



## Extra Care Housing in Cambridgeshire: Developing a Marketing Strategy

This Case Study has been produced in order to highlight the approach adopted in Cambridgeshire to provide some structure to the marketing of Extra Care Housing.

Written for the Housing Learning & Improvement Network by  
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## **1. Introduction**

In December 2011, the Housing Learning and Improvement Network and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services published a resource pack for local authorities and their partners to aid strategic market facilitation. The resource pack set out how partnerships should develop Market Position Statements and raise the awareness of older people, carers and operational staff across housing, health and social care about the benefit of Extra Care Housing.

In response, the Cambridgeshire authorities developed an Extra Care Housing Commissioning Strategy and acknowledge within it that, although individual schemes are marketed as they become available for letting or sale, there remains a piece of work to be done to improve knowledge about 'Extra Care' as a model of provision.

It was noted that often commissioners and providers report back on the lack of awareness of what Extra Care Housing actually is, not only amongst potential tenants or owners but also their families and other professionals working with them. In addition, with public sector funding limitations, this will increasingly result in more leasehold properties for sale within schemes in order for them to be viable to develop and 'stack up' financially. It was therefore recognized that it is important to the success of schemes being developed that older people and their families are aware of this option and that sufficient publicity is given to it locally. This led to the production of a marketing strategy targeted at those groups.

This strategy is the result of a short work by a sub-group of the Extra Care Housing Commissioning Group which addressed this problem through a coordinated multi-agency approach. Representatives on the Group included a housing enabler, providers of extra care housing and social care staff.

## **2. Public engagement**

In order to provide some realism to the strategy, the sub-group decided to gauge the views of the public. This was carried out through the involvement of representatives of local Older People's organisations on the sub-group and a discussion with new residents at a relatively new Extra Care Housing scheme in Huntingdon.

This process was quite enlightening and it quickly became clear that older people initially presume that the 'Extra Care' label means a residential care setting with 'more care' than usual, rather than an independent accommodation choice with relatively low levels of care available.

In the light of the above, the first action identified therefore was some work to think of a new description for this model. Interestingly, private developers delivering this type of scheme to owner-occupiers use, amongst others, the term 'Assisted Living' which emphasises the positive 'living' element rather than the negative 'care' element as in 'Extra Care'. However, residents (tenants/leaseholders) used the following words when asked how they would describe their accommodation:

- It's 'your home' not 'a home'
- My grandson tells people 'Nan lives in a hotel'
- Independent Living
- Supported independence
- Retirement Home

The engagement exercise highlighted that new residents didn't really know what to expect before they went to have a look round but said that they love it and there are many benefits including:

- Comfort and safety
- Independence (come and go when you like)
- Nice flats
- Meals available that you can have or not, and you can invite your family to dine with you
- Can be private or share company, you have the choice
- Carers on site if you need them 24/7
- Can stay until you die
- Social activities available but you don't have to get involved

Furthermore, residents said that none of them found the accommodation directly and that they were made aware of Extra Care Housing either by relatives, carers or, in the case of housing association tenants, by their housing officer. Importantly, they felt that marketing needed to be directed at relatives and other agencies as well as at older people themselves.

### **3. What are we marketing?**

Firstly, within Cambridgeshire, we are marketing a self-contained home. There are generally three tenure types available in Extra Care Housing. Namely:

Two "affordable housing" tenures:

- Rented homes - which will usually be at Social Rent levels;
- Shared Ownership - leasehold part purchase, often at 75% of market value with no rent payable on the un-owned share, (sometimes lower shares are available and rent is payable on the un-owned share)

On some schemes there may also be "market housing":

- Full purchase - leasehold apartments and/or freehold chalets or bungalows.

Occupiers of all three tenures pay a service charge for maintenance and management of communal areas and facilities.

Secondly, we are marketing that care is available on site. Only people with an assessed care need are eligible to apply. There may be a charge for social care provision, based on the owner's/tenant's needs and their ability to meet the costs from their own resources. Prospective purchasers may wish to seek independent financial advice to ensure they can maintain the costs involved.

All three tenures need to be promoted. In particular, the increasing elderly owner occupied sector needs to be aware of choices available to them.

### **4. Identifying key messages**

The main message identified to get across is that Extra Care Housing provides:

- ✓ Independent living in self-contained accommodation
- ✓ 24/7 care available on site to provide a sense of personal safety
- ✓ Secure safe accommodation

- ✓ A home for life
- ✓ Meals available on site
- ✓ A choice about whether or not to get involved with activities
- ✓ Choice whether to socialise with people or not

## 5. Who are we marketing to?

Group participants considered the engagement responses and agreed that marketing needs to be specifically aimed at three main groups:

1. Potential residents and their families
  - Older owner occupiers who have an assessed care need
  - Older tenants who have an assessed care need
  - Families of the above
  
2. Carers and professionals already working with potential residents:
  - GPs
  - District Nurses
  - Carers
  - Day Centres
  - Cambs Direct Advisors
  - Adult Social Care team Care Managers
  - Occupational therapists
  - Discharge planning teams
  - Community Psychiatric Nurses
  - Housing Options Teams
  
3. Possible referrers/advisors:
  - Estate Agents
  - Carers Partnership Board
  - Cambridgeshire Direct
  - Citizens Advice Bureau
  - Housing Departments
  - Age UK Cambridgeshire
  - Care Network
  - Libraries
  - Home Improvement Agencies
  - Handyman schemes
  - Voluntary Agencies

## **6. How should we market the model?**

It was also noted that there are a number of mechanisms available through which to market Extra Care Housing as a positive housing option. Many providers already use some or all of these for individual schemes when they are nearing completion. This strategy therefore seeks to complement individual scheme marketing with a higher level general message about Extra Care Housing itself. For example:

To potential residents and their families through:

- Tenants newsletters
- Local radio
- Newspapers
- Webpage on existing website i.e. Your Life, Your Choice with links from others e.g. Home-link, Councils, COPE, Housing Providers, etc.
- General Leaflets including a COPE leaflet
- Stands at older peoples events
- Elderly Accommodation Counsel/FirstStop

To carers and professionals through:

- Training sessions
- Production of short DVD for showing to potential residents
- Dedicated website with links from all other sites used by professionals
- Adult Care & Support Services – Care Directory
- General leaflets with contacts of providers in each area
- Involvement with the Housing Learning and Improvement Network

To possible referrers/advisors through:

- Local Radio
- Newspapers
- DVD/Training
- Links to dedicated website from theirs
- Annual mailshot with leaflets and lists of providers in the area
- Advising of new developments nearing completion

## **7. Resourcing the strategy**

While individual providers of Extra Care Housing routinely plan, market and advertise their own schemes as they become available for sale or letting, it was observed that there is no overall combined marketing of Extra Care Housing as a model in Cambridgeshire.

Housing associations are a possible source of funding to produce general promotional materials that could complement their own individual scheme information.

Health, Social Care and district housing authorities may be able to find small amounts of funding to pool to contribute to a project of this type. An action therefore would be to establish the costs of the various marketing tools, website, leaflets, DVD, etc and identify sources of funding.

## 8. Action planning and monitoring

To improve the capacity and capability of partners in Cambridgeshire, an action plan has been developed (Appendix One). It is intended that this action plan be monitored by the Extra Care Housing Commissioning Group at its quarterly meetings to review progress in facilitating both consumer demand and stimulating market development.

## 9. Related Housing LIN products

There are three essential Housing LIN resources available on the website that are relevant to marketing. They are:

Resource Pack:

*Strategic Housing for Older People: Planning, designing and delivering housing that older people want* (2011)

Briefing:

*The Marketing of Extra Care Housing schemes* (2012)

Report:

*Marketing Extra Care Housing* (2009)

### Note

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of the organisations they represent or of the Housing Learning and Improvement Network.

## About the Housing LIN

Previously responsible for managing the Department of Health's Extra Care Housing Fund, 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, care and support services for older people and vulnerable adults with long term conditions.

For further information about the Housing LIN's comprehensive list of online resources and shared learning and service improvement networking opportunities, including site visits and network meetings in your region, visit [www.housinglin.org.uk](http://www.housinglin.org.uk)

The Housing LIN welcomes contributions on a range of issues pertinent to housing with care for older and vulnerable adults. If there is a subject that you feel should be addressed, please contact us.

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**Extra Care Marketing Strategy – Action Plan 2011-13**

**Appendix One**

Objective	Action	Target Date	Resources	Lead Agency	Comments
Ensure the public and professionals know what Extra Care Housing is.	1. Re-brand the model and come up with a name all parties agree best describes Extra Care Housing.	April 2012	Provider time Marketing teams time		
Widely promote Extra Care Housing as a positive option	2. Design a generic leaflet to promote Extra Care Housing under its new branding to be distributed widely  3. Explore opportunities to develop dedicated webpages for Extra Care Housing and sites to link from.  4. Promote the leaflet and website through local media channels	June 2012  June 2012  September 2012	Officer time Cost of printing and distribution  Officer time  Officer time		
Ensure professionals are aware of the model and its advantages	5. Agree a training package and offer training to professionals and others	July 2012	Officer time		Training needs to take place prior to media promotion
Resource the actions in this strategy	6. Identify costs and amount of officer time required to deliver the elements of this strategy  7. Discuss with partners joint funding opportunities and agree lead partners.	February 2012  March 2012			