# Aberdeenshire council’s sheltered housing closures spark distress in Gamrie community



In the coastal community of Gamrie, 85-year-old Margaret Murray finds herself caught in a web of uncertainty regarding the future of her home at Gamrie Bay Court. Having spent her entire life in this close-knit area, Margaret recently left her family home, which she built with her late husband back in 1960, choosing instead a sheltered accommodation in hopes of finding a supportive community. However, just three months later, Aberdeenshire Council’s proposal to shut down her new residence has left her in a state of distress, compounded by a lack of clear communication from the local authority. “The uncertainty is very stressful, and we just want to know what is really going on,” she expressed.

Margaret’s case is emblematic of a wider crisis as Aberdeenshire seeks to cut back on its expenditures. The council has identified 17 potential closures of sheltered housing and care homes across the region as part of an effort to save £20 million, amidst alarming projections indicating a £135 million loss for its sheltered housing services over the next 30 years. While six “very sheltered housing” schemes were spared from the immediate cuts following public backlash, many residents, including Margaret, continue to live in limbo.

After a protest held by residents on May 17, the council offered a “personalised assistance package” which includes a financial grant. Yet, this gesture, described as inadequate by Margaret’s family, does little to address the emotional toll caused by the threat of displacement. “I’m not interested in accepting that,” her grandson, Shaun Donaldson, remarked, highlighting the inherent value of community and security. For Margaret, who has known many residents since childhood, moving to Portsoy or Turriff, the alternatives presented, would feel like exile. Such transitions pose profound disruptions to lives that have long been intertwined.

The decisions being made by Aberdeenshire Council, while presented as necessary fiscal measures, are troubling for those left in their wake. Shaun expressed his frustration: “There was nothing to stop them informing us about what we were signing when she signed a tenancy. It’s ridiculous they think this is an appropriate way to treat people.” This sentiment resonates with many residents who argue that the council should have anticipated the implications of such financial pressures before affecting long-term tenants.

Ally MacLeod, the council’s head of housing, acknowledges the emotional impact these changes impose on residents. She stated, “We do appreciate that this is an unsettling time for tenants whose schemes are under review.” The council’s stated aim is to reform sheltered housing services to better accommodate modern needs, yet the path ahead appears fraught with uncertainty for those who have relied on such provisions for a sense of safety and belonging.

While financial sustainability is crucial for public services, the human element cannot be overlooked. The stress experienced by individuals like Margaret Murray underscores the need for sensitivity and thorough communication from authorities as they navigate difficult decisions that bear heavily on their most vulnerable constituents. For many, including Margaret, the prospect of change is not only distressing but deeply personal, entailing a potential severing of ties to a community that has defined their existence for decades. The unfolding situation demands not only financial reform but a commitment to compassion in the face of challenging choices.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/politics/6765628/gamrie-grandmother-sheltered-housing-closure/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/politics/6765628/gamrie-grandmother-sheltered-housing-closure/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/politics/6765628/gamrie-grandmother-sheltered-housing-closure/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/politics/6765628/gamrie-grandmother-sheltered-housing-closure/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/politics/6765628/gamrie-grandmother-sheltered-housing-closure/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/politics/6765628/gamrie-grandmother-sheltered-housing-closure/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/politics/6765628/gamrie-grandmother-sheltered-housing-closure/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/politics/6765628/gamrie-grandmother-sheltered-housing-closure/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data