



# Supporting People funding *...your guide*



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# Supporting People funding...your guide

As you are aware, we have been informed by North East Lincolnshire Council that our tender to bid for and provide support services to older people through 'Supporting People' funding has been rejected.

To help answer any of your questions we have put together this guide. If you have any other questions or concerns please feel free to contact us on **0845 849 2000**, email **info@shorelinehp.com** or speak to your support officer.

## What is Housing Related Support?

This is support provided to vulnerable individuals to help them to remain independent and sustain their home. It is paid by central government through the local council Supporting People section.

In sheltered housing, it is the visits people get from a support officer who carries out a needs and risk assessment, then completes a support plan with the tenant to agree what support is needed. It is also the provision and monitoring of the 24 hour emergency alarms that currently operate in all sheltered schemes and other designated older person's accommodation.

## Why was the Shoreline tender for Housing Related Support unsuccessful?

We were keen to bid for and provide a tendered service. However, in our view we could not provide the type of service we currently provide within the suggested cost levels.

Despite the fact that we have provided this service since we took over the council's housing stock in 2005, the upper price limit for the tender was less than our current funding and was actually less than what it costs us to provide the service.

In addition, the tender was for a "floating support" service that would not necessarily fund sheltered scheme tenants unless the council agreed that support was needed for each individual.

In order to meet the terms of the contract, we would have had to increase administration and associated costs but most importantly, in our view, reduce the quality of the service we currently provide to meet the requirement of costs.

We are not prepared to reduce the quality as we believe this will be damaging to you - our customers.

So after very careful consideration we decided to submit tenders at actual cost to protect the current level of service that we offer you. We believe that the tender was unsuccessful on the basis of cost but have had no feedback as yet from the council on this.

## But many budgets are facing cuts, isn't that understandable?

We understand that the council's 'Supporting People' fund is facing budget cuts and that they must reduce costs. We were aware that funding levels were likely to reduce and we have sought opportunity to explore options with other organisations and tenants. There are examples of sheltered housing where the preventative benefits of sheltered housing are improved and services extended to the wider community. However, the service specification we were invited to bid on was so restrictive and inflexible that we believe it would have seriously damaged our existing service.

We believe the tender specification was not deliverable within the current cost base the council proposed.

In addition, the tender was for an 18 month contract and at the end of the term; it would have gone out to public open tender with no guarantees that we would have retained the service at that point. This means, we would have 18 months of seeking to provide a service with greater expectations and significantly increased administration.

We do not want to reduce the quality of the service you receive. We also think it would be better to take a different approach and discuss with you how we can preserve the best aspects of the service within reduced costs.

## So what happens now?

North East Lincolnshire Council has informed us that they will put the service out to open tender so that any other support service provider can bid to provide the service.

We have asked for clarification from the council about their proposed actions and timescales. They have only drafted a six month timetable for this.

There will be no immediate change to your service. However as our sheltered service may no longer receive 'Supporting People' funding from North East Lincolnshire Council in the near future, we do have to consider options carefully.

We remain fully committed to you and will immediately begin to explore all options to make sure that you continue to receive a quality service that meets your needs and expectations, even if we do not provide the housing support element.

## How will this affect me?

At this stage we have no further information from the council on what the impact may be on the service you receive.

## Who may bid for the service?

The council will now put the service out to open tender so that any other support service provider can bid to provide the service. We have no information about who else might bid for the service.

## **Does this mean that another organisation will be providing Housing Related Support?**

It is possible that another organisation could provide individual Housing Related Support to people living in accommodation that is owned and managed by Shoreline. This is similar to the situation for people who receive Home Care. Many people living in sheltered accommodation are provided with care by other organisations so this can also be the case with support.

## **What will happen to the Shoreline support officers?**

We have no further information from the council at this stage on what the impact may be on our support officers.

Any changes to the service could have a significant impact on our employees and this will naturally be an unsettling time for those involved. We are committed to supporting them throughout this time.

## **I have heard that Shoreline will now sell off or lease out their sheltered schemes. Is this true?**

The ownership and management of sheltered accommodation remains with Shoreline. It is the housing related support service that is funded by Supporting People that will be tendered.

## **When will the changes be taking place?**

We expect the changes to take place within the next six months. We will keep you informed of any changes as soon as possible.

## **Will I be involved in future decisions on sheltered housing?**

You will be at the heart of all discussions and decisions. If you have any views or ideas please let us know.

If you have any immediate questions or concerns please contact us or talk to your support officer.

**0845 849 2000**

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**[info@shorelinehp.com](mailto:info@shorelinehp.com)**



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