

B5

Good design characteristics in extra care housing

The design of the extra housing scheme will be critical to its ability to deliver the outcomes sought for its residents. This checklist is taken from “Guidelines for the Planning of housing for Senior Citizens” (www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/HousingOlderPeople/OlderPeopleDesign/?parent=3675&child=2401) published in 2007, and illustrates the range of objectives sought in well designed homes for all older people, with examples of design features which will contribute to these objectives. The guidelines themselves also cover communal spaces inside and outside the building, and the urban context.

These should be read in conjunction with the Royal Institute of British Architects publication, A Guide to Assisted Living, which provides more detailed guidance and the latest information on designing for older people published by the Homes and Communities Agency⁸⁹.

OBJECTIVES WITHIN THE HOME (usually individual homes but can also apply to schemes as a whole)	EXAMPLES OF DESIGN FEATURES TO ENSURE OBJECTIVE IS MET
Easy Identification of the Entrance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure entrance is in an easily visible and recognizable position, and is sufficiently lit by day and by night. • Distinguish the different doors with colours, materials, or by other devices so they are different from the walls. • Encourage the personalisation of the area immediately adjoining the individual entrance door without reducing the space of shared passageways.
Easy Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish between the zones inside and outside the apartment with colours and materials. • Provide the home with easy access for people with impaired ability. • Provide the entrance with a system for observing who is calling at the door. • Provide the entrance with a device for resting heavy objects so that one may open the door easily.
Guarantee a stimulating external view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide windows which overlook outdoor spaces where there is activity to provide interest and ideally provide a balcony or veranda.
Guaranteeing the best conditions for rest and sleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an independent bedroom large enough to accommodate a bed and wardrobe, whilst allowing space for accessibility.

⁸⁹ Royal Institute of British Architects (2011). A Guide for Assisted Living: Towards Life Home 21 plus ref for HCA guide when known

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure good sound insulation. • Make it possible to switch the light on and off directly from the likely bed position.
Taking care of one's own body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure easy access to and use of the bathroom for wheelchair users. • Give the bathroom door a simple opening and handling system. • Choose good lighting for the bathroom.
Preparing meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set out the kitchen to suit people with limited mobility or strength. • Ensure there is space in the kitchen for the older person to be able to involve friends and relations in the preparation of meals.
Eating meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design the home to enable meals to be eaten close to the preparation area, as well as close to the television and other parts of the living area.
Receiving treatment and care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide space to add an extra bed or a sofa bed for possible carer. • Ensure the route to the bathroom is short and without obstacles. • Install a wired or wireless help system, and also a system for the future use of a telemedical system.
Feeling at home in one's own home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage residents to furnish the interior spaces to their own taste. • Ensure there is sufficient storage space inside the home.
Making one's own home comfortable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place electric sockets at a height not less than 60cm from the floor. • Ensure heating or other climate control systems are easy to use and handle by people with limited dexterity.
Receiving people/socializing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide internal areas in the home which allow for guests.
Recreational activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design terraces with flower pots/boxes easily used by people with limited mobility. • Provide space in the home capable of being equipped for recreational activities. • Provide wiring in the home for the domestic use of the internet.
Moving around easily within the home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illuminate internal rooms with enough natural or artificial light. • Arrange internal doors so that walking distances are short and simple.
Guaranteeing comfort in the home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the home is well ventilated, preferably in a natural way.