

Kent Housing Group Extra Care Workshop

Wednesday 22nd September 10:00-12:00, MSTeams

Summary of questions/comments raised during the opening presentations:

Are there ways to link care in the Extra Care schemes to a wider care base in the locality to lower the cost of care provision?

More focus needs to be put on the social side of Extra Care as well, the benefits that can bring to individuals and their wellbeing

Use of dining areas, communal areas could be offered to the wider community - communal areas etc. in many EC schemes I've visited seem to be underused?

Are there opportunities to open EC to younger people with complex housing/care needs?

What is the awareness of ECH schemes amongst KCC teams? *The development of a shared vision/documentation to be communicated out across all stakeholders will help to address knowledge gaps.*

Flexibility within legal agreements to allow people to move into districts to be closer to family support may help remove barriers/voids.

Setting up joint regular panels very early on in the process can help to 'fill' schemes on completion.

A shared vision of what extra care housing is for Kent could be beneficial

Summary of the Healthwatch information on Extra Care to be circulated to the attendees.

Collaborative mission statement to be developed around tenure types for developers.

Working subgroups to be developed to work through the issues of extra care across Kent.

Sharon Williams and Simon Thomas to meet with each other and plan next steps.

Sharon Williams and Anya Harris to also meet and discuss next steps.

Breakout sessions Summary:

Room 1- Market Conditions and Demand

Ongoing concerns around voids and the length of time taken to getting lettings agreed. This has increased during the Covid 19 pandemic.

What will the impacts of 'no job no job' be on the homecare market and how will this effect Extra Care.

Requirement for consistent information around the value of Extra Care Housing and identifying the barriers such as affordability and location.

Task and finish group proposed to look at the issues in detail with a range of stakeholders

The decommissioning of existing historic sheltered housing stock was discussed as expectations for this type of provision has changed. Has this been factored into the single forecasting system?

Challenges over funding for extra care- cost per square meter is significantly higher than general housing and so Homes England grants and bridging loans required to increase confidence in scheme builds.

Could we work better with health to realise the savings created in the system by utilising Extra Care and preventing admissions etc.

Intergenerational housing schemes discussed e.g., Ebbsfleet Garden City and Riverside, Hull. Are there opportunities for this within Kent?

Shared ambition in terms to be developed of the need for Extra Care- 2014 district needs assessments would be a good place to start with a shared approach.

Room 2- Marketing Extra Care

Proposal for the development of 2 documents to outline what Extra Care is- one for prospective residents/families and one for professionals.

Standard description of what Extra Care is for use on Housing Registers and ensuring that staff within housing options teams are aware of Extra Care and the eligibility criteria.

Standard advertisement to be used by all district councils, on the Kent Home choice

Developing videos of a vacant flat, communal areas and gardens at the extra care schemes for prospective tenants to be able to view prior to application.

Room 3- Strategy and Policy

There were two broad issue that the group discussed:

Planning Policy

There is an ongoing debate over which planning use class extra care falls i.e., whether it is Class C3 (dwellings) C2 (residential institutions). Many planning authorities take the view that Extra Care falls within C3, as its main purpose is residential accommodation and not necessarily the level of care that would be typical of residential institutions such as care or nursing homes.

Planning appeal decisions are mixed; however, Inspectors have taken the view that the uses can be considered to fall within class C2 if a section 106 restriction is imposed to require all occupants to be in receipt of care. The implication is that without such a restriction the use would in fact be C3.

As a C2 use there will not be any requirement for affordable housing to be delivered through section 106 agreements and the scheme could be 100% market housing. Also, CIL or other community contributions would not generally be payable.

During the discussion the implications for affordable housing providers who rely upon a Homes England grant was discussed. Given that affordable housing that is secured through 106 does not attract grant (as it would duplicate the subsidy that the developer is effectively making to deliver s106 affordable housing) there is a benefit in extra care homes being defined as falling within class C2 as 100% of the development can attract Homes England grant.

Housing Policy

There is a need to define precisely what Extra Care Housing as it is widely misunderstood.

There was much discussion about the need to fully understand the need for and the affordability issues that Extra Care can create, as opposed to other forms of housing such as what might broadly and traditionally be described as 'sheltered housing'.

There is the need to drill down to understand the actual need for extra care alongside other types of housing. In the earlier presentation by Steve and Anya, there appeared to be evidence in some EC schemes of occupiers not wanting to pay the costs of the range of services that were provided for EC tenants. This was further evidenced by the fact that in some cases there is a difficulty in letting EC housing and consequently relatively high levels of voids in such schemes.

An example was given in the group of where a sheltered housing scheme had been upgraded to include additional services such as laundry, but it turned out that tenants did not value those additional services and were happy when they, along with the additional service charges were stopped.

There was concern that funding is directed at EC housing at the expense of upgrading older sheltered or non-EC housing - but is that really addressing the actual needs.

Is there a tension created by the push to deliver EC units with grants being targeted at such schemes and allocations policies that match people with EC schemes which they might not need or that they cannot afford, which means that other non-EC, for which there might be equal or greater need is not being provided?