



# Thinking about a move? Think about extra care housing

*“Perhaps I could have stuck it out alone in my terraced house a bit longer...it all felt a bit of a rush moving here straight after my accident in the town...but I’m content now, and I feel secure”*

Anna, an extra care housing resident for 9 years.

## **Extra care housing is different because:**

- You are living at home - not in a home
- You have your own front door – you decide who comes in
- Couples and friends can stay together
- There is a mix of able and less able older people
- 24 hour care services are available – if you need them
- You get support to keep your independence
- You can join in social activities - or you can be private
- You have control over your finances
- You have security – the aim is a home for life

Many older people end up living somewhere they are not happy to be, simply because they want to please others or not be a burden to their family. Moving after an accident or an illness can mean there is not enough time to think about what you really want. If you think through your options before you have to, you can make a positive choice for yourself.

Extra care housing offers a new way of supporting you to live independently for as long as you possibly can. It gives you the security and privacy of a home of your own, a range of facilities on the premises, with 24 hour care services available if you need them.

## **About this leaflet**

This leaflet aims to help you decide if extra care housing would be a good choice for you and tells you where to go for further advice and information. The government is putting money into developing and expanding extra care housing; they believe it gives value for money as well as improving the quality of life for older people. The amount of extra care accommodation is therefore increasing throughout the UK.



Extra care housing is sometimes called 'very sheltered housing'. The look of the accommodation varies enormously: some are new purpose built retirement villages, others are modernised sheltered housing schemes with extra services on site. Many offer a choice of accommodation such as flats or bungalows, for sale or rent. What all residents of extra care housing have in common is the security of owning or renting your own home, control over your finances and the peace of mind that goes with having 24-hour care and support available on site.

You may be thinking of moving or having to leave your old home because of life changes or health problems. Or you may simply be unhappy with where you are living now. If you value your independence and privacy and want control and choices in your life, think about extra care housing. To find out what is available in your area see the 'Contacts' section. See the 'Money Issues' section if you are concerned about financial matters.

*"Losing my home after my heart attack wasn't good, but I was very lonely and couldn't cope with the garden and housework. Here I get the help I need – my flat is cleaned and the washing done. I feel on top of things now."*

Iris, an extra care resident for three years

### **Howard's Story**

*"I came into extra care housing as an emergency after I had a nervous breakdown. I'd been living in a flat on my own and never saw my neighbours. I stopped eating and got very depressed. My doctor said he'd put me in a home, but I knew about this place because of visiting a friend here. I said it was the only place I would go. When I got here, I saw it as a new start and a chance to get back on my feet. At first I stayed in my flat, but I gradually felt better, I started eating and enjoying life more. Now I make my own breakfast and tea and join in social activities here and outside. I have made friends, and I feel a lot more confident now."*



## Some questions you may already be asking yourself

*I am managing on my own, but my health is not good and I want to move. Would extra care housing be suitable for me?*

Yes. Most extra care housing projects have a mix of more independent and able residents together with those who are very frail. Some will be getting a lot of care and support, others will be living independently. The accommodation will be accessible and it should be easy for you to manage.

*I own my own home, but my friend is a council tenant. Could we both move into extra care housing?*

Yes. Some schemes offer homes to buy, others offer only rented accommodation, some are a mixture of owner-occupiers and tenants.

*I already live in ordinary sheltered housing – how would extra care housing be different?*

The main difference is that care and support staff are on the premises 24 hours a day. There is also a restaurant for those who want it, social activities and other facilities. Different types of accommodation are available, and there is a mix of residents with different support needs. Your tenancy or ownership of your home is secure – you should not have to move if your needs change.

*My husband is very unwell and we get a lot of help from our family and friends. Could we move into extra care housing together?*

Yes. You and your husband can stay together and your family and friends can continue to help as before if they want to, with the added support of the extra care staff. You may make new friends too!

*My doctor has said I should go into a home. What are the advantages of extra care housing over a nursing or care home?*

Extra care housing shouldn't look or feel like an institution. You will have your own home, control over your finances, and privacy and choice about how much you mix with the other residents. The care staff will support you in looking after yourself for as long as possible, and you can keep up your usual routines and activities in the local area.

*What happens if my health gets worse while I am living in extra care housing?*

It is expected that your needs will change over time - and not always for the worse! There may be times when you need a lot of care and support, times when you need no support or a mixture of the two. The care staff should be flexible and sensitive in asking you about what you need. They cannot give you nursing care, but they will aim to support you to stay living in the same place.

*My mother has early signs of Alzheimer's disease Can she move into extra care housing?*

Possibly. Most people who develop dementia after moving into extra care can continue to be supported in their familiar home surroundings by staff and friends as before. Some extra care housing has a special wing for new residents with dementia; others mix residents with different needs across the whole scheme.

*What facilities and services are available on-site at extra care housing?*

The facilities range from restaurants and lounges to hobby rooms, shops, hairdressers and keep fit suites. Sometimes the local day centre, health services and other groups are based there, for example, a GP surgery, a district nurse or welfare benefits advice. People from the surrounding area may also come in to use the facilities and resources.

*Who is in charge of extra care housing?*

Most extra care housing projects are built and run by housing associations. Some are run by private companies or the local council. Usually, the care staff work under a contract from the local social services department. Extra care residents should be involved in making decisions on all aspects of the community they live in.

*Can I stay until I die?*

Extra care housing aims to provide you with a home for life. This may not always be possible, for example if you become a risk to yourself or others, but it is the aim.

*Is there an extra care housing scheme in my area?*

There are many extra care housing schemes throughout the country. They are very popular, often with waiting lists. For information on extra care housing in your area, contact your local council (you can get the number from your telephone directory), a Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) or Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC, see below). Your local Citizen's Advice Bureau can also give you general information about benefits, housing and financial matters



## MONEY ISSUES

### Can I afford extra care housing?

You can pay rent under a tenancy agreement, or you may be in a position to buy your home in an extra care housing scheme. Another option is to part-buy and part-rent your home (this is called 'shared ownership'). If the accommodation is provided by a housing association, the rent levels are usually regarded as 'affordable'.

Depending on your income, you may qualify for housing benefit for your rent. If you get housing benefit or income support you may also be entitled to free care and support services.

If you are thinking of moving into extra care housing it is important to find out exactly what it will cost you. You may qualify for benefits to meet all or part of the costs. Get advice and information from your citizen's advice bureau, or from the organisations listed at the end of this leaflet.

### How much does extra care housing cost?

There are three elements to the cost of extra care housing:

- the cost of buying or renting your own home
- the service charges associated with your home, for maintenance and any communal facilities
- your care and support costs

The amount you pay will vary depending on your individual situation and your income. You may have to pay for all the costs, or you may be entitled to benefits to meet some or all

Whether you already live in extra care housing or are thinking about a move, you may find that your care needs fluctuate up and down. This can mean that you need different services at different times, and as a result, your care and support costs may increase or decrease. If this happens ask for a care assessment from your local social services department. Remember to keep a regular check on your entitlement to welfare benefits.

#### **Maureens Story**

*"I was in a warden controlled bedsit. I liked it there and I could manage, but the council wanted to close it down, so I opted to come here. My best friend lives here too. I didn't want to come, but now I like it very much. They (the staff) don't feel they can just walk in. They wait to be invited....that's better. This is my own home, and I don't let just anyone in. If I want to see people I come down to the lounge and sit in this chair. I enjoy going across the road to the church every week. I still cook for myself some days, especially if I don't like what is on the menu. My son comes once a week with my shopping and we cook and eat together in my flat."*



## What do residents say about extra care housing?

“You get the extra help you need without moving” Julia

“There’s plenty to do here, and good company” Enid

“Living here means peace of mind for me and my family.... and they can stay over when they come to visit” Joan

“I see people every day, and at the end of the day I can lock my door and relax” Eileen

“I have the best of both world here. The staff remind me of things – like taking my pills - but they don’t do things for me”. Barbara

“I like being independent and I feel very secure.” Julia

## Contacts

### **Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC)**

3<sup>rd</sup> floor

89 Albert Embankment

London SE1 7TP

Advice Line: 020 7820 1343 or freephone 0800 377 7070

[www.housingcare.org](http://www.housingcare.org)

Phone EAC’s advice line for free advice and information on all aspects of housing, care and support. The website has a database of housing options, including extra care accommodation, nation-wide.

### **For more general advice and information contact:**

**FirstStop Advice: 0800 377 7070**

**Age UK Information Line: 0800 169 6565**

**Age Northern Ireland: 0808 808 7575**

**AIMS: 0800 169 6565**

An advice, information and mediation service for people living in sheltered and retirement housing.

**Alzheimer’s Society helpline: 0845 300 0336**

**Counsel & Care telephone advice line: 0845 300 7585**

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Housing Learning and Improvement Network, c/o EAC, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TP  
Tel: 020 7820 8077. Factsheets and information for providers of extra care housing.  
[www.dhcarenetworks.org.uk/housing](http://www.dhcarenetworks.org.uk/housing)