

Supported housing options for older people

**A guide to the options available
including sheltered housing, the
community alarm services and
home care**



NORWICH
City Council

This leaflet explains the supported living options available to older people.

It contains information for those wishing to stay in their existing home and for those considering a move to a sheltered housing scheme.

There are different options and help available depending on your current situation. This leaflet contains details of these options and key contact information.

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A. Sheltered housing schemes

Managed by Norwich City Council and housing associations

What is sheltered housing?

Sheltered housing consists of properties especially designed and built for people who are able to live independent lives, but who would benefit from additional security and housing related support.

The sheltered housing accommodation that we offer is a mixture of one and two bedroom bungalows and flats located within the city boundaries. There are currently 28 local authority schemes to choose from and these are listed in more detail in the 'Sheltered housing scheme facilities guide' leaflet. Norwich City Council also has nomination rights to some sheltered housing schemes managed by housing associations, details of which can also be found in the 'Sheltered housing scheme facilities guide'. Services offered by other sheltered housing providers may vary from those detailed below.

All sheltered housing properties are fitted with an alarm system that will enable you to contact help in an emergency, 24 hours a day (please see Section B). A scheme manager or community support worker will usually contact you each day to monitor your welfare.

Many of the properties have special adaptations such as level access showers.

In addition to the facilities provided in your home, most schemes have communal facilities such as a lounge, kitchen and laundry for tenants' use. Some schemes have a guest room where relatives or friends can stay for a small charge.

What do scheme managers/community support workers do?

A scheme manager will:

- monitor your welfare by making regular contact with you
- provide support and help in an emergency
- liaise with health, social services, volunteer organisations and family networks to arrange support as needed
- help to organise and facilitate social activities and events for the scheme
- assist you if you have an accident or fall ill suddenly and offer help until your family, friends or the medical services arrive
- assist in reporting repairs and give you advice to help you maintain your tenancy
- promote a professional and trusting relationship with you to provide support and security in your home
- help you to maintain an active and independent life
- discuss your individual needs and complete a support plan that enables us to help you to manage an independent lifestyle. Your support plan will be reviewed with you on a regular basis.

Scheme managers are unable to provide nursing or home care support, but can contact appropriate services on your behalf in order to ensure you get the help you need.

Who can apply for sheltered housing?

Any person who feels they have a need for supported housing can apply by registering for the HOME OPTIONS scheme. This scheme allows you to apply for the housing option of your choice from a wide range of properties that meet your housing needs. Please refer to the HOME OPTIONS scheme guide for further information.

You can apply yourself, or ask a family member, friend or social worker to contact us by:

- filling in a registration form on the scheme website www.gnhomeoptions.org.uk (available on any public access computer)
- calling 0844 980 3333 and talking to the HOME OPTIONS team

or

- writing to Norwich City Council, HOME OPTIONS, City Hall, Norwich NR2 1NH.

To apply for sheltered housing ensure that you indicate your support needs in the 'Special requirements' section (Section 8) of the form. Also answer 'Yes' to the question 'Are you interested in sheltered housing (usually for the over 60s)?' in Section 13.


After your application has been received an assessment officer will contact you, either by telephone or a home visit, to carry out a needs and welfare assessment.

They will discuss your housing needs, what levels of support you require and provide information on the various options available to older people. We are only able to offer sheltered housing after a needs and welfare assessment has taken place.

You will receive information about the bidding process and the priority band you have been allocated based on your needs and welfare assessment.

How do I bid?

Please refer to the HOME OPTIONS leaflet and scheme guide for comprehensive details of how to view and bid for properties.

Properties are advertised for one week on the HOME OPTIONS website and choice based lettings (CBL) newsletter. Adverts for sheltered properties will contain a symbol.  Most sheltered properties will be exclusively for persons aged 60 and older. In addition to the HOME OPTIONS website; the CBL Newsletter, which advertises all available properties, can be obtained from any of our area offices.

If you are unable to access the website or visit an area office you can apply to be added to our assisted list. If you are placed on the assisted list the CBL newsletter will be delivered to your home each week. An officer from the HOME OPTIONS team will provide additional support if necessary.

If your bid is successful you will be contacted to arrange a viewing of the property. When you have viewed the property,

you will need to inform the scheme manager or HOME OPTIONS team whether you will accept or refuse the offer.

If you do not like the property you will be asked to complete a refusal form stating why you do not want it. At the viewing you will be told if there is a decorating allowance on the property or about other work that will be carried out before you move in.

If you accept the property the scheme manager will ask you to sign a tenancy agreement for the property and you will be given the keys. If you are an existing council tenant you will be asked to sign a 'Notice to quit' form for the home you will be leaving.

You are responsible for making your own arrangements to move into the property and for meeting the cost of the move. You will need to contact your utility company to arrange for electricity and gas to be connected. Not all properties have gas, and for safety reasons we recommend electric cookers are used in sheltered housing.

Before you accept the tenancy, the scheme manager will tell you how much your rent, council tax, service charge and support cost will be, and if the property has a shared heating scheme. They will be able to advise you about how you can apply for housing benefit or a fairer charging assessment that may help towards your support costs. All costs will be shown on your offer letter.

Once you have moved into your home you are responsible for any bills, meals, cleaning and internal decorating.

B. Norwich Community Alarm Service

Norwich Community Alarm Service (NCAS) is a 24-hour, 365 days a year monitoring and response service for anybody that would like extra support when they are alone in their home. An alarm is popular amongst older people who want the reassurance of having a quick, entirely reliable means of getting help. An alarm is an excellent option for people who want to remain in their own home, perhaps to be near friends and family, or to avoid the upheaval of moving.

In an emergency, a person can activate the alarm by pulling a cord situated in their home or by pressing a pendant that is worn around their neck. The equipment automatically contacts NCAS and an operator will answer to ask what assistance is required. If for any reason a person is unable to speak to the operator and explain the emergency, the operator will still know that help is required and appropriate help will be provided. When living in a sheltered housing property there are periods of time when the scheme manager is off-duty. During these times the communication equipment in the home is linked through to NCAS.

For sheltered housing tenants with extra needs due to hearing problems, additional equipment can be installed to alert them if their alarm/smoke detector is activated. This consists of a flashing beacon and vibrating pad, which is of particular benefit at night time. NCAS also offer support services for people who have memory problems. If you believe that you, or somebody you know, could benefit from the community alarm service

please contact NCAS by calling 01603 213700 or emailing NCAS@norwich.gov.uk

How are support services paid for?

Most of the cost of providing the community alarm service and a scheme manager is met through Supporting People, which is a government programme that was introduced in April 2003. Your rent card shows the charge for your rent separately from your support services. If you qualify for housing benefit your support charge will be paid as well as your rent. Those not in receipt of housing benefit can apply for a fairer charging assessment form to complete, as you may be entitled to extra help towards support costs. Please be advised that these charges are attached to your property if you live in sheltered accommodation and will be applied whether or not you use support services.

C. Night Owls and Swift Support Service

The Night Owls and Swift Support Service exists to fill the gap for calls to the emergency services that are urgent but not strictly emergencies. It aims to provide an immediate, appropriate solution to a one-off incident to support older members of the community, allowing them to keep their independence and stay in their own homes.

The service can help if:

- You are over the age of 60 with an unplanned need at any time (or over 50, depending on circumstances and subject to referral via a duty social worker or the emergency services)
- You do not have any personal contacts to help in a one-off emergency situation, such as:
 - falling over and being unhurt, but unable to get up
 - feeling unwell and needing some assistance with a day-to-day task
 - dealing with problems with your gas or electrical equipment
 - changing clothes and bedding after an accident
 - dealing with a traumatic event, such as a burglary or bereavement.

You can access the service:

- automatically if you are already connected to the NCAS if you live in sheltered housing or have an independent alarm that is linked to your telephone.
- by ringing direct – between 10pm and 8am on 01603 481409 (Night Owls) between 8am and 10pm on 01603 442008 (Swift Support Service)
- by visiting the <http://www.athomenotalone.co.uk>

D. Housing with care

What if I need extra support?

A referral can be made to social services, who will arrange for an assessment to be carried out which will include making an application to live in a housing with care scheme (Harriet Court or Dell Rose Court). Social services can arrange for help with personal care tasks, meals and home care. You must also be on the housing register to apply for housing with care schemes.

Housing with care schemes

Each housing with care scheme is made up of groups of independent flats within a large complex that offers community facilities such as a cafeteria, shop, gardens and hairdresser. They are designed to enable tenants to maintain an independent tenancy, with the knowledge that high levels of care and support are available to meet needs 24 hours a day. Schemes in Norwich are run in partnership with Norfolk County Council, Norwich City Council and Broadland Housing Association.

For more information about housing with care, contact the Sheltered Housing Team, Norwich City Council, City Hall, NR2 1NH or telephone 01603 213711. Alternatively, contact social services directly by telephoning 0844 800 8014

E. What if I need disabled adaptations to my home?

Disabled adaptations are improvements to enable you to have access around your home and garden as well as help you use important facilities like the kitchen and bathroom. Depending on your needs they may include grab-rails to help you climb steps, equipment to help you get into the bath, stair lifts or alterations to your kitchen and bathroom (eg, replacing a bath with a walk-in shower).

There are a number of ways in which we can help older people who need adaptations and in most cases this will begin with a referral to an occupational therapist. The occupational therapist will assess your needs and make a recommendation about what improvements are necessary.

To arrange an appointment with an occupational therapist contact Norwich Care & Repair on 01603 283337. If you are council tenant, your occupational therapist will contact the council to arrange for the recommended works to be carried out, provided it is possible to do so in your own home.

If you are a private tenant Norwich Care & Repair will help you to apply for a disabled facilities grant and contact an occupational therapist on your behalf. They can also help by finding builders and making sure that the works are carried out properly.

There is an accompanying fee for this service, but it is usually covered by the disabled facilities grant.

F. Home care

Norfolk County Council manages home care services to help people with a range of tasks in their own home. It is available 24 hours a day seven days a week, though most care is provided between 7am-9.30pm. For more information on home care options telephone Norfolk County Council Social Services on 0844 800 8014. To receive the service, an assessment will be carried out to discuss the circumstances, find out what the care needs are and see what services are appropriate.

Services available include help with:

- personal care
- preparing food and drinks
- simple treatments
- personal assistance
- domestic tasks
- night care.

The cost to the service user will depend on what the user can afford to pay and the cost of the services required. A care plan will be developed explaining the type of care to be received and at what time of the day or night. The service is provided by Norfolk County Council or local home care providers for those who prefer to make their own arrangements.

G. Private sheltered accommodation

Sheltered housing solutions are also available for those wishing to buy their own property or rent privately.

Finding a scheme

Local estate and letting agents may have details on suitable properties for sale or rent. For more information contact the Elderly Accommodation Counsel advice line on 0207 820 1343 or visit their website at www.housingcare.org.

Buying

There is usually a minimum age for people living in retirement or sheltered housing (55 or 60), but younger people can often buy properties on behalf of an older person.

The scheme manager or warden and communal facilities are paid for through service and support charges. In addition you will have to pay ground rent, council tax, water charges, contents insurance, telephone and fuel bills. Optional home care and meal services will normally be charged for separately if they are privately provided.

Renting privately

A limited amount of privately rented retirement housing is available. Most of the properties are in leasehold schemes which accept tenants over the minimum age (55 or 60). The rent includes the service charge and ground rent and therefore covers the costs of the scheme manager, 24 hour emergency alarm and communal facilities etc. We suggest you check what services are included in the rent and the terms of the tenancy.

Costs

Prices, rent levels and service charges can vary enormously. People who are renting sheltered/retirement housing and who have a low income and limited capital should check their eligibility for housing benefit (which could cover rent and some parts of the service charge e.g. cleaning of communal areas) and help from the Supporting People Fund (which could cover support costs such as the scheme manager and emergency alarm). Leaseholders in receipt of pension credit or on a low income may also be eligible for help with the service charges.

Any questions?

Norwich City Council

You can contact us with your housing enquiries by:

- calling the Customer Contact Team on 0844 980 3333
- email: info@norwich.gov.uk
- email sheltered housing at:
- shelteredhousing@norwich.gov.uk
- visiting City Hall

For a full list of Norwich City Council services visit www.norwich.gov.uk



If you require this leaflet in another format or language please contact Norwich City Council
T: 0844 980 3333 F: 01603 213000
E: info@norwich.gov.uk www.norwich.gov.uk