



15 October 2019

## **Ageing tenants to be relocated due to failing infrastructure at Welverdiend**

The welfare of older and vulnerable tenants is our first priority when considering relocation. This does become necessary from time to time if a building administered by Communicare reaches a state where repairs are no longer feasible.

That is what is happening at Welverdiend in Rondebosch, a residential development owned by Communicare.

We fully understand the stress that may be caused to older people, some of whom have lived at Communicare premises for most of their adult life, and old age. We have held a meeting with tenants and we are having individual consultations with every tenant to understand their needs and make their transition to new accommodation as smooth as possible.

Communicare will pay for relocation and ensure that there are no additional costs for vulnerable tenants. We have committed to providing similar, alternative accommodation for all tenants affected by the proposed demolition. We have given considerable thought to the relocation process and have made units available in a number of developments, in well located areas, managed by Communicare.

Communicare is committed to ensure that no tenant is left without a place to go. We have sufficient alternative options within our portfolio and our social workers are working closely with and supporting our elderly tenants.

Accommodation is currently available in the surrounding complexes at Creswell House in Newlands, Musgrave Park in Diep River, Dreyersdal in Bergvliet and Mez Wallach in Lakeside. We already have 45 elderly tenants who have started the process of securing alternative accommodation.

We have committed to give tenants 6 months notice to vacate, prior to the building being demolished. As yet, no tenant has as yet been issued with a formal notice to vacate.

Wolverdiend is a 68-year-old building originally built as a convent with 115 units. Despite significant investment in repairs over the years by Communicare, the structural problems and ageing infrastructure can no longer be repaired. Some of the problems with the building include:

- Severe damp. There are no cavity walls in the building and the damp comes through the brickworks.
- The entire plumbing system has to be replaced due to continuous pipe bursts and leaks.
- There is no hot water in the kitchens. The only hot water is available in the bathrooms.
- Most windows have severe rust which allows water to seep through into apartments when it rains.
- There are no showers in any of the units. Only 200-litre baths.

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Communicare is concerned that continued residence in the building poses a long-term health and safety risk to tenants. Fixing these severe structural problems with the building is not feasible by renovation. It has, therefore, become necessary to demolish the building.

“I believe being proactive is the responsible thing to do. I do worry about the stress the relocation will cause our older tenants. I am trying hard to make every tenant as comfortable as possible and ensure their individual requirements are met. Care and compassion for tenants are what we stand for,” said Anthea Houston, CEO of Communicare.

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**Note to editor**

**Tenants are not being evicted from Welverdiend.**

What is an Eviction?

No landlord may evict any tenant in their own capacity. Evictions can only be granted through the courts after due process has been followed having considered the provisions of the Prevention of Illegal Eviction and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act (PIE). Even then, the person would have notice by when they need to vacate a unit at a period of time considered just and equitable by the judge, following which the Sherriff of the Court will implement the eviction order. A landlord may give notice to vacate for breach of contract or any reason provided, according to the Rental Housing Act, reasonable notice of termination of the lease is given. In the case of Communicare, notice of this nature would have followed a process of engagement with a tenant. If the tenant doesn't vacate the unit, having received notice, then we have to proceed to the courts to ask for an eviction order. The magistrate ultimately decides if there is grounds for an eviction. Tenants in South Africa are protected from arbitrary eviction and Communicare has always followed due legal process in all regards.

**More information about Communicare can be found at [www.communicare.org.za](http://www.communicare.org.za)**