

flexicare housing

Hertfordshire



Accommodation Services for Older People 2009

Adult Care Services
0300 123 4042
www.hertsdirect.org/acs





Foreword

At the heart of Hertfordshire's accommodation programme is a desire to improve the quality of life for older people. It is not only about increasing the amount of accommodation but supporting people to live independent lives, with a focus on early intervention to keep people healthy and well. It is as important to cater for people's emotional as well as practical care needs. Well-designed accommodation and good management can help build strong communities and reduce feelings like loneliness and isolation.

All local authorities are facing significant pressure on services as the older population increases. While many are responding to a shortage of accommodation by embarking on major building programmes, Hertfordshire is taking a different approach. Through complex negotiations and partnership working, the

programme is offering a range of housing options across the county. Remodelling out-of-date and under-used sheltered housing schemes into flexicare housing and responding to increasing demand for intermediate care to relieve pressure on acute hospitals, are examples of how we are tackling major challenges head-on.

This programme may not be taking the easy route but our strong partnerships and shared desire to deliver better outcomes means that Hertfordshire will be able to offer older people more choice, independence and a better quality of life.

Richard Smith

Executive Member for Adult Care and Health
Hertfordshire County Council

Introduction

With the number of over 65s expected to rise dramatically in the coming years, Hertfordshire has embarked on an ambitious programme to accommodate a growing population of older people through an innovative and flexible approach to maintaining independent living.

The programme is increasing capacity and the range of accommodation for older people by approximately 600 places by 2010/11 in order to keep pace with the growing number of older people and their care needs. The vision is not only about catering for increasing demand, but about giving people real choice about how and where they live.

The programme is being driven forward by an innovative partnership between Hertfordshire County Council, the ten district councils, two Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and local partners, supported by the Institute of Public Care (IPC). The emphasis is on a shift away from residential care towards providing more flexicare housing, which is Hertfordshire's model of extra care housing. The approach reflects an important change in attitudes towards the care of older people - helping them remain in their own homes as long as possible, preserving their independence while ensuring that they have all the support they need, when they need it.

“Flexicare housing transforms people’s lives. Although leaving the family home is hard, people feel more secure here and enjoy the company. You can literally see people bloom after they move in”.
Manager, flexicare housing scheme.

Background

The first phase of the programme involved mapping all the accommodation for older people across Hertfordshire, namely:

- county council-owned registered residential care homes leased to Quantum Care Ltd and Runwood Homes Ltd.
- private registered care homes.
- PCT commissioned community beds.
- PCT block contracted continuing care beds.
- hospices.
- sheltered housing (social rented).
- private retirement housing.
- extra care housing (social rented).
- extra care housing (private).

A map for each district was prepared which provided the opportunity to look for the first time at all accommodation (both public and private) from a local and countywide perspective. Through discussions with partners 110 ‘candidate projects’ were identified including:

- developing suitable provision by remodelling sheltered housing schemes managed by district councils and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).
- clustering schemes (which might include existing residential care homes or existing extra care housing schemes) to share a care team.
- building social-rented and mixed-tenure extra care housing schemes on sites which are part of affordable housing commitments or for retirement accommodation.
- using the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and local evidence produced by Adult Care Services to jointly prepare a detailed market analysis.

Alongside this were opportunities to improve residential care accommodation to ensure homes offer the flexibility to accommodate changing requirements for nursing dementia and intermediate care.

This includes:

- increasing capacity by extending the existing homes owned by the county council and leased to Quantum Care Ltd.
- developing integrated care facilities in partnership with the PCTs.
- reviewing provision of residential care homes owned by the county council that are no longer fit for purpose or economically viable.
- re-provide residential care homes owned by the county council on new sites that allow for expanded provision.
- create units capable of changing between uses such as nursing, dementia and intermediate care.

Another aspect includes jointly identifying the need for new extra care housing and residential care through new local planning policies in the emerging local development frameworks. This includes guidance to private developers and providers of private accommodation and/or services for older people on the predicted level and type of need for each district.



Flexicare housing - Hertfordshire's approach to extra care housing

Since September 2009, Hertfordshire's approach to extra care housing has been known as flexicare housing. This change has been made for two reasons:

- to use a name that better reflects the flexible, outcome-focused approach expected of care and support services.
- in response to feedback from tenants that the term 'extra care' housing is misunderstood, particularly the assumption that it is only for people with very high care needs.

Flexicare housing preserves people's independence while ensuring that older people have all the support they need, when they need it. It enables people to have their own tenancy with services available 24 hours a day; helps promote independence, safety and security; and offers a real alternative to residential care.

In flexicare housing, people live in their own apartment. There are communal areas, such as lounges, so people can meet up with friends or join in with social activities if they want to. Some of the larger or newer flexicare housing schemes also include facilities that help to promote a wider sense of community, such as internet cafes, hairdressing, telehealth suites and treatment rooms.

The main advantage of flexicare housing is that care staff are based on site 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Even if people do not need regular care, it is reassuring to know that someone is there if needed. Levels of care can increase or decrease in line with people's needs, which could prevent people from having to move into a residential care home; and for many, flexicare housing can be a home for life. Other benefits include:

- problems can be caught early and care at the right time can often avoid hospital admission.
- couples where each has different care needs can stay together in flexicare housing.
- tenants' needs can be better met by the close working of scheme managers and regular care staff.
- it is quick and easy to get help if needed.
- people may have the opportunity to buy or part-own their home.

Some of the key elements of Hertfordshire's model are:

Balanced communities and flexible support

Hertfordshire's vision is to support balanced communities, housing older people with a wide range of care and support needs ranging from those who require little or no support, to those who need regular contact with carers. This means flexicare housing schemes can support people over the years as their needs change, including providing support after a hospital stay or fall.

It helps couples to stay together as the schemes can accommodate people who require different levels of support. Caring for a partner 24/7 can take its toll, so knowing care staff are on hand means people can get a good night's sleep and can help couples enjoy their time together.

By managing allocations into the scheme, balanced communities can be maintained so that schemes do not simply evolve into residential care homes with apartments instead of rooms. It also means some people can move in at a good time in their life, planning for their future care needs, rather than just at a point of crisis.

Better outcomes and more choice

The accommodation programme is driven by a desire to improve outcomes for older people. The balanced community approach enables flexicare housing schemes to establish vibrant communities in which residents not only have access to professional staff, but the opportunity to develop social networks and provide mutual support.

Hertfordshire's aim is for flexicare housing to be available across the range of tenures, including affordable, intermediate and market rents, part buy and leasehold; giving people more choice about their accommodation options. With a high level of home ownership in Hertfordshire, we need to ensure that accommodation choices for older people reflect this. While meeting individual needs, we will also build schemes to help develop sustainable communities.

Financing an outcomes-focused approach

Traditionally, the home care charging policy has been used for extra care housing. However, this does not fit the flexicare housing model particularly well. While it ensures people only pay for the actual (day time) care hours provided, it does not encourage providers to flex the service to meet an individual's changing needs or preferences and it encourages an emphasis on outputs rather than outcomes for the individual.

The traditional system is also hampered by bureaucracy, requiring people to go through lengthy reviews and assessments if they need more support. This can not only delay care when it is most needed, it can stop people asking for a bit of extra help, even when it could actually improve their long term independence.

That is why Hertfordshire is introducing charging arrangements by banding for flexicare housing. This means introducing charges for flexible levels of care to

support people well, effectively underpinning our aspiration to promote independence. This allows tenants and care staff the freedom to increase or decrease care as needs change, with a focus on outcomes. Reassessment can then be done in a considered way, if long term changes are expected.

The benefits of banding include:

- a simplified process that makes it easier for people to understand how much they pay.
- care can be easily and quickly adjusted to suit people's changing circumstances.
- allocations panels at each flexicare housing scheme can ensure places are allocated on the basis of maintaining balance and of maximising resources.

Flexicare design principles

Whether it is a new build or a re-model, the physical environment is a critical consideration. When evaluating sites or plans for proposed flexicare housing schemes, the accommodation must be of a sufficient quality and standard to support the flexible, person-centred nature of flexicare housing. Therefore, there is a set of minimum standards that is expected of all flexicare housing schemes:

- they must be large enough to be financially viable. New-build schemes that follow the balanced community model are typically at least 60 units.
- all apartments must be built to a lifetime home standard. They must be accessible and appropriate for care to be delivered now or in the future. This includes the provision of walk-in showers or wet bathrooms.
- plans must incorporate communal areas, office space for housing support and care staff and sleep-in facilities for on-site care staff.

“When it became apparent that my mother could no longer live the way that she was living... everyone automatically presumed that she would have to go into a care home, she did not want this and we did not feel it would be the right move. One day we had a visit from a social worker who told her about Wormley Court... Moving to Wormley Court has put extra years on my mother, and we have peace of mind that she is happy and being well cared for, still in her own home.”

- the immediate location must be suitable. This includes whether the proposed site is near shops and other local amenities; whether the surrounding area is relatively flat and accessible for older people; and if good transport links are available nearby.
- links should be made to existing community resources, or host community resources or services within the scheme.

Workforce development

Hertfordshire recognises that the quality of staff working in flexicare housing schemes directly impacts on the tenants. Often staff come from a home care, residential care or sheltered housing background. While many are highly trained in their respective areas, it is important that they are well inducted and trained in the ethos of flexicare housing. Therefore a workforce development group has been set up to identify and meet training needs that are specific to flexicare housing, which are not being picked up through other avenues.

The group also acts as a signpost for flexicare housing staff to access training that is already being provided by the county council and partner organisations. Such training provision is open to both social care and housing support staff, reflecting the cross-agency working required at all levels. Early feedback from staff working in our 10 existing flexicare housing schemes has been very encouraging and appreciative. Work is currently underway to develop a training programme for managers in flexicare housing, recognising that we need to develop and support them in order to achieve our shared ambition.

Programme management

The strong partnership arrangements in place have proved vital to the success of the programme thus far and must continue if we are to deliver better outcomes for older people. Bringing partners together in this way allows all parties to look more broadly at opportunities available through joint working, as well as tackle challenges that may not be possible alone. The key partners and their roles are:

Hertfordshire County Council

The county council provides strategic direction, has some planning responsibilities, and is itself a landlord. Adult Care Services is leading the Accommodation Services for Older People programme with a team of programme managers operating at a local (district/borough) level. Adult Care Services commissions the social care provided in the flexicare housing schemes and, as host to the Supporting People team, commissions housing related support.

District and borough councils

The 10 district and borough councils have responsibilities for planning and housing need assessments. Three of the 10 currently retain their own housing stock, with two of these planning to establish housing trusts next year. The councils manage housing lists increasingly through choice based

letting and have nomination rights to some RSLs. Increasing the capacity and range of accommodation available to older people is contributing to availability of general needs housing.

Housing associations

These include local RSLs to whom council housing stock has been transferred, and national organisations ranging from those with many sheltered housing schemes to those with only a few. Several have carried out reviews of stock which indicate a need to move from bedsits to one or two bedroom apartments, and to increase flexicare housing provision.

Health

The Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) work with Hertfordshire County Council to provide intermediate care and National Health Service (NHS) continuing care in a range of settings. Increasing the capacity and range of accommodation with integrated care supports the PCTs and partners in delivering the health and wellbeing (prevention) agenda; helps to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions, facilitates hospital discharges and supports older people to sustain rehabilitation and healthcare programmes.



Voluntary organisations

A number of voluntary organisations in Hertfordshire provide clubs, day services and other facilities in flexicare housing and sheltered housing schemes, open to tenants and to people from the surrounding community. Some voluntary organisations are involved in helping people use personal budgets or to choose accommodation.

Private organisations

A range of housing options is provided by the private sector. This programme is helping developers identify the type and scale of need in local areas. It can also guide the planning of accommodation and support that maintains independence and facilitates good care at home.

Institute of Public Care, Oxford Brookes University

The Institute of Public Care (IPC) has been commissioned to independently evaluate Hertfordshire's Accommodation Services for Older People programme. As a member of the IPC Network Partnership, Hertfordshire County Council has access to evidence-based research on meeting the housing and care needs of older people; the experiences and learning of other network partner councils; and support to undertake local research and market analysis. As a 'critical friend', the IPC helps Hertfordshire face challenges in this area and ensures the programme remains focused on its objectives.

Programme delivery

Delivery is focused at a local level. Programme managers have responsibility for district/borough council areas. Programme managers facilitate Local Area Programme Boards and undertake project management and commissioning roles to progress opportunities through to completion.

Local Area Programme Boards

Local Area Programme Boards cover district/borough council areas and comprise local representatives to directly oversee the programme portfolio within the area. Boards consider local market intelligence and examine opportunities which become available through the district/borough council planning system, taking into account location, site characteristics, sustainability, economics of provision and the deliverability of accommodation for older people.

They also:

- consider the potential for clustering provision in rural areas or between existing smaller schemes.
- review the care and housing related support provided within sheltered housing (social rented) and the physical suitability of accommodation across local sheltered housing schemes.
- explore opportunities for linking care provision to sheltered housing schemes.
- consider how care and housing related support are provided within retirement housing schemes.

Boards have contributed to the borough and district Local Development Frameworks and Core Strategies to support the long term planning policy for the provision of accommodation for older people across all market sectors and care groups.



Finance

In Hertfordshire, it has proved possible to achieve our goals through effective partnership working between the county council, PCTs, district/borough councils and housing associations. The partners have identified 18 sites for remodelling or new build.

The capital funding for flexicare housing is provided by the Housing and Communities Agency and partner housing providers. The county council is providing revenue funding for the on-site social care, and Supporting People funding is provided for housing related support.

The Hertfordshire model includes low, medium and high bands. The low band is essentially concerned with prevention, health and wellbeing for older people who benefit from living in a flexicare housing environment. The medium band can be considered a direct alternative to a typical community home care package and the high band can be considered a direct alternative to residential care.

The revenue cost to Hertfordshire County Council will be partly offset by charging for social care in flexicare housing, transparently set out in bands which mirror the level of support provided. The Fairer Charging Policy applies to flexicare housing.

Whilst including a low band for people who may currently be considered below the threshold for support from Adult Care Services may appear to be an unwise use of resources, it is an important element of our ethos of flexicare housing. In one sheltered housing scheme currently converting to flexicare housing there are 106 tenants with an average age of 86 years. The investment in their health and wellbeing at this stage will prove significant in supporting their independence and help prevent unnecessary admissions to hospital and care homes.

“My patient was terminally ill and suffering with mild dementia. She was able to return home to her extra care housing scheme due to the 24/7 care team on-site, who worked brilliantly with the palliative care team. This meant that her final weeks were comfortable and peaceful. Thank you.”

Letter from a GP.

Communications and engagement

Communications for a large and diverse programme such as this, with multiple partners and stakeholders, presents many challenges. Hertfordshire County Council's communications team leads the communications for the overarching programme but also liaises with partners on local programme activity to try to ensure that consistent and timely information is provided to stakeholders.

Key activities include:

- providing strategic communications advice to the programme team.
- providing information about the accommodation programme, including developing printed and electronic materials.
- giving advice and support to local partners to ensure consistency across all areas.
- increasing awareness of flexicare housing as a real alternative to residential care.
- raising the profile of the programme at a local, regional and national level.

Analysing the market for older people's accommodation

Since 2000, Adult Care Services has been undertaking detailed analysis of the market for older people's accommodation in Hertfordshire at regular intervals. These exercises give the county council a clear insight into the demand for, and supply of, older people's accommodation in the market funded by the public sector and those privately financed parts of the market. By gaining a greater understanding of the Hertfordshire-wide picture, we can better understand what needs to be done to shape the market to the massive demographic changes. This helps to inform the strategies of the county council and its public sector partners, and influence the business plans of developers and other private sector organisations.

A comprehensive exercise undertaken in 2006 was used as the evidence base for the accommodation programme, including the setting of targets for flexicare housing, residential and nursing care units to 2010/11. Given the emphasis on the long-term challenges presented by a number of large-scale social and economic changes, the programme has extended this exercise to produce new targets for each district in Hertfordshire for 2015/16 and 2020/21.

The target-setting exercise has taken two main demographic changes into account:

- the dramatic rise in the number of older people in Hertfordshire, and the number of those with dementia.
- the predicted rise in the number of older people who are homeowners, which means that more older people are likely to be able to call on income and/or capital reserves to fund their own care (which assumes that some form of personal contribution will be required to fund social care in the future).

How are these changes expected to alter the demand for accommodation?

The targets for 2010/11, 2015/16 and 2020/21 are detailed in the district-by-district section of this document. Overall trends are:

Population

The significant increases in the numbers of older people, and the number of people with dementia, will require a large expansion in the older people's accommodation market across Hertfordshire, although by varying amounts in each district. The estimated Hertfordshire-wide population increase in the 10 years to 2020 is predicted to be 20%, including a 26% rise in the total number of people with dementia. However, large variations exist between district areas. In East Herts, the number of people over 75 is predicted to rise over this period by 32%; whereas the increase in Welwyn Hatfield is likely to be much lower (9%). Therefore, in order to maintain the current population-to-accommodation ratio, the units of accommodation will need to increase at different rates across the county. The Hertfordshire elements of the East of England plan will have a further impact once it has been finalised, depending on the number and location of new homes required and their dates of completion.

Homeownership

The increases in ownership are likely to increase the requirement for privately funded units as a proportion of the market in all areas. This means that in some areas, almost all the new units required due to the increases in population will need to be privately financed. It is only in areas of

“The care staff are all wonderful, everyone is friendly and helpful. You've only got to call them and they are there.”

Resident, flexicare housing.

the strongest population growth where an increase in the level of publicly-funded units is required between both 2010-2015 and 2015-2020.

We have a responsibility to ensure every older person in Hertfordshire who wants or needs to live in some form of supportive and caring environment gets services that are good quality and value for money. Therefore, as well as concentrating efforts on improving the capacity and quality of the accommodation owned or provided by the public sector, we must also place a long-term emphasis on shaping the privately-funded market for all types of older people’s accommodation. This means working with developers and provider organisations to extend the best practice principles of flexicare housing and care home provision right through the private market; guiding investment decisions by organisations considering opportunities in the accommodation market by providing clear

information about demand and supply; and facilitating market entry where appropriate.

The figures taken from this market analysis exercise, outlined in latter sections of this document, are based on data currently available and will be updated at regular intervals. They may be affected, for example, by the progress of the regional spatial strategy, the extent to which private extra care housing impacts on the demand for residential care, and market feedback on the appropriateness of current levels of provision of private care. Prior to using Hertfordshire’s Adult Care Services market analysis for future planning, the methodology and the latest position should be discussed with the Accommodation Services for Older People programme team.

