
Extra Care Design Principles

(March 2014)

There is no single 'model' of Extra Care but there are a significant number of built examples upon which to draw feedback. The specifics of each site, the local need, the scale and size of development, the types of service and care to be provided and both the capital and revenue funding available will determine the brief in each instance. However, flexibility and different tenure options should be considered to offer a mix of rented, shared ownership and private sale flats.

Of importance is the location of extra care housing. Consideration should be given to the site's security, proximity to other shops, facilities and public transport. The scheme itself may be the opportunity to enhance or rectify a deficiency in local amenities e.g. by provision of a base for occupational therapy and podiatry services or library services and should not enter into competition with existing local facilities e.g. grocery stores, hairdressers etc. The development of a scheme should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the locality and existing services.

The principle objectives of Extra Care Housing are to promote independent living for older people. An important feature of Extra Care Sheltered Housing is the creation of lively balanced communities of older people, ranging from active, independent residents to those requiring a higher degree of care.

The design of the accommodation, selection of equipment, signage, internal colour and finishes and landscaping should enable the independence of people who have mobility problems, may be physically frail, or who may have a visual, hearing or cognitive impairment.

The physical environment must be "care ready" and 'enabling' in terms of the likely progression of impairments and long term conditions that residents will experience with increasing age and frailty.

Developments should provide vibrant community facilities and encourage intergenerational activity in a secure part of the building whilst maintaining progressive privacy concepts.

Where practicable developments should embrace the ten key design elements of The Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) Reports 1 and 2:

- ***New retirement homes should have generous internal space standards, with potential for 3 habitable rooms and designed to accommodate flexible layouts.***
- ***Care is taken in the design of homes and shared spaces, with the placement, size & detail of windows, to ensure plenty of natural light, and to allow daylight into circulation spaces.***
- ***Building layouts maximise natural light and ventilation by avoiding long internal corridors and single aspect flats, and apartments have balconies, patios, or terraces with enough space for tables and chairs as well as plants.***
- ***In the implementation of measures to ensure adaptability, homes are designed to be 'care ready' so that new and emerging technologies, such as tele-care and community equipment, can be readily installed.***
- ***Building layouts promote circulation areas as shared spaces that offer connections to the wider context, encouraging interaction, supporting interdependence and avoiding an 'institutional feel', including the imaginative use of shared balcony access to front doors and thresholds, promoting natural surveillance and providing for 'defensible space'.***
- ***In all but the smallest developments (or those very close to existing community facilities), multipurpose space is available for residents to meet, with facilities designed to support an appropriate range of activities - perhaps serving the wider neighbourhood as a community 'hub', as well as guest rooms for visiting friends and families.***
- ***In giving thought to the public realm, design measures ensure that homes engage positively with the street, and that the natural environment is nurtured through new trees and hedges and the preservation of mature planting, and providing wildlife habitats as well as colour, shade and shelter.***
- ***Homes are energy-efficient and well insulated, but also well ventilated and able to avoid overheating by, for example, passive solar design, the use of deciduous planting supplemented by external blinds or shutters, easily operated awnings over balconies, green roof and cooling chimneys.***
- ***Adequate storage is available outside the home together with provision for cycles and mobility aids, and that storage inside the homes meets the needs of the occupier***

- ***Shared external surfaces, such as ‘home zones’ that give priority to pedestrians rather than cars, and which are proving successful in other countries, become more common, with due regard to the kinds of navigation difficulties that some visually impaired people may experience in such environments.***

Dementia Friendly Design

Many residents living in Extra care will be living with or will acquire a dementia related illness. Therefore, it is vital to include dementia friendly design principles within any Extra Care development.

Building design and interior design is especially important for people with dementia and bad design can impair memory, reasoning, learning and cause stress.

Detailed advice on dementia friendly design can be obtained from the Dementia Services Development Centre at the University of Stirling at <http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/> and the Kings Fund especially the EHE Environmental Assessment Tool at http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/kf/field/field_pdf/is-your-care-home-dementia-friendly-ehe-tool-kingsfund-mar13.pdf

Bariatric Care Design

Current trends in obesity may prompt some consideration given to the level of care and need that the facilities can offer and be designed to meet. Apartments designated for Bariatric Care (care of residents over 26st) if included should be located on the ground floor. These will require wider door sets to accommodate larger specialist equipment, wheelchairs, shower chairs, etc.

The bedroom and bathroom should have the ability to take a heavy duty ceiling track hoist capable of lifting up to 45st. Consideration should also be given to floor-mounted rails, larger WC pans, bidet-toilets, etc.

Resources

The Housing Learning and Improvement Network (LIN), is the leading 'knowledge hub' for a growing network of housing, health and social care professionals in England involved in planning, commissioning, designing, funding, building and managing housing with care for older people. Details of developing ideas in the design of Extra Care housing for older people, can be found on its website at: http://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design_building/

Better Homes: housing for the third age - A FRAMEWORK FOR DELIVERING OLDER PEOPLE'S ACCOMMODATION ACROSS KENT AND MEDWAY was developed by a Task and Finish Group set up by Kent Housing Group following recommendations within the Kent Forum Housing Strategy, which identified housing an ageing population as a key concern for Kent and Medway.

<http://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/uploads/OPFrameworkFINAL.pdf>