



## Independent Living with Care at Hafod Y Parc: A Case Study from Abergele

This case study for the Housing Learning and Improvement Network focuses on the benefits that effective partnership working brings to new extra care schemes. It specifically looks at North Wales Housing's second extra care housing scheme in Abergele, Conwy, and draws on what key stakeholders offered to the process and takes learning from each stage of the development to get a better understanding of what made the partnership work. This process also included designing for inclusion of older people, those with physical disabilities or sensory impairment and learning disabilities in mind. Lessons learnt from what worked well from previous extra care housing schemes developed and



managed by North Wales Housing Association have also been taken into account and have contributed to the ongoing learning.

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## Introduction

Officially opened in November 2014 (tenants moved in April 2014), Hafod Y Parc is a superb scheme for older persons allowing them to benefit from an independent lifestyle in a safe and homely community with flexible care and support services.

Situated on the attractive North Wales coastline in the popular market town of Abergele, Conwy, Hafod Y Parc offers the best in accessibility but also peace and quiet in an enviable parkland setting.

## The Scheme



*Entrance at Hafod Y Parc, Abergele*

Managed by North Wales Housing in partnership with Conwy County Council, Hafod Y Parc is an £8.6 million scheme (works), part funded by a £6.2 million Social Housing Grant from the Welsh Government. The scheme comprises of 49 self contained apartments (44 two bedroom, 5 one bedroom flat) for persons aged 60 and over with care and support needs. One apartment is utilised as a short term apartment.

The scheme was built on the site of an existing Conwy County Borough Council traditional Residential Home. After extensive consultation with the various stakeholders, it was determined that the Residential Home was to be decommissioned and an Extra Care Housing Scheme built on the site.

Research was high on the list of priorities for both North Wales Housing and Conwy County Borough Council and a variety of options, layouts and design principles were considered

ISP Architects of Wrexham designed the site and the scheme was built by K&C Construction of Kinmel Bay who have now worked closely on several extra care housing projects with North Wales Housing. Key features include 24 hour on site care and support, communal lounges, restaurant, hair salon, therapy room, hobby room, snooker room, laundry, guest suite, assisted bathroom, scooter store and attractive gardens. There is also assistive technology and wi-fi in the building.



*Awel y Mor Residential Home*

## On site management

At Hafod Y Parc there is an on-scheme manager who provides a housing related / tenancy support service to residents. There is also a manager who manages the onsite care team. Both were appointed before the building opened using the time before the open date to carry out what has turned out to be very valuable preparation work.

This included:

- The Extra Care Scheme manager and Community Support Manager visiting people in their own homes.
- Awareness raising sessions with local people, our staff, NHS staff and GP's and local community groups to inform them of what Extra Care was as a concept and specific scheme information.
- Marketing of apartments and the care and support, meal and leisure services on offer, which included show apartment viewings.
- Creating a list of potential residents and, closer to the completion date, carrying out assessments of potential residents and completing move-in processes.



*Hafod Y Parc official start on site event*

## **Capital funding**

The original funding for the scheme (£6.2m of the £8.6m costs) came from the Welsh Government in the form of a grant set up to promote the development of Extra Care in Wales. The balance has been met by funding from private finance.

## **Designing considerations**

In terms of design, features that have assisted people with a range of impairments to quickly settle in Hafod Y Parc include:

- Spacious apartment layouts that help people to find the key places (eg. the toilet can be seen by a person lying in bed). Enough room for equipment
- Bright and attractive colour schemes with themed areas and colours
- Dedicated lounges, dining area and communal rooms where bespoke activities can take place
- Assisted technology that enables people to be as independent as possible whilst supporting a safe environment from door entry and exit systems
- An electric scooter store is near the main entrance to encourage residents to be independent
- Maximise natural lighting and increased lighting lux levels on light fittings to aid failing sight problems. LED external lighting
- Distribution of core amenities close to hand
- Three lifts to aid accessibility

- Curved design structure avoids ‘institutional’ feel of long corridors
- Insightful building design – maximising parkland setting and views and integration into established wooded area to appreciate natural environment
- Circular path around the scheme and a gateway to the park promotes well-being and social inclusion through regular walks
- Large open landings which can be incorporated into additional recreational areas
- First floor level access veranda
- Infrastructure for ceiling track and hoist systems has been installed but concealed in each apartment

Throughout the design of this scheme, specific thought was given to ensuring dignity and privacy for all the residents to provide them with the maximum quality of life possible.



*Communal Areas, Hafod Y Parc*

The apartments were designed in accordance with the Development Quality requirements of the Welsh Government and Lifetime Homes standards.<sup>1</sup>

The main aim was to create a “home from home”, designing a building which is sympathetic to its neighbours and residential in appearance rather than institutional as displayed by the curved design of the building. This eliminated the rather institutional feel of long straight corridors.



<sup>1</sup> <http://gov.wales/desh/publications/housing/devquality/guide.pdf?lang=en>

All of the apartments were built to achieve a minimum BREAAAM multi residential Excellence standard and follow the requirements of the TAN 22 legislation for sustainability. Environmentally responsible methods of construction and a palette of sustainable locally sourced materials were used to create an energy efficient design. New technology in the form of Combined Heat & Power System has been sized and integrated into the scheme to supply a base level of electrical demand to introduce renewable energy sources into the scheme.

Ventilation is provided by means of heat exchangers, (whole house ventilation systems) therefore providing an airtight structure and conditioning the incoming air).



*Residents enjoying lunch at Hafod Y Parc*

The use of colour and light to differentiate between areas was maximised, assisting those with sight impairment and helping them to be aware of their surroundings.

A communal restaurant provides a good opportunity for interaction at the heart of the scheme and all residents pay for this meal service as an integral part of their charges. Tenants have input into preparing the menus.

## **Delivering care and support**

The decision to provide care and support through extra care housing was developed through consultation with strategic partners as well as being informed by older persons themselves, their relatives and carers.

Assessed and nominated by Conwy County Borough Council Social Workers and Community Support Managers, residents appreciated individual care plans, enough but not too much support, help with household tasks, assistive technology and good use of space and light, all of which were provided.



*Young apprentices on site during construction*

## **Communications and marketing**

Regular articles appeared in local newspapers as well as bulletins, newsletters, brochures, posters, website, Twitter, videos, banners, talks to organisations, raising awareness events, carnival, Prom Day, hospital radio, stands in supermarkets and hospital. Information was provided to hospitals, GP surgeries, health and social care professionals and over 50 other organisations and businesses. Site Visits by Councillors ensured that the message was conveyed to their constituents. The show apartment was a great marketing tool for professionals and general public.

Neighbouring residents were also invited to a pre-viewing of the scheme before opening, to ensure that the scheme settled comfortably into the neighbouring community from day one. Interest locally in the scheme has been extremely positive with a lengthy waiting list within months of opening.

## What the residents think



*“Hafod Y Parc has made a massive difference to my life and I have made new friends, I have a hot meal daily and I don’t have to leave the premises to have a haircut”*

*“I am very happy here and don’t feel as lonely as I did at my old home- it is wonderful to know if I need help I know it’s here”*

*“Hafod y Parc is a modern designed building which gives independent living with care provided as required. The décor, furniture and carpeting is top class. Each apartment is well planned. The management and staff are effective and friendly. The whole set up is of five star status. We would recommend it to anyone who is seeking a secure future accommodation.”*

*“I feel relaxed, on top of the world and so glad I’m here. I didn’t move a minute too soon. It feels like I’m with one big family. The carers are amazing. There’s plenty to do!”*

*“Hafod y Parc has made a massive difference to my life”*

*“My new home is ideal for my husband who has had a severe stroke. It is lovely for him to have the walk in shower. Everything is so much easier for him which makes our lives so much better. Thank you so much”*

*“Hafod y Parc is the finest place I have ever had. I have never felt so happy and contented in my life. There is wonderful food and unconditional support from the staff. It is out of this world”.*

## Conclusions and lessons learnt

The benefits of working together prior to opening cannot be underestimated. Not only from the aspect of work that could be achieved around getting a great build design, but the development of procedures and protocols that work from both a housing and care perspective. This meant that things such as assessments and allocations worked relatively smoothly from the outset and, perhaps most importantly, separate teams had an opportunity to gel as one team that continues to work well together.

### **Examples of Working Together**

- Project Team consisted of Health, Housing, Social Care Representatives and Town Councillors
- Allocation panel comprised of Health, Housing and Social Care Representatives

- Development Site meetings involving North Wales Housing and Conwy County Borough Council Adult Social Care
- In partnership with Conwy Council re: Short term tenancy flat for short breaks or Respite after Hospital
- Occupational Therapist involvement to assess requirements prior to moving in, and presence on moving-in day ensured immediate instruction to on-site Contractors for siting and installing adaptations
- Combined social and educational events with other RSL Schemes and private older person schemes in the town.
- Inter-generational work with local primary schools, college and projects

### ***Key learning points***

- The benefits from having staff in place in advance of opening
- Appreciating all the stakeholders groups as partners is vital to ensure not only ownership at agency level, but ownership of the development by the local community members in what goes on at the scheme.
- Joint training helped with building a one team approach and also maximised the expertise and resources of each partner in turn generating efficiencies. Scheme Manager received Induction Training on Occupational Therapy, Dementia and Domiciliary Care in the Community
- Operational meeting at all levels plus project team
- “Lessons learnt” from previous projects and incorporated changes. For example:
  - Improved lighting – employed specialist M&E Consultants to enhance specification for improvement in the lux levels and general task lighting due to increased instances of persons affected by macular degeneration and other vision issues in previous scheme
  - Integration of key-less electronic door entry system giving greater flexibility for security and ease of use
  - Ensured the proximity of fob readers were closer for access for those in a wheelchair/ mobility scooter
  - Greater use of free-swing and electronically operated communal doors for free flow accessibility
- In partnership with Conwy County Borough Council, maximised access to the nearby park by installing a gate from the scheme to the park. This has resulted in tenants utilising the facilities of the park more, generally, plus organised walks three times a week to aid health and well-being which has been really successful.
- Interests, Skills and Expertise were casually discussed during home visits; resulting in a number of tenants setting up activities, events and clubs themselves immediately
- Cohesive planning and installation of minor adaptations resulted in tenants moving in without delay and ensured retaining independence and in some cases reduced care.

## **Awards**

North Wales Housing won Silver Award for 'Best Housing Association of the Year' at the What House Awards in November 2015 and Hafod y Parc won an LABC County Award in April 2015.

## **Note**

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Housing Learning and Improvement Network.

## **About North Wales Housing**

North Wales Housing has over 2,500 homes, with the majority of these being rented accommodation. Its rented properties are spread across the counties of Ynys Mon, Gwynedd and Conwy, Denbighshire and Wrexham, providing both general and supported housing, including developing and managing sheltered and extra care housing.

[www.nwha.org.uk/](http://www.nwha.org.uk/)

## **About the Housing LIN**

The Housing LIN is the leading 'learning lab' for a growing network of housing, health and social care professionals in England and Wales involved in planning, commissioning, designing, funding, building and managing housing, care and support services for older people and vulnerable adults with long term conditions.

Previously responsible for managing the Department of Health's Extra Care Housing Fund, the Housing LIN is called upon by a wide range of statutory and other organisations to provide expert advice and support regarding the implementation of policy and good practice in the field of housing, care and support services.

Further information about the Housing LIN Cymru's comprehensive list of online resources can be found at: [www.housinglin.org.uk/Wales](http://www.housinglin.org.uk/Wales)

## **Published by**

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