

Hospital Home

Factsheet 2:

Options for older patients needing to move home

Although most older people would prefer to return home after a hospital stay, this may not be possible for everyone.

This factsheet sets out a range of specialist housing options that may be more suitable than their current home. When patients are considering their options, it is very important that they choose a form of housing that meets their particular needs.



For further information on any of the housing options listed below, see [First Stop](#) or [Age UK](#) or contact your local authority Housing Options Team.

Specialist housing options for older people

Sheltered or retirement housing

Sheltered housing, sometimes referred to as retirement housing, is available in all areas and is managed by a variety of public and private landlords. It offers flats, studio flats or bungalows to rent or buy. On site facilities may include a residents' lounge, a visitors' room, a communal garden and a laundry.

Typically the scheme will have a full- or part-time scheme manager whose job includes making contact with residents and facilitating low-level support and advice as required. Some sheltered schemes have a social dimension. Residents and/or scheme managers may organise coffee mornings, bingo, whist drives, entertainments, religious services or outings.

While it most often provides settled accommodation for people aged 55 and over, some schemes are making provision for post-hospital stays during the period of reablement or rehabilitation as illustrated in [Housing LIN factsheet No.31](#).

Age UK's [Sheltered housing factsheet](#) provides useful information to assist patients in deciding whether a move to sheltered/retirement housing is right for them in the longer term (schemes may have waiting lists). [Erosh](#), the national consortium for older people's housing and support also has some useful information.

Retirement villages

The name retirement village refers mainly to the size of a development – say 100 units or more. Retirement villages are a relatively new type of housing for elderly people, but are growing in popularity in the UK. In 2009 there were approximately 80 retirement villages in the UK. They offer a variety of housing types, an extended range of facilities for older people, and attractive settings; meals and personal care are also often available. [See this website](#) for a guide to retirement villages and a list of retirement villages in the UK.

Almshouses

Almshouses provide people in need with affordable housing enabling them to continue living in their community close to friends, neighbours and family. Most residents are older people. There are almost 1800 separate Almshouse Charities in the UK that own over 30,000 Almshouse dwellings and provide accommodation for around 36,000 people. Almshouses provide various types and levels of support for their residents.

Extra care housing and assisted living

Assisted living, extra care housing, senior living or housing-with-care are terms used to describe various models of retirement housing for older people who can no longer live completely on their own but do not need 24-hour complex medical supervision. Extra care housing schemes offer facilities, emergency help, the option of meals on-site and a range of other practical support and personal care services. There will usually be at least one member of staff on hand 24 hours a day. In its most developed form, extra care housing is seen as an alternative to residential care (care home). It may be suitable in some instances for post-hospital stays during the period of reablement or rehabilitation.

The Housing Learning and Improvement Network (LIN) is a useful resource on everything you need to know about extra care housing. See [Housing LIN factsheet No.1](#) for further information on extra care housing.

Care homes

If an individual requires more personal care than the housing options listed above can provide, they may need to move into a care home. Care homes are staffed 24 hours a day and all meals are provided. Care homes sometimes provide nursing care as well. There are two main types of care home:

- ② **Residential homes:** these offer accommodation and help with personal care – activities such as washing, dressing and going to the toilet
- ② **Nursing homes:** these provide the above services and offer nursing care in addition.

This [Age UK factsheet](#) provides further information.

All care homes have to be registered with the Care Quality Commission, who also publish the [inspection reports](#) about the quality of care in all registered homes.



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