

Ventnor Court- Update

As you may be aware, staff from Southampton City Council have attended a number of meetings with residents and tenants of Ventnor Court to discuss the proposal to lower the age criteria for Ventnor Court to 50 years of age.

As part of the ongoing conversation, some residents have been working and meeting with staff on a regular basis to discuss resident concerns, identify ways of minimising those worries and looking at how the blocks may work in the future.

We felt that it would be a good idea to update you with some of the questions and answers that have been discussed.

Will you reduce the amount of support in the block?

We always try to ensure that we put the correct amount of support into all of our blocks across the City. As you may know, we also provide support to older people who do not live in our supported housing but who are vulnerable and in need. The amount of support will be dependant on the needs identified in the housing complex.

Some vulnerable residents currently leave their doors unlocked and they would be more at risk from younger people.

We always advise you to keep your doors locked and to stay safe. It is not a good idea to leave your front door unlocked at any time and we would hope that you will heed this advise and keep your front door shut and locked.

Will my rent change if the age criteria reduces?

Rent is not dependant on the age criteria of the block and is subject to normal rent setting policies.

Why not make Ventnor Court an Extra Care Scheme?

Staff in housing are working with colleagues from Adult Social Care to look at how much extra care is required across the City. We do not feel though that Ventnor Court would be suitable for an extra care scheme for older people.

Would the Council consider reducing the age criteria to 55 rather than 50 years of age?

After looking at this suggestion, we still feel that lowering the age to 50 plus rather than 60 would have more of an impact of the housing register and as a responsible landlord we must make best use of our stock.

However, we are not putting an upper age limit so people over the age of 60 can still bid.

We will though, ensure that this consideration is out forward in the final report that goes to the Senior Manager for Council Housing.

Residents are concerned over Right to Buy.

Three years ago, we lowered the age criteria in nearly one thousand properties to 50 years of age from 60 and we have not had a Right to Buy request in any of those properties.

Although some people in Ventnor Court may be eligible for right to buy (there are certain criteria that need to be met), it is unlikely that there would be many applications.

By lowering the age criteria, you will make the car park situation worse.

We acknowledge that car parking is an issue across the City and it is something that the Council continues to try to address. However, we don't not believe that lowering the age criteria will have a major impact on the car park.

During discussions some other questions have been raised but these are not related to the lowering of the age range.

Questions include:

Will my heating charge remain the same?

When will the kitchens and bathrooms be upgraded?

Although these are not related to the question about the age criteria, we are happy to invite the relevant officers to a tenants meeting to discuss these issues if you would like us to do so.

We hope that the above has given you an update as to some of the questions that are being raised on your behalf through the working group.

If you do have any further questions, or would like some clarification on anything please feel free to talk to one of the on site staff or contact Cathy Daykin on 02380 834546 or cathy.daykin@southampton.gov.uk