

The face of supported housing has changed in the last ten years

We are all aware that our population is aging fast and that care for the older generation is becoming a more important issue. 16% of the UK population is over 65 and the number of people over 85 has risen to 1.2 million. In Cumbria this issue is of particular importance as 26% of our population is over 60, compared to the national average of 21%, coupled with the county's higher life expectancy, we are facing a much older generation in the future.

In the last decade, Eden Housing Association (EHA) has taken their supported housing service to another level; continually improving the facilities and support for older Cumbrian residents in supported housing. This has been noted by other Associations who have approached us to learn more.



Carlisle Housing Association staff join Eden Housing Association for training and to share best practice

Val Martin, Supported Housing Manager for EHA has been with the organisation since it began 10 years ago. In 2002 Supported Housing became a dedicated function allowing Val and her team to concentrate on supporting older residents to access the right kind of care at the right time.

“We have a person centred approach to the provision of services which is agreed with individuals through effective support planning. It is important that they maintain their independence, still have choice and are included and involved as much as they want to be.”

EHA's ethos has always been one of consultation and involvement and it was our teamwork with residents that helped identify ways to make the most of resident's personal support plans, clearly focused on their real needs. A consultation group also identified new ways to provide support for older residents living in the community. Today the team operates a system of flexible hours and has introduced mobile Supported Housing Officers who deliver over 150 hours support in the community per month.

Now streamlined, consolidated and refocused, EHA has managed to significantly reduce the cost of personal support paid by residents. Each year since 2004 cost reductions have been realised, resulting in an overall reduction of £7.90/week – a remarkable achievement when inflation averaged 3.3% increase in the same period.

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EHA has also achieved the only national accreditation in the field of Sheltered Housing - awarded for Professional Excellence. Having evidenced best practice for six core objectives including service delivery, needs assessment & support planning, Level B on the Quality Assessment Framework for Supporting People has also been achieved.

In 2006 Cumbria Supporting People identified EHA's record keeping and support planning as an example of good practice. This led to an approach by Carlisle Housing Association for training and the opportunity to share (to share) best practice. John Little from Carlisle Housing Association summed up the training by saying, "the joint training event was a very worthwhile venture from which our staff derived a great deal of benefit and it shows that co-operation of partnership between organisations can deliver good working practices to the benefit of all tenants."

Over the last 5 years EHA has remodelled and refurbished two Sheltered Housing Schemes. Where shared facilities were once the norm, modern living demands more privacy and shared bathroom facilities are no longer acceptable and there was low demand for these sheltered homes. Major remodelling was carried out at Rampkin House and Sim Court to create fully self-contained one and two bedroom flats and improved communal facilities. The other sheltered schemes have also been enhanced and the Association is currently bidding for grant funding from the Housing Corporation to make greater improvements.

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Paul Davies, Chief Executive summed up the last decade by saying "In the last ten years the changes made by our Supported Housing team have significantly improved the quality of life for our older Sheltered Housing residents as well as the lives of the older & younger vulnerable tenants living in the community. In the coming years we have plans to develop our facilities even more. We are building inter generational links within our communities and have also introduced our "Silver Surfers" to ICT. These types of initiative are a result of direct involvement with our residents – something that will remain at the heart of our development plans in the future."

If you need more information regarding this press release please contact Val Martin, Supported Housing Manager, Eden Housing Association on 01768 861 412 or email val.martin@edenha.org.uk

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Notes to the editor:

This year, Eden Housing Association celebrates its tenth anniversary. We are an established Registered Social Landlord providing over 1500 homes for affordable rental in the Cumbria districts of Eden, rural Carlisle and Allerdale. We provide a range of accommodation and services to meet the needs of young single persons, couples, families, older persons and the homeless, including specialist provision with support.

16% of the UK population is over 65 and the number of people over 85 has risen to 1.2 million. It is estimated that by 2031 3.8% of the UK population will be over 85.

The post WW1 baby boom and longer life expectancy is one of the main reasons for the recent lift in the over 85's – a trend that is set to continue as the post WW2 and 1960's baby boomers get older.

In Cumbria this issue is of particular importance as 26% of our population is over 60, compared to the national average of 21%, coupled with the county's higher life expectancy, we are facing a much older generation in the future.

The **Supporting People** programme delivers high quality and strategically planned housing-related services which are cost effective and reliable, and complement existing care services. The planning and development of services will be needs led. Supporting People is a working partnership of local government, service users and support agencies.

*Office of National statistics RPI calculator for rate of inflation 30 month average Aug 07.

Personal support charges
2004/5 – reduced by £2.50
2005/6 – reduced by £4.00
2006/7 – reduced by £1.40

