# Gamrie grandmother faces housing closure amid council’s cost-cutting review



Margaret Murray, an 85-year-old grandmother from Gamrie, finds her life turned upside down as she grapples with uncertainty surrounding the future of her sheltered housing at Gamrie Bay Court. Having lived in the close-knit coastal community her entire life, Margaret's stress has mounted since Aberdeenshire Council announced plans that could threaten the very roof over her head.

Just three months after selling her family home to downsize, the prospect of closure loomed large over her new residence, one of 17 across the region identified by the local authority as possible targets for cuts aimed at saving cash. “The uncertainty is very stressful, and we just want to know what is really going on,” Margaret told local media, expressing her frustration with the inadequate communication from the council. She further criticised the inconsistent updates, noting, “We keep hearing different things, and no one is giving us proper updates.”

The situation is not unique to Margaret. The council's initial proposal aimed to address a projected £135 million shortfall in its sheltered housing services over the next three decades. Despite a public outcry leading to the preservation of six “very sheltered housing” schemes and care homes, hundreds of residents, including Margaret, remain in limbo as their futures hang in the balance.

For Margaret, the emotional strains are compounded by the reality of uprooting after years of stability. After moving from her former home overlooking the North Sea, she felt she had found a sanctuary at Gamrie Bay Court, a place imbued with memories shared among childhood friends and family nearby. “I thought I would try and get somewhere smaller to live,” she reflected, adding, “I’ve settled, I’ve loved it.”

Yet now, her home faces the spectre of relocation. Residents have reportedly been offered three alternative accommodations, with Portsoy and Turriff as potential options. However, Margaret’s grandson, Shaun Donaldson, argues that such alternatives are not a solution. “I’m not interested in accepting that," he said, emphasising that his grandmother’s security and community were at risk. “While Portsoy or Turriff don’t seem that far away, it’s far away for her.”

In a bid to soften the blow, Aberdeenshire Council has proposed a “personalised assistance package” for affected residents, including a grant of £2,570. However, for Margaret and her family, financial compensation does little to alleviate the emotional distress. Shaun aptly summarised their position: “It’s unfair of the council to put its financial problems onto her. There was nothing to stop them informing us about what we were signing when she signed a tenancy.”

With the council's review of these housing complexes scheduled for deliberation by the communities committee, the uncertainty continues to cast a long shadow over Margaret and her neighbours. Ally MacLeod, head of housing, acknowledged this anxiety, stating, “We do appreciate that this is an unsettling time for tenants whose schemes are under review.” The council aims for a modern, sustainable housing approach; however, actualising this ambition appears fraught with distress for those like Margaret, who are caught in the turmoil of financial constraints and bureaucratic decision-making.

As the situation unfolds, the questions remain: at what cost should the community's welfare be sacrificed in the name of financial austerity, and who bears the burden of these decisions? For now, Margaret waits, her future uncertain, her community in peril, longing for clarity amid chaos.

## 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/),

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## Bibliography

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