



Independent Living Strategy 2018/23

Introduction

Grand Union Housing Group (GUHG) owns and manages approximately 12,000 properties across Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and the surrounding areas. These properties include general needs housing, independent living accommodation, shared ownership, leasehold and market rent properties.

GUHG provides a wide range of independent living services. There are a number of key areas that will inform our strategic direction over the next five years.

Background

Over the next five years GUHG will deliver an ambitious programme to modernise, streamline and deliver customer focused services for our customers and enable staff to work efficiently and effectively, providing tailored support solutions. We will develop further understanding of our assets and commit to invest in our homes to achieve improvement in their performance as assets and as homes for our customers.

We will continue to focus on our customers and review the way we deliver and offer services.

We will review revenue streams and explore new ways of funding services; this is against a backdrop of reducing social care budgets. The introduction of the Care Act in April 2015 brings further opportunities to work with existing customers and those in the wider community.

The current funding stream is made up of rent and service charge, social care grant (which replaced Supporting People), registered care fees, local authority contracts, individual support charges (sheltered housing) and rent guarantees in the form of nominations agreements.

All services at the point of commissioning have a financial impact assessment completed. There are robust contracts in place for all but two of the schemes. Regular income and revenue reviews are completed by the director of independent living and better lives.

Strategic objectives

- To address the needs of our current and future customers in order to shape our services in line with Customer 2020 principles.
- To develop a robust accommodation and support offer that is renowned for quality and innovation.
- To further improve the way in which our staff deliver our services.
- To work with internal and external partners, putting the customer at the heart of all that we do.
- To work with our partners to bring about real improvements for some of our most vulnerable customers suffering financial hardship and/or social exclusion.

Key policies and documents

The strategy provides a framework which is supported by a number of other key documents/initiatives:

- Community Investment Strategy
- Complaints Policy
- Corporate and Annual Plans
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Customer Care Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Single Equality Scheme

Independent living strategic priorities

Independent living services are currently delivered across GUHG. Grand Union's priorities for the next five years will be to focus on:

- increasing our extra care offer
- increasing and expanding our supported housing services by tendering for new services as opportunities arise
- developing an integrated model of support with the NHS
- reviewing and developing our lifeline/menu of support service across the GUHG
- value for money (VfM) and an appropriate GUHG structure for efficient delivery of all of our supported housing services
- reviewing and developing our day services offer.

Delivering the strategy

In order to deliver the strategic objectives for GUHG, they have been broken down into short and medium term goals.

Short term objectives

Staff

- Consider any knowledge or skills gaps – Care Act and Wellbeing agenda. This is an evolving objective to keep ahead of the market place and ensure our customer offer remains fresh and attractive.
- Ensure that all job descriptions are refreshed and up to date. All job descriptions have been reviewed and are up to date.
- Ensure that the teams are briefed and clear about the service objectives, with a comprehensive training plan to enable them to achieve the targets set. A clear and concise training plan is now in place.

Service offer

- Continue to talk to commissioners about how we can review and develop services for all customers, existing and new, within independent living.
- Continue to build on existing and new partnerships with care providers.
- Consider the re development of Beech Close in central Bedfordshire – this now operates as temporary accommodation, with the added addition of a step up/step down facility. Within Hertfordshire we are now progressing the re configuration and development of the registered care services to individual dwellings CASSH funding is in place.
- Develop the role of the wellbeing project officer across GUHG, exploring new opportunities to support an ageing population.
- Undertake a wholesale review of the retirement living support charges, and put forward a robust financial proposal, proposing how the service will be funded in the future.
- Develop a brand for GUHG's independent living service. This was completed and will be absorbed as part of unification. Moving forward the service will be known as Grand Union independent living service.

Medium to longer term objectives

Staff

- harmonise the services that we provide across GUHG
- ensure all staff are equipped to provide high quality, customer focused support
- explore further opportunities to manage services for or on behalf of other providers/agencies
- continue to be an independent living provider of choice, based on innovation and quality of the services we provide.

Service Offer

- Develop relations with the NHS to explore new business opportunities. Work with health commissioners and providers to develop integrated models of health, care and support.
- Increase our extra care offer and review the longevity of our existing retirement living accommodation.
- Continue to grow the service by exploring different funding models and tender for new business as opportunities arise.
- Deliver the Dementia strategy for GUHG.
- Update to digital equipment within schemes, giving customers a choice of enhanced service options.

Expected outcomes for Grand Union

- A diverse range of independent living services providing customer focused solutions.
- Services that demonstrate VfM.
- Performance monitoring of an outcomes focused service.
- A wider role for GUHG's Housing and Services Committee who will oversee the strategic direction of our services and make recommendations to the Board on future services and opportunities.

Value for money (VfM)

It is anticipated that the suggested changes outlined within this strategy will bring real VfM improvements. Getting things right first time will also make for a better customer experience.

Equality and diversity

Grand Union is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and embracing diversity, to ensure that our services are accessible to all members of the community. This strategy relates to all our staff, partners, customers, Board members and customers, both internal and external.

Responsibilities

The director of independent living and better lives will implement and develop this strategy but all management staff will be expected to have regard to it when reviewing policies and procedures.

Monitoring and review

This strategy will be reviewed in line with GUHG's policy review programme. Implementation of the associated action plan will be monitored and reported six monthly to the Executive Management team.

Customer consultation: March 2016

Equality Impact Assessment carried out: initial screen

Person responsible for review: Director of Independent Living and Better Lives

Supported by: N/A

Date reviewed: July 2018

Ratified by: Leadership Team September 2018

Date of next review: September 2019

Key:

Short Term Objectives (6-12 months)

Medium Term Objectives (1-2 years)

Long Term Objectives (2-3 years)