The future of sheltered housing in Wales

Report to Older People’s Advisory Group

1. This paper has been put together by officers from the Welsh Local Government Association, the Welsh Federation of Housing Associations, the Chartered Institute of Housing in Wales and Care and Repair Cymru. Other organisations with a particular interest in older people’s housing were also consulted on the first draft. The views and ideas of the following organisations have been incorporated into the final version: Age Concern Cymru, Help the Aged, Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Project, Wales Pensioners and the National Old Age Pensioners Association of Wales.

2. The original intention was to focus on sheltered housing because of our concerns about the lack of any real debate or vision in Wales up to now about the future of this important resource. However, it became apparent during our discussions that it makes little sense to consider the future of sheltered housing in isolation from the wider debate about the priorities and strategies for meeting older people’s housing needs in general. Sheltered housing should be seen as one option within a spectrum of investment and service development which can maximise the contribution of housing to:

- Improve older people’s health and well being;
- reduce their risk of hospitalisation or need for longer term support or care;
- improve their participation and reduce the risk of social exclusion too often associated with ageing.

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Background

What do older people want from their housing?

1. Recent research suggests that the priorities are for a home of their own which promotes:

   - Independence (transport is seen as important as housing in this respect)
   - Security (from fear of crime and being unable to manage alone)
   - A sense of community (e.g. interaction with neighbours)
   - Social and economic participation (to go shopping and use social/leisure facilities)
   - Quality (the physical state of the home was more important than tenure, size or design - with drafts, damp and defects causing particular dissatisfaction)

Is there a future for sheltered housing?

1. Sheltered housing still comprises a significant proportion of the social housing stock – in 1998 there were estimated to be 450,000 units with on site wardens in the UK, which represented 11% of council stock and 21% of registered social landlord’s properties on average.
2. However, a view has developed in recent years that sheltered housing is unpopular, that it has contributed to the social exclusion of older people and its time has gone. How true is this? Older people do want their own self contained accommodation which means that the old style bedsits and communal facilities provided by sheltered housing are now unpopular. But the evidence suggests that more modern models of "sheltered" housing remain in high demand, see Annex 1. Many Welsh local authorities and registered Social landlords (RSLs) have waiting lists for their sheltered housing. Research from Scotland also suggests a high level of satisfaction (75%) amongst sheltered housing tenants compared with those living in other forms of accommodation.

3. In common with Berryhill (see Annex 1), there has been demand for retirement flats and villages being built privately for owner occupation in many parts of Wales. These trends suggests that many older people with the financial capacity to do so are opting to move into such housing when it offers the right facilities and environment. What can we learn from this trend? Would other older people make the same choice if they had the means? What is it about these more popular forms of "sheltered" housing that make them attractive enough for it to be seen as worthwhile to move. What has to be in place for other older people to want to take advantage of the opportunity to move to more manageable and comfortable accommodation with company from their peer group and greater security? How much does thermal efficiency and the ability to achieve affordable warmth influence older people’s housing choices or contribute to reducing inequalities?

**Getting the balance right**

4. Research in the 1980s and 1990s showed that the majority of older people want to stay put in their own homes as they age and this has rightly led to greater emphasis in public policy and investment in Lifetime Homes and schemes such as Care and Repair. The main challenge for public policy should be to assist people to stay put for as long as they want to do so. In reality, the overwhelming majority of older people do remain at home throughout their lives without requiring care services and it is important that the priorities for housing policy and investment should reflect the needs of these older people as well as those requiring care or regular support services.

5. Equally, in supporting the principle that older people have a right to stay put, we must not ignore the fact that the price of this decision for many of them is:

- increasing social isolation and exclusion;
- a deteriorating physical environment; and
- only being offered or able to consider an alternative at the stage when residential or nursing care is the only realistic option.
1. The reality is that most owner occupiers in Wales have had no alternatives to staying put. They are often penalised by local authority and RSL point systems and it is likely that the majority of sheltered housing tenants are former council tenants who have transferred as they got older. A more equitable and innovative approach to public policy and investment in meeting older people’s housing needs should:

- Reflect the different needs and circumstances amongst older people and increase the choices available to them, regardless of their current tenure; and
- Seek to achieve an appropriate and more equitable balance between investing in preventative action, including improving older people’s housing conditions; breaking down social isolation and developing local support networks and the provision of appropriate services for those who need more formal support or care.

1. When people do need support or care as they get older, it is important that public policy should not assume there is only one solution to meeting these needs for appropriate housing and support. What is best for one older person will not be right for another. Access to social networks, transport, shops and whether we live in rural or urban areas will be hugely influential in determining what is the best option in each case. A criticism of sheltered housing has been that it creates "ghettos" isolating older people with their peer group and separating them from the wider community. An important challenge for future policy will be to get the balance right between investing in options that allow older people to stay put, develop strong inter-generational links and culturally diverse communities while also making provision for those older people who do want to move into "retirement housing" with other people of their own age group.

2. One group whose needs are often overlooked are older people from black and minority ethnic groups. Any research on sheltered housing (or we suggesting this?) and a strategic approach to older people’s housing needs must consider which options are best suited to meeting the needs of black and minority ethnic older people in Wales (a v. minor point – could we switch the sentence round to say ‘An A y strategic approach to meeting older peoples’ housing needs must consider which options are best suited to meeting the needs of black and minority ethnic older people……BME older people in different parts of Wales. There are successful models in other parts of the UK from which we can learn.

Promoting choice and respecting culture and aspirations

3. It therefore follows that older people need a range of options and choices in order to make the right decision at each stage in their lives and as their needs change. If the current pattern of housing and support services does not fit the bill, we have to ask what options can be developed which can enhance older people’s lives and their ability to make positive choices rather than constricting them. In "Home Alone". The Audit
Commission argued that:

"Sheltered housing must reinvent itself as provision for older people who prefer the presence of a supportive community or it must rethink the levels of need it is able to support. If it does not it will face serious questions about its relevance in a system which can deliver high levels of support in ordinary housing".

4. It is particularly important that if older people have to contemplate a move from their existing home, that the available options should not deprive them of facilities or other essential aspects of their cultural identity and current lifestyle. Too often a move to older person's housing or residential care requires them to give up too much of their independence, possessions, privacy and previous way of life.

5. It is hardly surprising that many older people are reluctant to make the move to retirement housing if they have to give up so much of what they hold dear and risk being isolated from existing family and friends. It should therefore be a priority to develop a range of housing options that permit people to retain things and aspects of their lifestyle that are precious to them, particularly when this links to their religious observances or cultural heritage. As a minimum, wherever older people live, they should have the right to continue whatever cultural, spiritual and religious practices are important to them and public policy should ensure that such arrangements are available and in place.

6. One example of how we expect older people to make do with a much more limited lifestyle is the assumption, when designing sheltered or retirement housing, that older people need just a small single bedroom and a small living room. Housing benefit ceilings exacerbate this problem by financially penalising tenants whose homes are considered "unreasonably" large. Far more flexibility is therefore required in housing benefit legislation and in the cost and space guidelines for social housing for older people if those who want to have two bedrooms and a large enough home to maintain a social life and have relatives to stay are to be able to do so. This is often a big issue for black and minority ethnic elders but must also be of equal concern to many other older people. In the longer term, older people who occupy two bedded accommodation and who subsequently develop care needs are also better placed to stay put and have the option for a relative, friend or paid carer to stay regularly or move in with them. The option of a home large enough to maintain a reasonable social life and appropriate relationships should not be seen as a luxury and should be possible for everyone as they get older, not just those who have enough capital to buy larger and better facilities.

**Rural issues**

7. There are particular challenges in getting an appropriate range of options for older people in rural Wales. Housing issues are, in general, no different to those experienced elsewhere but they are exacerbated by questions of location and sustainability. For
instance, the kind of older people’s "villages” described in Annex 1 may be difficult to sustain in sparsely populated areas. We need to know more about whether "sheltered housing" is a sustainable model in rural areas, where the catchment area for one project may have to be quite large. What schemes currently exist and how appropriate and viable are they? How far is it reasonable to expect older people to move in order to access sheltered housing when the transport links to their relatives and previous communities are so poor? Are there better alternatives?

8. There is a view that the time has come in rural areas to dissociate the concept of sheltered accommodation from the requirement to cluster together a number of homes within a common boundary served by communal facilities. There is a need for a wider dispersed model, for instance some kind of ‘hub and spokes concept’, where services can be accessed as and when required. However, such an approach should not be used as an attempt to transform housing, which is unsuitable because its location, condition or facilities, into an acceptable option through the input of domiciliary care or providing transport to a day centre.

9. In considering a range of options for supporting older people, particularly in rural areas, we must also not forget the part which investment in community facilities in real villages can achieve in creating the kind of mutual support and activities described for retirement "villages” such as Berry Hill in paragraph 31 and Annex 1. Many older people in villages are able to stay in their own homes and lead reasonably active lives because there has been investment, both through public funds and voluntary action, to develop a similar range of facilities, regular social activity as well as strong inter-generational links and support. In this context, increasing older people’s access to public buildings and facilities, such as schools and IT training, not only provides meeting spaces and skill development but can also breaks down social isolation and build inter-generational learning and relationships.

**Action required**

**Principles**

10. The Audit Commission report "Home Alone" published in 1997 identified that none of the authorities visited had a clear vision of the future role of sheltered housing. In England a major debate about the future of sheltered housing has been initiated by EROSH – a consortium of 160 agencies working in the field.

11. This paper proposes that a similar debate is needed in Wales to consider what are the best ways to respond to older people’s housing needs in general, and to agree a clear
national framework and priorities specifically for meeting older people’s accommodation and support needs. The future of sheltered housing should be considered in this context and decisions taken on its as part of the spectrum of services and investment which older people may need.

12. This debate should start from the principles that housing options for older people must:

- Be flexible enough to promote independence, choice and privacy while offering the support, care and sense of security which older people need

- Shift the emphasis of public policy towards investment that aims to enhance older people’s lives and not just to protect them from risk

- Treat older people as a valuable resource

- Contribute towards a reduction in inequality and social exclusion amongst older people

- Respect and promote older people’s rights to maintain their cultural and religious identity and practices and allow them to retain as many of their possessions, previous lifestyle and social life as possible, particularly when they move into accommodation that offers support services

- Contribute to promoting healthy, active and enriched lives for older people designed to increase their participation and ability to play an active part in their local community, rather than isolating them from that community

- Be designed to increase their participation in the running and management of the facilities and services provided as part of their housing package

- Increase individual tenant’s choice about which elements of a tenancy package to accept, particularly when this includes care and support

- Be relevant to those who are approaching pension age and must not be focused exclusively on the needs and aspirations of those aged over 60 or wait until they have care needs

**An innovative approach to funding**

1. Investment strategies in relation to sheltered housing should:
• reflect the principles outlined above and be consistent with the agreed priorities for meeting older people’s housing needs;
• promote affordability in meeting support services as well as accommodation costs and
• be equitable and flexible in responding to the housing needs and problems of all older people, regardless of what tenure they currently occupy, and whether or not they have access to assets that allow them to meet their changing support or accommodation requirements

1. An innovative approach to funding must recognise the huge and growing inequalities in income and wealth between older people and the social exclusion that too often accompanies age. It should be a central tenet of a revised approach to public investment in housing to seek to reduce such inequalities and to promote much greater social inclusion, better links between generations and greater cultural diversity within communities, while also making provision for those older people who wish to live in "retirement housing" with others of their own generation.

2. The publication of the Assembly’s housing framework and strategy, together with the commitment to develop a strategy for older people in Wales, have been widely welcomed. These moves have, at the same time, raised expectations that a wider range of options will become available that promote more choices and improve wellbeing, rights and independence as we age. The proposals in this paper go some way to creating the right framework from which to achieve such aspirations. But they will be no more than aspirational unless they Assembly is prepared to invest far more in housing renewal, repair and support services than it has been willing to do since devolution. To a high degree, the credibility of the Older People’s Strategy will depend on the extent to which the Assembly is prepared to invest in improving housing conditions and support services for older people and to ensure that appropriate care and support which does not undermine our independence or potential is available, as we get older.

The impact of Supporting People

3. In April 2003, housing benefit payments towards certain service charges and costs in sheltered housing will cease. Instead, local authorities will become responsible for funding these costs in both the RSL and council sectors. It remains unclear exactly how the new arrangements will work in Wales and this continuing uncertainty is likely to have impacted on Welsh funders’ and providers’ willingness to invest in new forms of supported housing, including sheltered housing.

4. The other factor which may affect the future viability of supported and sheltered housing is whether landlords will have to recover the costs of support services through higher service charges as a result of Supporting People. There is a real risk that the future shape and availability of sheltered housing is being determined by inertia and assumptions about how Supporting People will operate rather than being informed by any clear vision about the future role of such housing in meeting older people’s needs.
5. It is some time now since there has been any consultation from the Assembly on the implementation arrangements for Supporting People in 2003. It is therefore proposed that the Older People’s Steering Group should ask the Assembly for a report which:

- outlines the arrangements that will have to be in place by April 2003 and what progress is being made to develop these new requirements; and

- provides an evaluation of the impact of the Supporting People reforms on both providers and residents in sheltered housing, given the principles and approaches proposed in this report

Mapping needs and provision

1. Too often housing providers have little knowledge of what other providers and funders of older people’s housing are doing, even within one tenure in the same local authority area. There needs to be much greater investment in information sharing and mapping at both national and local level to ensure a more strategic local approach to:

- the development of housing options across tenures,

- prioritising investment

- allocation policies; and

- the relationship between sheltered and very sheltered housing.

1. At a local level, local authorities and registered social landlords should build such assessments of housing needs into their Best Value review processes and actively engage their local communities in determining what types of housing are likely to be needed, by whom and in what form over a reasonable period. This mapping should take account of existing local provision as well as the needs and aspirations of older people locally.

2. One of the challenges is not only to assess needs amongst the current population of older people but also to identify how the needs, values and aspirations of the 50+ age group should influence the development of new options. There are particular considerations in relation to some black and minority groups where it can be difficult to predict how many of them intend to move to warmer climates or closer to relatives in other countries when they retire and how many will actually do so when the time comes.

3. Given the importance of mapping needs and provision, the Assembly’s decision to commission research into the need for sheltered housing in Wales was very welcome.
However, little progress appears to have been made with this work since the commitment was published and the Strategy Group is therefore asked to:

- seek a progress report and clarification on the timetable for completing this research;
- agree the terms of reference for the research; and
- propose that it must identify the issues and questions raised in this paper in relation to:
  - future demand for sheltered housing for rural areas (paras 3 and 4)
  - black and minority ethnic older people (para 7)
  - rural issues (paras 14-16)
  - the implications from the Supporting People changes (para 23-24)
  - the lessons from European models for older people’s housing would be appropriate in Wales (para 36)
  - the lessons from the "extra care" pilots (para 39)

**Investing in cultural change**

1. A huge shift in attitudes and approaches is required, similar to that which underpinned the Welsh "mental handicap strategy", if we are to develop forms of sheltered housing which represent a positive choice for older people. A new vision— and title — is required which gets away from the image of traditional sheltered housing and offers new models for working with older people in ways that fit how they want to lead their lives as they age. It would, for instance, be helpful to come up with a new name which reflects the kind of vision and principles set out in para 19 for the kind of provision that has traditionally be known as sheltered housing. The equivalent in the private sector for owner occupiers is usually called "retirement housing."

2. Some of the characteristics of the Berryhill scheme (see Annex 1) which contribute to older people’s sense of independence and participation are:

- The provision of shops, bars and other "normal" social facilities in close proximity to the housing
- Support packages which aim to promote more positive lifestyles through activity based
support, tailored to the individual resident’s needs

- Older people being involved in running and maintaining facilities and services, as well as deciding what happens in the community in which they live

- Support staff being actively involved in facilitating links between the residents and the local community

- Relatives and friends being actively encouraged to visit and take part in the village activities

- Flexible tenures which give residents a stake in their homes and their community.

- Physical and environmental design to be as much like "ordinary" housing as possible, including street names, while ensuring privacy, security and communal facilities. Wasn’t there something about using names such as ‘avenues’/’streets’ also?

1. One factor to be taken into account, particularly where the housing package includes care or support is whether individual residents should have more say over the provision and timing of different services. A new approach to sheltered housing, consistent with the principles in paragraph 19, ought to include the requirement to charge individually for accommodation, living costs, care and support with residents having some choice over how many of these services they received. There is no doubt that, particularly as older people become less able, such an approach will be very challenging to sustain, given current social attitudes to risk taking and vulnerability.

2. In addition, there seem to be anomalies between between how tenants and owner occupiers in mixed tenure schemes like Berry Hill are expected to contribute towards their support and care costs. This requires greater scrutiny and policies in Wales should seek to avoid creating inequities between different residents in the same project or community.

Harnessing technology

3. The growth of technological solutions is already transforming the options available to assist older people to maintain their independence and privacy while having assistance at hand when they need it. The changing relationship between alarm systems and warden services in recent years is a good example of this. It is essential that the planning and design of future housing options for older people harness the potential of the available technology and take account of developments in the pipeline. For instance, technological advances have made the kind of dispersed model described in paragraph 9 a real possibility.
4. Similarly, systems for ensuring high levels of thermal efficiency and affordable warmth have a critical part to play in allowing many older people to stay put and remain in reasonable health.

**Learning from Europe**

5. In many European countries, notably the Netherlands and France, there have for a number of years been more participative models for older people’s housing, which includes access for younger residents (those over 40 or 50 in some cases). It would therefore, in devising both a vision and implementation strategy for Wales, be useful to find out more about the different European options and models, including co-operatives, and what lessons have been learnt from the relatively long existence of such schemes in other countries.

**The role of very sheltered housing**

6. Most of the growth in sheltered housing has been to develop "very sheltered" schemes as an alternative to residential care. Joseph Rowntree Foundation Research has found that older people in these kind of schemes have higher disposable incomes and more choice and control over their lives than their counterparts in residential care. However, the focus on admission criteria relating to "dependency" levels can undermine the independent living philosophy and the creation of an active community. The research also suggests that current funding and registration criteria create too rigid boundaries which still result in residents losing most of their income and independence if they live in a registered home.

7. There are concerns that the new Care Standards registration regime may exacerbate this problem by making it more likely that much sheltered housing will become subject to registration requirements. The Older People’s Strategy Group is asked to agree that the Assembly should take this matter up with the UK government and seek a change to primary legislation to ensure that even if sheltered housing becomes subject to registration requirements, people on benefits should retain entitlement to housing benefits and enough disposable income to maintain a social life and have some choice about how they spend their money.

8. In Wales, a number of pilots were introduced to determine whether it was possible to provide "frail" elderly people with sheltered housing and additional care to prevent them being forced into more intensive and institutional residential care. It is important that the evaluation of these projects is more widely disseminated and the lessons learnt. There is a need at both national and local level for greater understanding and clarity in distinguishing between the contribution of sheltered, very sheltered and residential care
models and what that should mean for future funding strategies and priorities.

**Better local co-ordination of services**

"Care packages count for nothing without good housing, and the best housing is of no value without appropriate care"

*Quote from a Joint Housing and Community Care Strategy*

9. "Home Alone" in 1998 described the housing dimension of community care as the ‘junior partner’ in terms of resources and number of people devoted to it, compared with health authorities and social services departments. While there has been more joint working between social services and local NHS services in recent years, there is far less evidence of the kind of seamless approach between housing and care services being taken in the quote above, despite the creation of unitary authorities and joint housing and social services departments in several parts of Wales. Better co-ordination between all local services and across tenures is required if we are to provide more appropriate and cost effective solutions to older people’s needs for adequate housing and support in the future.

10. The importance of housing and housing services, not only to community care objectives, but also to the Assembly’s aim to shift the focus of the NHS from acute care to health improvement, has begun to be recognised. But there must be much greater practical expression of this recognition in the setting of en the Assembly’s investment priorities and how it funds local authorities and RSLs to deliver housing and support to tenants. The role of housing, particularly appropriate sheltered housing, in reducing demands on both social services and acute NHS services – primary, community nursing and hospital care – must be better recognised in local and national funding strategies.

11. Not only is a higher level of investment by the Assembly required but also greater awareness amongst local commissioners of acute health care services of the long term benefits to their budgets from funding projects that improve housing conditions and provide timely, preventative intervention. In this context the Cornwall Intervention Study (April 2000) showed that the NHS achieved net savings, from reduced demand for NHS services, when it paid for the costs of housing improvements for older people. This study was considered controversial and was opposed by some members of the Local Medical Committee as it diverted NHS funding into an intervention study that had no published data supporting its effectiveness "it is more important that every penny possible is spent on the acute trusts where there is a sever shortage of funds and beds". The results however are striking and when an economic analysis of the interpretation was undertaken it showed not only a net overall benefit, but also a specific one to the NHS. It should be noted that the overall savings to the NHS also of £488.15 exceed the annual cost of the housing improvements. Some Local Health
Groups in Wales have now started to fund Care and Repair schemes in recognition of this correlation. However, ways must be found to lever more NHS funding into a range of housing services if we are to significantly reduce demand for NHS services and bridge the substantial gap between older people’s needs, their housing conditions and the type of support required to help them stay put and avoid hospitalisation.

Summary of Recommendations

National action

A vision for the future and a national framework

12. A national debate is required about the options for meeting older people’s housing needs and what part "sheltered" housing should play in the future. Any consideration of sheltered housing should start from the principle of promoting independence and participation rather than treating older people as passive and dependent users of services and support.

13. A national framework should be agreed for addressing older people’s housing needs, investing in innovation and achieving cultural change based on the principles in paragraph 19. The framework and the Assembly’s commitment to future housing investment should be underpinned by:

- a recognition of the role of housing, and associated support services, in reducing inequalities and promoting social inclusion amongst older people
- a strong vision for the future role of sheltered housing
- an evaluation of different models for providing sheltered housing, including mixed tenure, which promote independence, choice and participation
- clarity about the relationship between sheltered housing, very sheltered housing and residential care in meeting older people’s needs for accommodation which includes support or care services
- a commitment to respect cultural diversity and assist older people to retain essential aspects of their cultural and religious identity and previous way of life when they have to move into retirement housing or residential care

Funding issues
1. An innovative approach to funding is required to achieve greater flexibility and equity in national policy. This should include:

- Substantial additional investment by the National Assembly to improve older people’s housing conditions and develop a wider range of appropriate housing with support services (para 22)

- Greater flexibility in the setting of benefit rules and space and cost guidelines to give older people more choice over the size of accommodation that is appropriate to their needs and which allows them to maintain regular contact with family and friends. (para 13)

1. This paper also proposes a new approach to charging for sheltered housing and retirement villages which would give residents more say over which elements of the support and care package they will receive and which avoids inequities in how people are charged for services depending upon their tenure (para 32).

2. The Assembly should seek a commitment from the UK government to revisit the relationship between registration under the Care Standards Act and benefit entitlement so that residents in sheltered accommodation and retirement villages who receive some care and support services can still retain the same benefit entitlement as someone living in "ordinary" housing in the community who gets similar services (para 37).

Mapping needs and provision

3. The Assembly’s commitment to undertake national research regarding the future of sheltered housing is very welcome (para 29). However, the Older People’s Steering Group is asked to:

- Seek a progress report and clarification on the timetable for this research

- Propose the terms of reference for this research including a focus on the questions and issues raised in this paper, in particular:

  - in relation to the future of sheltered housing in general (para 3 and 4)

  - an evaluation of the needs of black and ethnic minority older people and appropriate models for meeting their needs (para 7)

  - the issues for older people in rural Wales (para 9 – 11)

  - an evaluation of the impact of the Supporting People changes (see paras 23-24)
lessons from European models of older people’s housing (para 36) and the Welsh Extra Care pilots as an alternative to residential care (para 37)

Local action

1. As well as the national survey, local authorities and registered social landlords should undertake detailed mapping of existing provision in all tenures and an accurate assessment of older people’s needs for housing, including sheltered housing, as part of their Best Value review processes (para 27).

2. Each local authority, in consultation with the public and other local stakeholders, including housing providers, should develop a local strategy for meeting older people’s housing needs which:

   - Is based on identified housing needs that exist locally amongst older people
   
   - has a clear vision for the future role of sheltered housing and its relationship to other forms of accommodation and care
   
   - addresses the needs of older owner occupiers; those from black and minority ethnic groups and those who need high levels of care or supervision.

1. Much closer co-operation is required between the different local players, particularly local authority departments, such as housing and social services, registered social landlords, the NHS, the voluntary sector, Care and Repair Cymru in assessing and meeting needs for appropriate housing and support services for older people, determining funding priorities, developing a range of flexible options and ensuring the most effective use of the available resources.

ANNEX 1 Berryhill Retirement Village – A model for good practice?

1. The Berryhill Retirement Village in Stoke-on-Trent (www.berryhillvillage. freeserve.co.uk) is one of the first purpose-built communities for older people in the UK. It is the result of collaboration between Touchstone ExtraCare and the local authority. It attempts to meet the challenge of bringing together housing and care within a philosophy of promoting life-affirming alternatives to the traditional residential care home model. Based on research into American and European models of continuing community care, it aims to:
• provide security,
• provide the opportunity to remain active in a neighbourly community where personal achievement is actively encouraged,
• add life to years, rather than years to life
• enable residents to achieve personal goals and
• empower residents by promoting user choice, control and involvement.

1. The village has 150 units of self contained accommodation – one and two bedroomed flats - on three levels. All rooms are connected with life-line alarms, Five levels of support are provided with category 0 providing access to staff on an emergency level; 1 is the equivalent of home help; 2 is equivalent to low level residential care and 3-5 are equivalent to nursing care.

2. The accommodation is arranged on streets with each resident having their own front door. Security is achieved by having access points connecting each street. Visitors are unable to pass beyond these points without the permission of the resident they are visiting. An intercom and televised picture operates in each flat.

3. Other facilities include:

- a village hall,
- craft room,
- woodwork room,
- health and fitness suite,
- library,
- bar and lounge,
- restaurant,
- IT studio
- social club,
- greenhouse,
- Grocery and other shops.
- Hairdresser

1. Residents run and maintain many of the facilities on a volunteer not-for-profit basis. External contacts have been made with schools and volunteers from the village help pupils with reading. The health and fitness suite is open to residents’ families.

2. The Berryhill development cost £15million. Capital funding, includes 37% private finance, as well as local authority, housing corporation and charitable funding. ExtraCare are currently developing a much larger village near Warrington – 350 units for up to 400 people at a cost of £20m. At the pre-launch consultation, 340 units were reserved immediately and there is currently a waiting list of 1,000. The new development is mixed tenure, with some units available for purchase, either outright or through shared equity, and a proportion of properties for rent.