

INSIDE...

This newsletter has information about the PSSRU's evaluation of extra care housing for the Department of Health:

- Characteristics of residents
- Residents' views and reasons for moving to extra care
- Social well-being in extra care housing
- EVOLVE: a new study assessing the design of extra care housing

BACKGROUND

The PSSRU is evaluating 19 extra care housing schemes funded by the Department of Health. The aim of the study is to see how well extra care housing meets the needs of its residents and to investigate the impact on their health and quality of life. As many local authorities are interested in using extra care more than care homes in the future, another aim of the study is to compare extra care with care homes, using information collected in a survey of care homes carried out in 2005.

Progress so far

Of the 19 schemes, seven opened in 2006, eight opened in 2007 and the remaining four are expected to open by summer 2008. Although the data collection has not been completed, there are some early results to report. These results are from the seven schemes that opened in 2006 and from one that opened in 2007: Brighton and Hove, East Riding, Enfield, Havering, Northamptonshire, Peterborough, West Sussex (Horsham District Council) and Bradford. One of these is a village-style scheme, while the other seven are smaller developments with an average of 45 apartments.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESIDENTS

By Autumn 2007, 541 people had moved into these eight schemes, and of these, 82 per cent have chosen to take part in the study. Of those taking part, 64 per cent had a care need, and those without a care need mainly lived in the village.

Compared with people in care homes, the people who moved into extra care were younger, on average, more likely to be male, less likely to be widowed or living alone, and in need of much less support.

RESIDENTS' VIEWS AND REASONS FOR MOVING

Two-thirds of residents in the schemes completed a questionnaire about their expectations and their reasons for and experiences of moving to their scheme.

Reasons for the move

The majority of residents (67 per cent) made the decision to move themselves, and only rarely had their GP or other professional suggested moving. Most residents (71 per cent) also chose the scheme themselves and visited it beforehand, as did their family or friends. It seems that residents made a positive choice for extra care housing.

Approximately 85 per cent of residents had previously been living in their own home or sheltered housing. On the other hand, people admitted to care homes mostly come from hospitals or care homes or have previously been receiving intermediate care. It seems that extra care schemes and care homes may be providing for different types of people.

The attractions of extra care housing were more important in residents' decisions to move than difficulties experienced in their previous homes, such as physical health, lack of services, coping with daily tasks and getting around the home. Residents reported that the most attractive features of extra care were having your own front door and tenancy rights, accessible and spacious living arrangements, security and care support on site.

Experience of the move

Two-thirds of residents experienced the move as quite or very stressful. Interestingly, people without care needs reported more stress than those with care needs. Overall, the majority of residents described their move as well organised and said that staff were very helpful.

Expectations

Nearly all residents (90 per cent) expect to live in the schemes for as long as they want. A third of those with care needs reported no intention of moving on. For those without care needs, nearly all saw a move into a care home as a very unlikely future possibility, but did not rule it out.

The majority of residents (60 per cent) expected an improved social life, whereas one-third did not expect any change. Just over two-thirds of residents did not expect to see a change in the frequency with which they saw family or friends: 45 per cent of residents had moved locally.

SOCIAL WELL-BEING IN EXTRA CARE HOUSING

Part of the study, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, is investigating residents' well-being and the development of the social life at each scheme. Information about social activities six months after opening is currently available for six of the schemes.

Social activities

- In all schemes, residents were involved in contributing ideas and organising or running social activities, although the level of involvement varied between schemes.
- Most schemes had a number of regular social activities alongside one-off events. The most common activities were bingo, coffee mornings, exercise classes and religious services or groups.
- Shops and restaurants seem to be important to the development of schemes' social lives.
- The fact that residents can socialise if they wish, but also have privacy behind their own front door was appreciated. For example one resident said: *'...I would have thought it's the best answer to everything – you've got privacy but you've got activities that are there.'*

Local community

- Residents mentioned the importance of being able to access their local community and maintain previous links. As one resident put it: *'The attitude of the management I think is quite right – that you have a life outside [the scheme].'*
- Links between schemes and local communities were taking time to develop and appear to be influenced by the nature of the local area, particularly the availability of transport.

Social life

- Residents' health and mobility can sometimes prevent them from getting involved in organising and running their scheme's social life, and from taking part in social activities. One resident said, *'The biggest problem is [needing] the carers to get you to anything'*.
- Having an active residents' committee, interested residents, helpful staff, and a well-designed scheme were mentioned as being helpful in developing a scheme's social life.
- There were indications of neighbourliness and 'community spirit' in the schemes, although it was recognised that these take time to develop. As one resident said, *'In time it will be a really good community. People do look out for one another – they ask "where's so-and-so, I haven't seen him for a couple of days".'*

If you would like to read more about the early findings from the evaluation, a Summary of Findings is available from your local researcher, or on the PSSRU website at www.pssru.ac.uk/pdf/rs047.pdf

EVOLVE – Evaluation of Older People's Living Environments

As yet there is little research evidence to guide the design of extra care. The PSSRU has begun a new project with the University of Sheffield which will develop a tool for assessing whether extra care housing meets the needs of its users, and is intended to encourage good design in future schemes.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all the extra care housing residents and staff who have taken part so far. Thank you for giving up your time to be interviewed, and sharing your views and experiences so openly and honestly. We value your continued participation very much, as the results from this evaluation should help councils and schemes provide better services in the future. Thanks are also due to our local researchers for all their hard work so far.

The Housing and Care Research Programme team at the PSSRU includes Ann Netten, Robin Darton, Theresia Bäumker, Lisa Callaghan, Lesley Cox, Jane Dennett, Ketta Holder and Ann-Marie Towers. The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Department of Health or the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. We would welcome comments about this newsletter.

PSSRU, University of Kent, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 7NF. Tel. 01227 823963.