

Press release

For immediate release

May 2008

New housing support service helps vulnerable and socially excluded residents in Bedfordshire live independently

One Support, the housing, care and support arm of One Housing Group, has launched a new Floating Support service for vulnerable and socially excluded residents who need help sustaining their tenancies. Commissioned and funded by Bedfordshire County Council, the service has an annual value of £454,000.

The Bedfordshire Support Service will work with around 300 people across the County each year, providing invaluable support to help individuals avoid tenancy loss and achieve a more stable and sustainable position to deal with their needs.

The unique service operates from a hub office in Bedford. A team of 13 staff will work with a range of people in their homes, who need additional help to live independently.

Open to all residents in the County, whether living in council housing, housing association, private renting or owner occupied accommodation, the innovative paperless support planning and administration system enables One Support staff to spend approximately 20 per cent more time with customers compared to more traditional support services.

Support staff are equipped with their own personal laptop, which they can use while with customers or on the move, reducing time spent in the office or travelling to and from appointments. In addition, staff run surgeries in each of the County's Area Housing Offices one day per week and offer flexible weekend visits to fit around customers' specific needs.

Kevin Beirne, Group Director of One Housing Care and Support, said: "This pioneering service will bring real benefits to people who require support to live independently in Bedfordshire.

One Support is committed to helping people achieve real independence and realise their full potential. We value this opportunity to work with the Bedfordshire County Council, a dynamic local authority partner.

"We will continue to develop further links with local groups across the County to ensure hard to reach communities benefit from this new service. Together we aim to push the boundaries with this service, to ensure the it makes a real impact on the community and reaches those who are most in need."

Cllr Bob King, Bedfordshire County Council Cabinet member for Community Services, said: "This is a fantastic service and we are thrilled to be a part of it. There is real benefit in vulnerable residents using this service to ensure they live as independent as possible."

Client groups able to take advantage of this support include:

- People in a state of housing crisis, often facing eviction notices
- People with low level mental health problems
- People with substance misuse problems
- People with offending histories and at risk of re-offending
- People with poor physical health and long term illness
- People with a mild learning disability

- People with problems of Anti-Social Behaviour – those causing it and those suffering from it

Bedfordshire Floating Support Service accepts referrals from a wide range of sources, including self-referrals.

One Housing Group runs similar successful services in Camden, Westminster, Lambeth and Haringey.

For more information on One Support visit

www.onehousinggroup.co.uk/content/supportservices

Ends

For further information please contact Fiona Crook at One Housing Group on telephone: 020 7428 4107 or email: fcrook@onehousinggroup.co.uk

Notes to Editors

One Housing Group currently manages over 12,000 homes in 25 local authorities across London and the Home Counties, with over 2,700 homes in the development pipeline. These include shared ownership schemes; intermediate rent homes for key workers, affordable rented homes and homes for outright sale.

All new schemes look at the need for balanced communities and therefore include a mixture of tenures and uses.

One Support is the group's housing care and support arm. With a reputation for providing high quality modern supported housing and services. One Support has been the biggest developer of supported housing in London for the last 5 years.

Community Housing Group, Island Homes and Toynbee Housing Association joined to form One Housing Group in September 2007.

Visit www.onehousinggroup.co.uk for further information.