

## De-commissioning and Decanting Sheltered Housing at The Manors

This case-study describes The Manors which was a traditional sheltered housing scheme. A partnership between Milecastle Housing, Northumberland Care Trust and Tynedale District Council resulted in a successful bid to the DH Extra Care Housing Fund to de-commissioning the existing building and replace it with an Extra Care scheme.

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### Introduction

Tynedale is a local government district in south-west Northumberland. It had a resident population of 58,808 according to Census 2001, and is named for the River Tyne. Its main towns are Hexham and Prudhoe. The district contains part of Hadrian's Wall.

With an area of 2,219km<sup>2</sup> it is the second largest English district, after the East Riding of Yorkshire. It is bigger than several English counties, including Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, and Hertfordshire. The current district was formed on April 1, 1974, under the Local Government Act 1972.

The District is currently one of six which makes up the County of Northumberland. As a result of local government re-organisation Northumberland will become a unitary authority in April 2009. The County covers an area of 5,013 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of 307,190. Similar to many other authorities the older population is growing significantly. The County has one existing extra care development in Blyth Valley District but the Manors will be the first purpose built scheme.

## **Background**

Milecastle Housing Limited (formerly Tynedale Housing Ltd) was formed in December 1999 when the housing stock was transferred from Tynedale Council. They are a not for profit housing association providing affordable social housing in the Tynedale area of Northumberland.

Milecastle Housing Limited has a stock of over 3100 homes in the area supported by offices in Hexham, Haltwhistle and Prudhoe, including sheltered housing schemes, bungalows and properties designated for older people.

## **Description**

The Manors was the site of an obsolete sheltered housing scheme on the West Wylam Estate in the Prudhoe North Ward of Tynedale. The scheme was owned and managed by Milecastle Housing.

The Vision for The Manors Extra Care development is for a dynamic and flexible service model that will promote quality of life and health for the wider older population in the area, and sustain vulnerable older people with chronic and other health conditions in the community. The vision was developed in line with the service re-design aims of Northumberland County Council, Northumberland Care Trust and Tynedale Council. The redevelopment of the Manors was also the subject of extensive consultation, including a community planning exercise.

In May 2009 the Manors will:

- Provide 46 units of multi tenure Extra Care housing
- Provide a 'virtual extra care' outreach role to support vulnerable older people in the community
- Use the public communal areas in the scheme to provide a community hub for older people in the area, both active and vulnerable

The aim is for the Manors to be a flagship development and a demonstration centre to spark further developments in other districts.

The scheme was awarded funding of £4.4m through the DH extra care housing fund.

## **De-commissioning the Manors**

### ***The DH Bid***

The original Manors had 28 flats. At the time of the bid to the Extra Care Housing Fund in August 2006 there were six empty flats with a further two expected. Once the bid was submitted it was agreed that no further vacancies would be re-let. The plan for decanting the scheme was part of the DH bid, to demonstrate the following:

- that residents had been consulted
- that the building could be empty, services disconnected and demolished
- that start on site for the construction of the new building could begin by April 2008

### ***Arrangements with the District Council***

Milecastle Housing operates a Joint Allocations Protocol with Tynedale Council and the following arrangements were agreed for the Manors:

- That tenants will be given priority for alternative housing
- Any suitable vacancies to be held to use for The Manor's tenants
- Tynedale to nominate to any other RSL with suitable accommodation in the tenant's area of choice
- Tynedale to liaise with neighbouring authorities such as Gateshead regarding other options.
- A named officer to be identified to be responsible for the process
- Monthly meetings with Milecastle to review progress (or more often if needed)

### ***Options available within Milecastle***

As a provider of older persons accommodation Milecastle considered the options within their own stock:

- 253 older persons bungalows in the local area.
- 17 suitable vacancies during the previous 12 months in the locality and 14 in the nearby villages
- 25 sheltered flats in Corbridge, and 69 in Hexham, and based on previous 12 months, potentially 26 flats available
- In total based on previous year's vacancies, there would be about 55 Milecastle properties available for decanting current tenants from The Manors

In addition local RSL's were consulted about forthcoming vacancies and Home Housing, Nomad and Anchor Trust provided a total of 7 possible properties, bringing the total to at least 60.

The target date for having the scheme vacant was set for December 2007

### ***Managing the closure***

Key staff were responsible for managing the closure and communicating with residents and their relatives. These were the Support Manger (responsible for managing all of Milecastle's properties for older people), Housing Officer and the Scheme Officer based at the Manors.

It was agreed that once the outcome of the bid was known and assuming it was successful residents and their relatives would be informed that the scheme was closing and the process for finding them suitable alternative housing care and support. Residents and their relatives were part of the consultation process to de-commission the scheme and replace it with extra care housing. Milecastle staff agreed the following process:

- Once the decision is made, it is important to ensure clear, accurate communication so that residents and relatives are fully informed and understand the process
- Need to reflect realities of the situation and meet personal needs of residents

- Clear, sensitive, individual discussions in addition to regular meetings with residents
- Role of Scheme Officer crucial in providing reassurance and support as well as practical help with moving
- Written information to be provided after meetings
- Q& A sheet to be prepared to help answer queries (see appendix 1)

In addition to regular meetings with residents, staff were involved in regular discussions with a number of local agencies, including:

- Tynedale District about housing options
- Providing updates to Supporting People re. changes
- health and care providers to assess residents care and support needs and ensure these would be addressed
- Housing Benefit
- Communications/ PR

Through the community planning exercise and consultation with residents a lot of work was done to gain support for this project. It was important that the closure process was as positive as possible and specifically that Councillors and the local paper continued to support it.

### ***Consultation with residents***

A number of actions were undertaken to ensure that residents and their relatives were kept fully informed and that residents were offered alternative accommodation to meet their needs. A number of residents had high care and support needs, whilst others were completely independent.

- Scheme Officer to complete Tenant Profile by gathering information and review of Support Plans on specific needs and requirements
- A decanting checklist was also completed for every resident (see appendix 2)
- Be clear about alternative housing options and provide as much detailed information as possible
- Hold individual interviews with tenants and their relatives if required to discuss immediate concerns, identify requirements re alternative accommodation, offer practical help
- Complete checklist with each tenant to ensure all support needs/actions completed
- Continue regular meetings with tenants to update
- Scheme Officer to provide support on daily basis and practical help with arranging the move, reading meters, packing etc.

### ***Allowances and payments***

All residents were entitled to specific allowances for the loss of their accommodation at the Manors and in relation to their tenancy. Details are set out below:

- Tenants with protected tenancies to retain protection if transferring to Milecastle accommodation
- Tenants required to move as a result of replacement entitled to Home Loss Payment – Statutory amount (01.09.06) of £4,000 per property to compensate for loss of home. This amount is updated annually and details are available on the Housing Corporation website
- Disturbance Allowance to be payable for both temporary and permanent moves, covering the following:
  - removal costs,
  - disconnection/reconnection of services, cookers, telephones, dispersed alarms, TV aerials,
  - relocation of adaptations,
  - redirection of mail,
  - decoration allowance if necessary.
- Consider contracting with one removal firm, carpet fitter etc.
- In addition a fixed amount up to a maximum of £500 to be allowed for additional costs such as re-fitting/ provision of carpets, floor coverings, curtains.
- Compensation to be paid for any qualifying improvements in accordance with Milecastle's Compensation and Payments Policy

### ***The building***

Consideration was also given to the building which needed to be maintained to reasonable standards whilst residents remained living there. This was addressed through the following:

- Regular meetings with residents and the Scheme Officer to include the state of the building as standard agenda item
- Review security of the building as residents moved out
- Continue regular Health and Safety checks
- Complete Risk Assessment and regularly review

### **Conclusions**

The vast majority of residents were successfully re-housed within the first two months. It took seven months until the final resident moved out.

Of the twenty residents who were re-housed, three went into residential care, six to other sheltered housing schemes and eleven to flats or bungalows designated for older people with a community alarm service. Milecastle housed eleven residents and the others were housed by other providers.

Residents were not given the option to move into the new development. Former residents will be considered but their application will be assessed in the same way as others.

### **Lessons learned**

- Communication is key and can be complex and time consuming keeping everyone up to date including scheme officer, housing office staff, residents, relatives and care managers
- Resources need to be dedicated to de-canting if it is to work well
- The process happened very quickly at the beginning with the majority of residents re-housed in a short period, but finding suitable accommodation for a minority of residents was difficult and time consuming
- Thought should be given to keeping suitable properties void at an earlier date, obviously the loss of rental income needs to be balanced against residents waiting for suitable properties to become vacant
- It was invaluable having an in-house maintenance team that could help with moving adaptations and getting properties ready for residents to move into
- Agreeing a contract with a local removal firm for an agreed price who were flexible meant that moves were quick and easy
- Discussions with some residents could have been helped if a number of reasonable offers had been agreed at the outset
- Staff were all flexible in order to try to meet residents requests for moving dates and giving practical assistance

### **Other relevant Housing LIN resources**

Housing LIN Report No.25: [Remodelling Sheltered Housing and Residential Care Homes to ECH](#)

Housing LIN Factsheet No.10: [Refurbishing or Remodelling Sheltered Housing: a checklist for developing ECH](#)

Key Housing LIN Document: [The Extra Care Housing Toolkit](#)

These resources and many more available to download free from the Housing LIN website, at [www.networks.csip.org.uk/housing](http://www.networks.csip.org.uk/housing)



## Appendix 1:

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE MANORS

1. Q What is happening to the Manors ?  
A The Department of Health has awarded £4.4 million towards building a new Extra Care Housing Scheme on the site of The Manors
  
2. Q How will this affect me ?  
A The Manors will have to be demolished to allow the new development to start. This means anyone living in The Manors will have to be rehoused.
  
3. Q Where will I be re housed ?  
A Milecastle staff will talk to all residents and their families to discuss the options available, and find out where people would like to live. We will try to find accommodation in the areas that people choose.
  
4. Q Will I have to move to another Milecastle property?  
A If Milecastle do not have suitable accommodation in the area you would like, we will ask other Housing Associations to help. People moving out of the Manors will be given priority for suitable Milecastle properties.
  
5. Q How will I meet the cost of moving ?  
A Milecastle will meet the costs of your removal, for example moving your furniture, disconnecting and reconnecting services, fitting carpets if necessary, and other reasonable costs up to a fixed limit. This is called 'Disturbance Allowance'
  
6. Q Can I take my cooker and fridge ?  
A Where Milecastle have provided your cooker and/or fridge in your flat you can take them with you to your new home.

7. Q Will I be compensated for having to move out ?  
A Yes, because you have to move out so we can demolish The Manors, you will be entitled to a 'Home Loss Payment' of £4,000. This will be paid to you after you have moved.  
(any outstanding rent would be deducted from your payment)
8. Q When will this happen ?  
A People can start to move out as soon as they find suitable accommodation, but we do not know how long this will take. It depends on suitable properties becoming available. The new development has to start by March 2008, so everyone will have to be rehoused before then.
9. Q Who will help me ?  
A Your Scheme Officer will be there to help with packing & arranging your move if you need help, and will continue to provide support at The Manors until everyone has moved.
10. Q Will I be able to move into the new Extra Care Scheme when it is completed ?  
A The new scheme will be let to people who will benefit from services on offer there, and will be a mix of people with different care needs. Anyone wishing to apply would have their needs assessed and decisions on allocations made jointly by a panel. It will depend on individual needs.
11. Q What if I have more questions or concerns ?  
A We will continue to hold regular meetings to keep people informed, and will meet individually with you or your family or carers if necessary
- Your Scheme Officer will be on site daily as usual to answer any queries
  - You can contact Milecastle staff by phone:  
Sheila Kinsey-Morgan, Housing Officer 01434 611 475 or  
Alison Urquhart, Support Manager 01434 611 459



**Appendix 2:  
THE MANORS DECANTING CHECKLIST**

<b>NAME</b>	
<b>FLAT NUMBER</b>	
<b>ACCOMODATION REQUIRED TYPE / LOCATION</b>	
<b>ADAPTATIONS NEEDED</b>	
<b>SUPPORT NEEDS</b>	
<b>CARE MANAGER CONTACT DETAILS</b>	
<b>FAMILY CONTACTS</b>	
<b>OFFERS MADE</b>	
<b>DATE ACCEPTED</b>	
<b>MOVING DATE/ TENANCY END</b>	
<b>DISTURBANCE ALLOWANCE</b>	
<b>HOME LOSS PAID</b>	
<b>FORWARDING ADDRESS</b>	

Other Housing LIN publications available in this format:

- Case Study no.1: **Extra Care Strategic Developments in North Yorkshire**  
Case Study no.2: **Extra Care Strategic Developments in East Sussex**  
Case Study no.3: **'Least-use' Assistive Technology in Dementia Extra Care (Eastleigh)**  
Case Study no.5: **Village People: A Mixed Tenure Retirement Community (Bristol)**  
Case Study no.6: **How to get an Extra Care Programme in Practice**  
Case Study no.7: **Supporting Diversity in Tower Hamlets**  
Case Study no.8: **The Kent Health & Affordable Warmth Strategy**  
Case Study no.9: **Supporting People with Dementia in Sheltered Housing**  
Case Study no.10: **Direct Payments for Personal Assistance in Hampshire**  
Case Study no.11: **Housing for Older People from the Chinese Community in Middlesbrough**  
Case Study no.12: **Shared ownership for People with Disabilities (London & SE)**  
Case Study no.13: **Home Care Service for People with Dementia in Poole**  
Case Study no.14: **Intermediate Care Services within Extra Care Sheltered Housing in Maidenhead**  
Case Study no.15: **Sheltered Housing Contributes to Regeneration in Gainsborough**  
Case Study no.16: **Charging for Extra Care Sheltered Housing Services in Salford**  
Case Study no.17: **A Virtual Care Village Model (Cumbria)**  
Case Study no.18: **Community Involvement in Planning Extra Care: the Larchwood User's Group (Brighton & Hove)**  
Case Study no.19: **Durham Integrated Team - a practical guide**  
Case Study no.20: **BME Older People's Joint Service Initiative - Analysis and Evaluation of Current Strategies (Sheffield)**  
Case Study no.21: **Estimating Future Requirements for Extra Care Housing (Swindon)**  
Case Study no.22: **'The Generation Project': a sure start for older people in Manchester**  
Case Study no.23: **Developing ECH in Cheshire: the PFI route**  
Case Study no.24: **Commissioning an ECH Scheme from Social Services' Perspective - Leicester**  
Case Study no.25: **Broadacres Housing Association Older Persons Floating Support**  
Case Study no.26: **Unmet Housing-Related Support Needs in Wokingham District - an investigation**  
Case Study no.27: **Dee Park Active Retirement Club - Age Concern Berkshire**  
Case Study no.28: **Essex County Council Older Person's Housing Strategy (Summary)**  
Case Study no.29: **Pennine Court: Remodelling sheltered housing to include Extra Care for people with learning difficulties**  
Case Study no.30: **Dementia Care Partnership: More Than Bricks and Mortar**  
Case Study no.31: **Anticipating Future Accommodation Needs: developing a consultation methodology**  
Case Study no.32: **Park View: an 'Independent Living' scheme with support for individuals with a learning difficulty**  
Case Study no.33: **Private Sector Leasing Scheme for People with Learning Difficulties in Norfolk**  
Case Study no.34: **Mini-Cost Model of Housing with Care Project**  
Case Study no.35: **Ledbury Community Health and Care Centre**  
Case Study no.36: **Duddon Mews Extra Care Scheme for People with Mental Health Problems and Physical Frailty in Cumbria**  
Case Study no.37: **Private Sector Engagement with Extra Care Housing Development**  
Case Study no.38: **Healthy Outcomes in Blackburn and Darwin's Extra Care Housing**  
Case Study no.39: **Implementing an Extra Care Housing Strategy in Oxfordshire - Delivering System Change**  
Case Study no.40: **Combining Extra Care Housing with Health Care Services at Barton Mews**  
Case Study no.41: **Integrating Retirement Villages with the Local Community at Painswick**

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