

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 29 SEPTEMBER 2015

HOME SAFETY EQUIPMENT FOR HRA TENANTS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING AND PLACE

ABSTRACT

This report seeks approval to review the current provision of home safety equipment for Housing Revenue Account (HRA) tenants with hearing impairments.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Approves the adoption of home safety equipment linked to pager systems for HRA tenants with hearing impairments;
- (ii) Approves the adoption of Carbon Monoxide detectors with improved visual alerts;
- (iii) Agrees to screening of new tenants for hearing impairments during the housing application process;
- (iv) Agrees to the provision of home safety equipment linked to a pager system for all 23 tenants with hearing impairments, in partnership with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Our communities are safe, secure and vibrant
- We have improved the health and wellbeing of our people and inequalities are reduced
- Individuals are supported in their own communities with good quality services.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 As part of the Council's commitment to improving home safety, there have been discussions with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on which measures could easily be implemented and which could bring potentially huge benefits for individual vulnerable householders. One area identified concerns a number of incidents across the country where householders with hearing impairments have been unaware of fire alarms activating in their homes. These incidents could have far reaching consequences. A review of the current fire alarm equipment provision for HRA tenants has therefore been undertaken.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 The current fire safety equipment provision for tenants with hearing impairments consists of smoke detector, flashing light and vibrating pillow pad. When the detector is activated it also activates the flashing light and vibrating pillow pad. This system works well at alerting the tenant when they are present in the room/rooms where the equipment is situated, however if the tenant is in another room they may be unaware that the fire alarm has been activated.

4.2 The current carbon monoxide (CO) safety provision for tenants with hearing impairments is no different to those provided for all tenants. The CO detector has a relatively discreet flashing light as the visual alert.

- 4.3 Fire safety equipment provision for tenants with hearing impairments is currently only fitted following a request from an Occupational Therapist (OT).
- 4.4 There are currently 23 tenants who would benefit from alternative home safety equipment, greatly increasing their safety at home.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 To adopt the use of home safety equipment linked to a pager system. A pager would be worn by the tenant to give 24 hour cover anywhere in the home. When a fire or CO detector sounds this would send a signal to the pager and alert the tenant to the activation. The pager is equipped to indicate which alarm has been activated through both flashing pictures and a vibration pulse alert. The pulse alert function makes the pager also suitable for tenants with dual sensory loss. Other alert options such as baby alarm, car or house alarm can be added to the system, all of which have a different flashing picture and vibration pulse.
- 5.2 To adopt the use of carbon monoxide detectors which offer an improved visual alert in all tenancies.
- 5.3 To provide home safety equipment linked to a pager system for all 23 tenants with hearing impairments with immediate effect.
- 5.4 To adopt hearing impairment screening during the housing application process so any new tenants can have the new home safety equipment fitted.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Any financial implications will be met from current HRA resources. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have also indicated their willingness to work in partnership with the Council to help implement the report recommendations.

7. CONSULTATION

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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