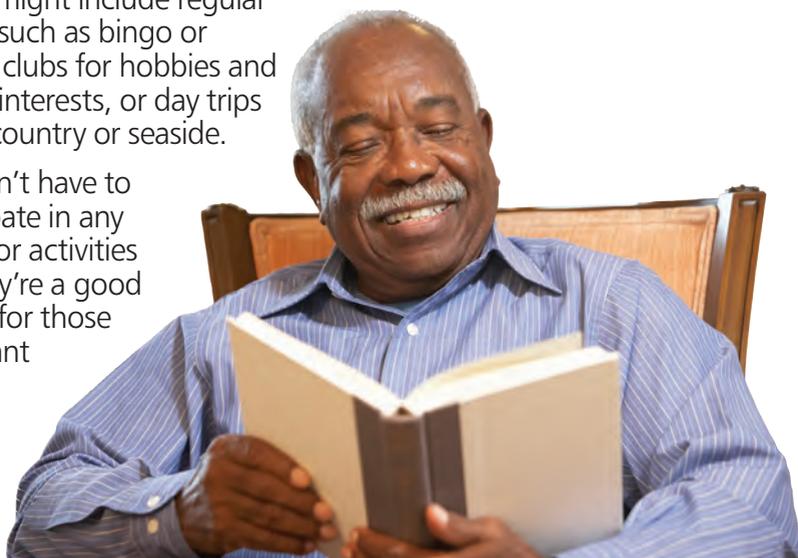
Events might include regular games such as bingo or bridge, clubs for hobbies and special interests, or day trips to the country or seaside.

You don't have to participate in any events or activities but they're a good option for those that want them.

### ● How long do I have to wait to be moved?

It's quicker to move to sheltered housing than to any other type of social housing in Hammersmith & Fulham. It's hard to say exactly how long you might have to wait but on average people receive an offer within 6-12 months of joining the housing register. If you're very keen about wanting a particular scheme, you may have to wait longer than this.

If you're giving up one or more bedrooms to move into sheltered housing as part of our beneficial transfer scheme, you're likely to have higher priority than people moving from a one bedroom or studio property.

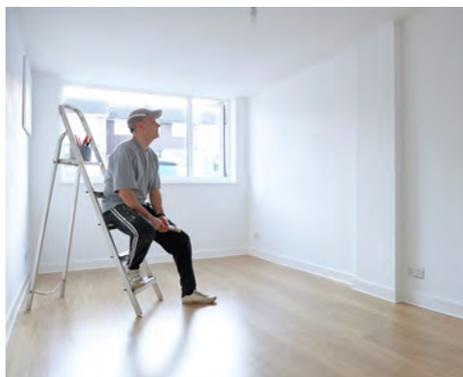


### ● Are there any incentives for moving to sheltered housing?

If you are a secure or fixed term council tenant giving up one or more bedrooms you'll qualify for our beneficial transfer scheme. More details of the scheme are available in 'Beneficial Transfer – A Guide'. If you would like a copy of the full booklet, please call 020 8753 4390 or email [housing.solutions@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:housing.solutions@lbhf.gov.uk). You can also view the guide online here <https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants/finding-more-suitable-home/help-move-smaller-home>

As part of a beneficial transfer you'll be entitled to:

- £2,000 for each bedroom you give up
- £1,000 bonus payment for moving into sheltered housing
- Free removals
- Disconnection and reconnection of oven and washing machine
- Reimbursement for redirection of post for three months



### ● Do sheltered flats come decorated and carpeted?

The condition of the flats vary according to how the previous resident kept it. If the flat you are considering is in poor condition we will paint it before you move in. We don't carpet sheltered properties before people move in.

However, if you're moving as a beneficial transfer you can choose to use all or part of your incentive payment to have your property carpeted before you move in. If your tenancy starts before the work is finished, we'll cover your rent until the property is ready for you to move in to.

● **I have a lot of care requirements. Is sheltered housing suitable for me?**

In sheltered housing you're still expected to live independently – it's not like a care home. We can still adapt a sheltered property with handrails and walk-in showers etc.

If you have lots of care needs, extra-care housing might be more suitable for you. This type of housing is like 'sheltered plus'. There is a care team on site and the residents tend to have higher care needs. Meals are often provided but it is still for people who are mainly able to live independently.

If you think you'll need extra care and this type of housing might be more suitable for you, you will need to be referred to it by adult social care. You can contact our social care team on 0845 313 3935.



● **Can I apply for sheltered housing in another area?**

We can only offer properties within Hammersmith & Fulham. However, if you qualify to join the housing list in another local authority area you can choose to be offered sheltered housing there. The advantage of this is that the waiting lists for sheltered housing in most areas outside London are shorter.

The council can't provide any incentive or assistance with removals if you move to an area outside Hammersmith & Fulham.



## ● **What is the Seaside & Country Homes Scheme?**

The Seaside & Country Homes Scheme is for London residents living in social housing who are aged 60 or over and are interested in moving to the seaside or countryside.

The scheme has one and two bedroom flats and bungalows, mainly in the south of England. To register you need to have no rent arrears. When you register you select the areas you're interested

in moving to. When a property becomes available in one of the areas you've selected you're contacted directly and invited for a viewing.

If you move through the Seaside & Country Homes Scheme the occupancy team will reimburse you up to £500 of your removal costs.

## ● For more information about this scheme visit

[www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land/renting/seaside-and-country-homes](http://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land/renting/seaside-and-country-homes) or contact the occupancy team on 020 8753 4390.

## ● Do I have right to buy in sheltered housing?

No, you don't have right to buy in sheltered housing.



## ● Can I do a mutual exchange in sheltered housing?

Yes. You can swap with another sheltered resident in Hammersmith & Fulham. You could also swap to sheltered housing outside Hammersmith & Fulham provided you qualify for sheltered housing in the area you're moving to.

You could also swap with someone not currently in sheltered housing provided that the person you swap with qualifies for sheltered housing themselves – i.e. they are aged 60 or over.

If you're interested in mutual exchange the best way to find a swap is online at [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk). You can find advice about finding a mutual exchange in our booklet, Mutual Exchange – A guide for Hammersmith & Fulham council tenants. If you would like a copy of this booklet, please contact your local housing office or call 0208 753 4390. The guide is also available online here: <https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants/finding-more-suitable-home/exchanging-your-home>



## ● How do I find out about sheltered housing schemes in Hammersmith & Fulham?

We have a guide to sheltered housing in Hammersmith & Fulham. For a copy of the guide please call **020 8753 4390** or email [housing.solutions@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:housing.solutions@lbhf.gov.uk)

### Useful Links

- [www.lbhf.gov.uk/housing/finding-home/sheltered-housing](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/housing/finding-home/sheltered-housing)
- [www.lbhf.gov.uk/housing/finding-home/applying-council-housing/housing-allocation-scheme](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/housing/finding-home/applying-council-housing/housing-allocation-scheme)
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- [www.housingcare.org/index.aspx](http://www.housingcare.org/index.aspx)
- [www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land/renting/seaside-and-country-homes](http://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land/renting/seaside-and-country-homes)
- [www.ageuk.org.uk/home-and-care/thinking-about-your-options/sheltered-housing](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/home-and-care/thinking-about-your-options/sheltered-housing)
- [http://england.shelter.org.uk/get\\_advice/housing\\_with\\_support/sheltered\\_housing](http://england.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/housing_with_support/sheltered_housing)
- [www.which.co.uk/elderly-care/housing-options/sheltered-housing/343013-what-is-sheltered-housing](http://www.which.co.uk/elderly-care/housing-options/sheltered-housing/343013-what-is-sheltered-housing)
- [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/finding-a-place-to-live/housing-options-for-older-people](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/finding-a-place-to-live/housing-options-for-older-people)

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