



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

1 October 2018

Jackie Andrews  
Regional Director  
Clarion Housing Group  
Stakeholder Enquiry Team  
Clarion Housing Group  
Reed House  
Peachman Way  
Norwich  
NR7 0WF

Dear Jackie,

Thank you for your email of 12 September making me aware of the changes you are proposing to your sheltered housing services, provided by Centra, which will come into effect in April 2019.

I understand that there are six primary residences in Tonbridge and Malling that this will affect, and since the start of your consultation I have heard from many residents and relatives of residents who will be affected by these changes, and share with them their concerns over the impact that this will have.

Like others, my main concern comes with the removal of the warden from the residences, and the lack of daily and weekly wellbeing checks. The majority of the people that reside in Frome Court, St Mary's Court, St Augustine's House, and others, are vulnerable people who specifically chose to move into sheltered accommodation, so they would have help on their doorstep should they need it. Not only did this give peace of mind to residents, but to their families too. As you know, choosing where to move a loved one to is never easy, but those who chose to live in Centra accommodation did so knowing that they would have that necessary safety net, which is now being taken from beneath their feet.

For many who reside here, it is not possible to have visitors' every day, and many struggle to get outside due to physical and mental difficulties. They need a familiar face to bring comfort and reduce loneliness. The Wardens provide that. You acknowledge in your letter to residents that you are aware of the importance of having contact with staff on a regular basis, and yet removed the key interaction that residents were getting. I appreciate that you say the same staff will remain, but if residents don't have easy and regular access to them, this fact alone is insufficient.

Furthermore, to enjoy the benefits of the concierge service it would require residents to reach out to them, but I know for many that anxiety or even difficulty using the phone would make this hard for them to do, and worries, problems, or even medical concerns may go unattended. This would not be the case if the Warden were to regularly visit.

**Member of Parliament for Tonbridge and Malling**

020 7219 4727 - [tom.tugendhat.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:tom.tugendhat.mp@parliament.uk) - [www.tomtugendhat.org.uk](http://www.tomtugendhat.org.uk)

Not only this, but it is my understanding that the Warden is the current first responder to emergencies from the pull cord system. While you have given assurances that this system will continue to work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, I see no mention of the Warden's role. Should this be the case I would be very concerned that it may put added pressures on the NHS in many cases where the Warden, a first-responder, would be able to manage the situation without needing to involve the emergency services. Could you please provide some clarification on this?

I am also concerned by your proposals to provide an individual support service, and to terminate any existing Support Agreements. With the removal of the Warden's daily and weekly visits, this becomes more of a problem than it would have been, should this not be considered. The removal of this support raises many similar questions and feelings to the previous worries I have highlighted. Although you say that alternative plans will be found, there is no guarantee that they will be found and agreed before the Centra agreements are terminated in April 2019. And even if they are, there is no guarantee that they will be the same, or affordable. This therefore may leave vulnerable people very suddenly at risk, with no Warden visits to support them, and cause understandable concern for the residents and their families. I would be grateful to know what discussions you have had with Adult Social Services at Kent County Council, as I'm aware that the local County Councillors were not of aware this proposal.

Like you, the safety and wellbeing of residents based on these proposals is of great concern to me, and from the information that you have provided, I am unsure how you will ensure the service level residents currently experience will remain the same. As I said at the beginning of my letter, residents and their families chose Centra because of their high level of service and support, and I am afraid that these key factors are being too easily lost, to the detriment of the vulnerable people who place so much trust in you to support them.

I would welcome a meeting with you to discuss this further.

Best wishes,

Tom Tugendhat

**TOM TUGENDHAT**