

# Housing Learning & Improvement Network

The Health and Social Care Change Agent Team (CAT) was created by the DoH to improve discharge from hospital and associated arrangements. The Housing LIN, a section of the CAT, is devoted to housing-based models of care.



## Community Involvement in Planning Extra Care: the Larchwood User's Group

Prepared by Maria Brenton for the Housing Learning & Improvement Network

### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING EXTRA CARE: the Larchwood Users' Group**

**Lead organisations:** Brighton & Hove City Council and Hanover Housing Association

**Local & Health Authority:** Brighton & Hove City Council; Brighton & Hove Primary Care Trust

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**Key partners:** Brighton & Hove City Council & Hanover Housing Association & Department of Health

**Brief Description:** The Coldean Extra Care Users' Group brings together as a core consultation group representatives of local people in the Coldean district of Brighton and Hove who have an interest in the replacement of a former council residential home by a 37 unit extra care scheme. The group follows a consultation pattern successfully adopted by Hanover Housing Association in previous projects.

### **Key Strategic Issues:**

1. To inform local residents of plans and progress and address any concerns they may have in relation to the proposed scheme at the start and as they arise.
2. To involve representatives of local older people and carers in build and service delivery issues and facilitate their input into aspects of the scheme for the duration of the build.
3. To maintain communications between local representatives, the construction firm and the main partners.

4. To be a vehicle for prospective tenants to view the site during the fitting out stage and possibly then to become involved in some way with the consultation process.
5. To ensure that older people and their representatives are involved in the development of the services within the new development.
6. To ensure good communication with local residents in the area through community representatives.
7. To develop in the future into an extra care residents and local community group.



### **The Process:**

Following a period of consultation during 2004, the long term residents were moved into alternative care homes and the day service was re-provided within local sheltered housing schemes in November 2004. Clearance of the site was completed in February 2005 for construction to start, with completion aimed for in May 2006. Organisations represented on the Users' Group are the Older People's Council, the Sixty-plus Action Group, the Carers' Centre, the Alzheimer's Society, the Coldean residents' Association, various departments of the City Council such as adult social care, highways, cultural services and press and publicity and the Primary Care Trust, as well as Feltham Construction, the builders. The head of the local school and the local church deacon were also invited to participate. The first of a series of bi-monthly meetings of the group was held in the former residential care home in October 2004. This meeting presented the plans for the site, set out the scope of the extra care scheme and established the remit of the group in relation to it. When the building was demolished the bi-monthly meetings were moved into the local library.

### **Interim Outcomes:**

Issues that have been raised in subsequent meetings of the Users' Group have contributed both to safeguarding the amenities and convenience of local residents and to developing ideas for the future use of the extra care scheme's facilities.

1. The Highways department attended to hear local concerns regarding delivery routes to the site, lack of traffic calming measures, parking provisions etc. Site delivery arrangements have been put in place to minimise congestion at school start and finish times. The consultation has given local residents opportunities to raise traffic issues of wider concern than the extra care scheme.

2. Letters were sent to every local household and an 'extra care' open evening was held for all local residents where they could examine the plans for the building and talk to the developers. The Coldean Residents Association have been pro-actively engaged and have enabled information to be distributed regularly via the Residents Newsletter which goes to 1000 households. Regular updates will be available and the residents association newsletter included a questionnaire asking for proposals on how the community areas should be used. Various suggestions have been made for use of this general space in the new building for activities which would link the scheme into its locality. It was felt to be important that any general space should be kept as flexible as possible for use for a variety of purposes by a range of groups such as fitness classes, mother and baby groups, mixed generation activities, a mobile shop (depending on discussion with local traders), a café and computer training and use. It is planned that a Community Involvement Officer will be appointed, funded through Supporting People contribution, to promote the community facilities attached to the scheme. The Users Group and the local school will also be involved in choosing a name for the extra care scheme.



3. Funding for an arts project was included in the extra care development as a condition of planning permission and the Users Group will be discussing the form this should take and how local people and future tenants will be involved. The Council's Cultural Services department has undertaken to produce a brief for this project and to consult local residents via the Users Group, the Residents Association and the School.

4. The possible uses of a treatment room in the scheme have been discussed – particularly in light of poor coverage of the Coldean area by GP surgeries. Some nursing services such as phlebotomy and chiropody are a possibility, complementing development of other ancillary services from an active local pharmacy. Possible use of the room on a sessional basis for GPs outside the immediate area is under consideration. This would have knock-on requirements for a receptionist and a waiting area.

5. Included in the scheme are five units intended for use as intermediate care facilities. These will be furnished by the City Council.

6. A new day service will be provided within the extra care scheme and further consultation on this is planned in order that a modern day service can be developed that meets the expectations of the service users.

7. The Users Group has asked for and secured a commitment from the developers that all possible building materials from the demolition plus furniture and equipment which still had a useful life would be re-used. All internal timbers and doors were recycled and the kitchen equipment was re-used in another day service. In the new scheme, rainwater will be recycled.

8. Issues such as internal signage and the scheme's security were discussed and the assurance given that Hanover would have a non-resident estate manager in place four months prior to the opening of the scheme.

9. The needs of local older people who are owner occupiers were raised with Hanover and the Council, as the area has a high proportion of people who own their own homes. It is recognised that older people might prefer to stay in their own locality and this issue was taken aboard for consideration in the extra care scheme and in relation to the need for other, mixed tenure developments.

### **Likely lessons:**

This case study was written before the completion of construction of the extra care scheme and was therefore able to capture some of the consultative process that has preceded it. Any evaluation of the long term effect of involving this wide range of local residents and agencies has to be provisional, but it is possible to reach tentative conclusions regarding its efficacy and value.

It is already clear that:

1. Any potential problems associated with the impact of the demolition and construction process on this fairly densely populated neighbourhood have been minimised. The construction firm, a regular partner in Hanover developments, has co-operated readily in local discussions and has taken instant measures to resolve difficulties that may have arisen.

2. A perceptible feeling of involvement with the scheme and investment in its success has been generated among those involved in the consultation process. This has an immediate pay-back in that local informal surveillance of the site and its security is maintained while the builders are off-site. The extra care scheme will be familiar to local residents well before completion and the challenge of integrating it in the neighbourhood will have been mostly achieved.

3. A range of ideas has been generated for use of the extra care scheme's facilities as a communal resource and there is no doubt that a sense of local ownership of these will be in place. This is a good foundation on which to establish the extra care scheme.

### **Involvement of the end users:**

Where eligibility for an extra care scheme is governed by Council allocations policies and needs criteria for a relatively high dependency care and support package, it is clearly difficult to identify the future tenants of such a scheme well in advance. It is also involvement in the consultative process for planning and building the scheme, or that

there are future tenants whose needs have not yet become evident. Hanover hopes that, at fitting out stage, at least some potential tenants will have been identified and can be drawn into the consultative process. The importance of such a process cannot be under-estimated for its benefits in helping future tenants meet and get to know each other while occupied with a project they can contribute to. Some individuals, if they are local, may already know each other, but it is unlikely that the area of Coldean will provide the tenants for all 37 units. Involvement at an early stage could promote capacity building in the sense of helping tenants to interact purposefully as a group and could generate an embryonic sense of community.

For further information on Involvement in Extra Care, please see Housing LIN Factsheet no.8 - 'User Involvement in Extra Care Housing' - also available on our website under Factsheets.

<http://www.changeagentteam.org.uk/housing>

Other Housing LIN publications available in this format:

Case Study no.1: Extra Care Strategic Developments in North Yorkshire (01.09.03)

Case Study no.2: Extra Care Strategic Developments in East Sussex (01.09.03)

Case Study no.3: 'Least-use' Assistive Technology in Dementia Extra Care (02.02.04)

Case Study no.4: Tenancy Issues - Surviving Partners in Extra Care Housing (01.06.04)

Case Study no.5: Village People: A Mixed Tenure Retirement Community (15.10.04)

Case Study no.6: How to get an Extra Care Programme in Practice (15.10.04)

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The Housing LIN welcomes contributions on a range of issues pertinent to Extra Care housing. If there is a subject that you feel should be addressed, please contact us.

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