

What is Extra Care Housing?

Extra care housing (ECH) was developed to respond to three principles:

1. To promote independence
2. To empower individuals
3. To be accessible

These three key principles within extra care housing are met through:

- The provision of self contained accommodation and access to on-site care which enables individuals to live independently within the community
- Primary health care, social care and support services which come to the individual, rather than the individual being required to change accommodation in order to receive services. This puts the individual in control rather than the services.
- Purpose designed accommodation and communal areas make it easy for people with mobility problems and enable easier delivery of personal health and social care services. The provision of on-site facilities like hairdressers, restaurants, computer rooms, etc., ensures that individuals are not isolated from community events and that social activities and learning is still accessible. Extra care housing schemes create communities not just buildings of flats.

Extra care housing has been viewed increasingly as a community-based alternative to institutional residential care. However, extra care housing can also provide more multi-dimensional solutions ranging from providing an alternative to residential care to enabling individuals to age in place. There are two major underlying themes that define extra care housing:

- it is a type of housing
- there is access to on-site 24-hour, 7 day a week care and support services which are flexibly delivered according to need

This contrasts with residential care provision where residents live in a bedroom (which are now required to have en suite facilities as a result of the Guernsey Care Standards), have meals provided in a dining room, have access to lounges and televisions, and have staff on hand to provide care on a 24-hours a day, 7 days a week basis. Some residents may not require 24/7 care services, but within a residential care environment, 24/7 care services are paid for irrespective of need.

Extra care housing can take many forms:

- it could be a single building of flats
- a building of flats with community facilities
- a core-and-cluster scheme where there is a core central building from which services are managed and delivered with housing units adjacent
- remodelled residential care buildings
- remodelled tower blocks.

Extra care can also be characterised by a range of tenures from purchased units, to partial ownership units to rentals.

There are a number of characteristics which differentiate extra care housing from other forms of accommodation based care provision such as residential care homes:

- Living at home – not in a home

- Having one's own front door
- Flexible care delivered according to need, which may increase or decrease
- The opportunity to rebuild or preserve the skills required for independent living
- The provision of accessible, purpose designed buildings into which it is easy to deliver services and which can accommodate assistive technologies to enhance independent living for people with a range of needs
- The opportunity to build a community with a range of tenures and facilities and the opportunity to enhance and contribute to existing communities

Most admissions to a care home are made after an emergency or critical event such as a fall. Often, admission into a care home is made because it is perceived to be the lowest risk environment for an older person and often an older person agrees to such a placement to avoid being a burden on family and friends.

Extra care housing can offer a real alternative in such cases, providing a supported environment while at the same time enabling and promoting continued independence. Extra care housing ensures that care staff are available when needed, but that opportunities for rehabilitation and for regaining confidence are provided.

Extra care housing can also help prevent the separation of elderly married couples when an older carer can no longer cope. In residential care, generally only those that require care services are admitted, which often results in the separation of married couples. Within an extra care scheme, care and support are available when needed to support someone who needs care, but can also provide support and respite to an informal carer. Admission to extra care housing is based on the care needs of one or more persons and, because the accommodation is an independent housing unit, there is no exclusion of spouses or partners or, indeed, ageing, disabled children who meet the age criteria.

Extra care housing is also becoming more and more popular as a solution to providing specialist care in community locations. People with dementia and people with learning disabilities can often be accommodated and supported to live independently within an extra care setting where there is 24-hour, 7 day a week care and support, access to assistive technologies¹ and the ability to design built form with sensitivity to specialist needs.

Very generally, extra care housing is characterised by:

- An on-site care manager and care team delivering personal care and support on a 24-hour-7-day-a-week basis
- Buildings and flats which are accessible and specially designed to meet older people's and people with a disabilities current and future personal care needs
- A range of on-site communal facilities like hairdressers, restaurants, computer rooms, exercise rooms, lounges, etc.
- The ability to deliver flexible care to people
- Possibly a location for additional day services, outreach clinics such as chiropody, physiotherapy, etc.

¹ Assistive Technology is an umbrella term for any device or system that allows individuals to perform tasks they would otherwise be unable to do or increases the ease and safety with which tasks can be performed with the general aim to increase or maintain independence

The kind of care services delivered into extra care schemes can only be undertaken by trained domiciliary care workers – similar to HSSD’s Senior Carer service. Personal care services might include:

- Helping someone to get dressed or undressed
- Helping to feed someone if they can’t manage themselves
- Washing/bathing someone who can’t manage alone
- Toileting
- Assisting with medication

For more information on extra care housing please contact the Housing Department on tel: 717190 or e-mail: housing.extracare@gov.gg