



**Essex County Council**  
Adult Social Care

Making the difference every day



# Extra care housing in Essex

Supplement to the Market Position Statement 2025

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# 1. Purpose

The information in this document supplements the information already published in Essex County Council's (ECC) Market Position Statement. The statement is updated regularly. You can access ECC's Market Position Statement [here](#).

## **What is a Market Position Statement (MPS)?**

A MPS is produced by local authorities with responsibility for Adult Social Care (ASC) to comply with their market shaping duties under the Care Act 2014. The content reflects the local authorities understanding of their existing markets.

The MPS provides an overview of ASC's current commissioning intentions, market pressures and ambition that support existing strategic objectives for ECC. It is primarily written for existing providers of services who work with ECC, new providers who are looking for opportunities within Essex and other businesses or organisations such as, Health, Community Health Providers, Voluntary or Community organisations working with ECC.

This extra care housing in Essex, supplement to the MPS seeks to:

- Provide information to help extra care housing providers make informed decisions about where there is demand and need for extra care housing in Essex.
- Provide information to assist local housing and planning authorities in Essex when developing their Housing Strategy, Local Plan and other strategic documents.
- Provide information for care providers so that they are aware of where new schemes are proposed and opportunities for them to provide services may arise.

In this document we use the term "extra care housing" by this we mean:

Extra care schemes for older people and people with disabilities who want to live in their own home with access to on-site care and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, if they need it. It means living in a safe property, with self-contained apartments, in a well-maintained scheme in the heart of the community, that is purpose built and tailored to the needs of older people and people with disabilities.

ECC has a contract with the on-site care and support provider at each scheme across Essex where placements are made by ASC. There are two components to the on-site care and support service provided within extra care schemes:

- The provision of planned personal care for residents who wish to receive their personal care package through the on-site care and support provider; and
- 24/7 on-site support. This provides a 24/7 in-person response to any unplanned care needs and/or emergencies. This 24/7 on-site support is available to all residents irrespective of who provides their planned personal care.

You will find more information later in this document in the "Key features of extra care housing" section on page 8.

## **2. Essex County Council's approach and commitment to extra care housing**

### **Why we want extra care housing?**

ECC has a commitment to delivering extra care housing. We see extra care as an essential housing option for older people and people with disabilities who have care and support needs. Extra care housing helps ECC to fulfil its ambition to help ensure that people get the right support at the right time to maintain their independence and quality of life. ECC want to grow this provision to meet current and future needs.

Whilst supporting people to live in their own home for as long as possible is our priority, where an older person or person with a disability has care and support needs that could be better met in supported and specialist housing, we will encourage them to consider extra care housing and refer them into it. ECC is committed to developing a diverse market, in accordance with our duty under section 5 of the Care Act 2014, as well as ensuring care and support services focus on prevention, independence and the assets and strengths of people and their communities. Enabling people to live as independently as possible, playing full and active roles in their local communities. Extra care housing is a key enabler for this aspiration.

### **What have ECC done to deliver extra care housing and what are we doing to develop it?**

The first scheme to be developed with ECC support opened in 2017. Since then, using our own land or grant funding we have delivered three more schemes in Essex. We have now identified land we own or land owned by other public sector bodies to deliver seven more extra care schemes in Essex. We continue to seek sites in two areas of the County. See Section 7 "Our plans for extra care housing" for more detail of site location and status.

## Our approach to developing sites

**Sites we own** – Our Housing Company, Essex Housing, will secure outline or full planning permission for a scheme with a minimum of 60 apartments. The design will be in line with our Extra Care Design Guide<sup>1</sup> and reflect site conditions. On some sites we may have already undertaken demolition and site preparation works. We will engage with the market through soft market testing and use feedback from this to tailor any procurement exercise to ensure we get the best outcome from formal procurement. We are open to the successful developer-provider reflecting innovation and good practice in the design and build of new schemes with our agreement<sup>2</sup>. Our technical experts in Essex Housing will support throughout the development phase.

**Sites you identify or own** – We welcome approaches from providers who own or have identified sites with the potential to develop extra care housing. We will consider sites that can accommodate a minimum of 60 apartments (along with communal facilities) up to a maximum of 100 apartments. We will assess the site's suitability against the criteria in our design guide for site location, our future need data and the knowledge of our locality teams. We expect the tenure of these schemes to be predominately affordable/social rented housing and to be managed by a registered provider once completed. We will require the following information from you when you contact us:

- Site name and location.
- Planning status
- Description of proposed scheme to include number of units and proposed mix of 1 bed and 2 bed apartments, tenure, facilities.
- Model of build, manage and care provision.
- Timeline for development of the scheme.
- What else will be co-located on or near the site.

We will respond to you with initial feedback in a timely manner.

## Support we will offer

### Commitment:

- A clear corporate commitment to extra care housing.
- Provide opportunities to secure care contracts and/or build and manage new extra care housing.
- Future need analysis.
- Support to make schemes fully operational.
- Partnership working with local housing authorities on referrals and nominations.

### New build opportunities:

- Land for new schemes which has full or outline planning permission.
- Expertise in development and engagement with local planning authorities.
- Opportunity to flex tenure to support viability.
- Robust suite of tried and tested agreements.

<sup>1</sup> The latest version of our Extra Care Design Guide (2023) can be found [here](#). Schemes designed before 2023 were designed in line with the published version of our Design Guide at that time. <sup>2</sup> Where ECC has secured full or outline planning permission for a site, ultimately it will be for the Local Planning Authority to agree any variation to plans/designs.

## Our approach to eligibility of people for extra care

Where schemes are developed on ECC land and/or ECC commissions the care at a scheme, the eligibility criteria will be set out in a nomination agreement between the landlord and ECC. Some nomination agreements will include the local housing authority as a party to the agreement.

The nomination agreement will be guided by the following principles:

- For new schemes, ECC will have nomination rights to all or a percentage of the rented apartments.
- The nomination agreement will set out the approach for self-referrals by older people and people with disabilities not known to ECC and those placed by NHS bodies or other local authorities.
- Whilst extra care is primarily for those aged over the age of 55, we encourage flexibility particularly to meet the housing, care and support needs of people with disabilities who may be under or over the age of 55.
- Extra care apartments will be let to older people and people with disabilities with a local connection to the local housing authority area where the scheme is located and in line with the local connection criteria in the local housing authority's Allocations Policy.
- Older people and people with disabilities nominated to the scheme would benefit from a home environment with 24- hour on-site care and support that enables their continued independence.
- Flexibility around the minimum care hours needed for a person to be considered for extra care housing in recognition of the prevention agenda.
- Where a nomination is made by ECC, older people and people with disabilities must be ordinarily resident within the County and have eligible needs under the Care Act 2014.

People with a range of needs should be considered, including, but not limited to, people living with sensory and/or physical impairments; learning disabilities; autism; cognitive impairment and/or decline; dementia; neurodegenerative conditions; mental health needs, drug and/or alcohol dependence where extra care is deemed to be the most appropriate service to meet their needs.

## Our expectations – rents and service charges

- ECC accepts that rents and service charges will be at exempt rent levels, however we would still expect rents and service charges to be affordable for residents. Rent and service charges have an impact on occupancy rates in extra care schemes.
- Rent and service charges will need to be agreed with the district/city/borough council housing benefit departments.
- Rents should be in line with the Regulator's standards and the Government's rent policy.
- We expect housing benefit ineligible service charges to be kept to an affordable level.
- We can provide data on average, highest and lowest rent and service charge levels in Essex for schemes built on our land or where we commission care, to facilitate benchmarking.

## **Schemes where ECC does not commission care; schemes where ECC does not have nomination rights (including market housing)**

ECC's involvement in these schemes is minimal. Our expectations for the design of these schemes remain the same as our own schemes as set out in Section 3.

We would still expect developer-providers to provide M4(2) and M4(3) compliant housing to ensure that homes built today meet the needs of occupiers in the future. Adapting properties once they have been built is both costly, disruptive for the person and retrofitting adaptations rarely achieves what good design can from the outset. Ultimately the Local Planning Authority's Policy on accessible, adaptable and wheelchair housing will shape what is provided.

Planning Practice Guidance Housing: optional technical standards<sup>3</sup> states that Local Plan policies for wheelchair accessible homes [M4(3)(2)b] should only be applied to those dwellings where the local authority is responsible for allocating or nominating a person to live in that property. This does not preclude market sale homes from being wheelchair adaptable (M4(3)(2)a) and we will continue to seek wheelchair adaptable homes as part of our consultation responses to planning applications.

Local Planning Authorities will need to satisfy themselves whether proposed developments are Planning use Classes C2 or C3.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-optional-technical-standards#accessibility-and-wheelchair-housing-standards>



### 3. Key features of extra care housing

Extra care housing is self-contained housing, primarily for older people and people with disabilities, that offers care and support on site 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is different to a care home because residents have their own front door to a self-contained apartment and hold their own tenancy while also benefiting from access to communal and other facilities. Extra care housing is based on an ethos of promoting independence and offering flexibility as people's care needs change over time.

All extra care housing in the County should have vibrant, inclusive communities where older people and people with disabilities can live, feel safe, enjoy life, and promote independence. Schemes should be community hubs providing a range of social, learning and voluntary opportunities benefiting both residents living within the scheme and the wider community where possible.

Detailed information about the design of new extra care housing can be found in our [Extra Care Design Guide 2023](#).

#### **ECC's location and design expectations for extra care housing:**

##### **Sites**

Sites should be:

- Well-served by public transport.
- Easily accessible - Preferably a relatively flat neighbouring topography with dropped kerbs and pedestrian road crossings to promote access by ambulant older people, wheelchair users and mobility scooters.
- Close to local facilities (or easily accessible by public transport) - library, health facilities, post office, retail, leisure & amenity.
- Integrated into communities - for example, at the heart of a new or existing residential community.

##### **Design**

- One- or two-bedroom self-contained apartments, available to rent, buy or part buy/part rent to meet local need which are affordable to the local community.
- 60 or more flats in one building with a communal entrance and reception facility.
- A proportion of apartments to be purpose-built to fully wheelchair accessible standards (Part M4(3)) and the remainder to accessible and adaptable standards (Part M4(2)).
- The use of innovative technology to meet care and support needs and promote independence including an emergency response system allowing people to call for help when needed.
- Communal rooms or areas where people can access a range of health and leisure activities and on-site services such as restaurant/café, hairdressing, activities to



promote health and well-being. Some of these facilities may be open to the local community, promoting community involvement, reducing isolation and fostering inclusion, as well as helping to ensure sustainability of the facilities and activities provided.

- Outside space, for example communal gardens, courtyards and private balconies or patio areas.
- Safety and security built into the design.

## **Care and support**

- Provide a home for life and offering flexibility as people's care and support needs change over time.
- Have a balanced community, accommodating people with a range of care and support needs, from people who are more able through to people with high care and support needs.
- Have an on-site care and support service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to deliver the 24/7 on-site support service to all residents and planned personal care and support as required.
- Care and support that is tailored to individual needs and personal preferences, promotes independence, choice and control and builds on people's assets and strengths.

## 4. Forecasted Need

The Supported and Specialist Housing and Accommodation Needs Assessment (2025) (SSHANA) provides estimates of future need for supported and specialist housing and accommodation. The future need for extra care housing is identified in the assessment which uses a range of data sources and evidence including:

- population and tenure changes over time
- current supply and pipeline of extra care housing
- older people's housing needs and their likelihood of moving
- income, income deprivation health and social care characteristics
- people moving to extra care from other population groups such as people with disabilities

The estimates of the need for supported and specialist housing and accommodation are produced in five-year intervals from a base year of 2024. The information below is:

- For affordable rented extra care housing.
- Not cumulative, data from one 5-year period are not carried forward to the next 5-year period.

The full report can be found here: [Supported and Specialist Housing and Accommodation Needs Assessment 2025](#)

**Figure 1: Estimated need for affordable extra care housing**

District/City/ Borough	2024	2029	2034	2039	2044
Basildon	64	128	209	277	343
Braintree	61	128	206	277	344
Brentwood	27	53	95	125	153
Castle Point	33	64	109	142	173
Chelmsford	61	123	221	295	367
Colchester	62	125	216	289	359
Epping Forest	48	98	163	218	272
Harlow	31	64	99	132	164
Maldon	31	62	94	126	156
Rochford	32	63	93	124	154
Tendring	72	147	276	371	462
Uttlesford	37	78	117	160	202
Essex	560	1,134	1,900	2,536	3,148

Source: ECC SSHANA 2025, edited version of Table 114 to remove retirement/sheltered housing and extra care market housing

## 5. Care

We expect the on-site care and support provider to provide:

- A 24/7 on-site support service, including waking night cover, to be able to respond to any unplanned care needs and/or emergencies.
- Planned personal care and support that can meet each person's individual care and support needs and personal preferences.

The 24/7 on-site support service is available to all residents irrespective of who provides their planned personal care. It includes the provision of Care Quality Commission regulated personal care tasks as required. It provides a 24/7 on-site care presence that can be accessed as needed rather than in a scheduled way.

Planned personal care is provided by the on-site care and support provider, for older people and people with disabilities who choose to receive their personal care from them, however, this is not mandatory and down to personal choice. Older people and people with disabilities can choose a different provider/carer to provide their planned personal care.

### Our approach to commissioning care

At new schemes we will commission the care contract separately to the developer/landlord. This does not prohibit the developer/landlord from bidding for the care contract. Feedback from our market engagement exercises was very clear that there were benefits to adopting this approach.

Our care and support contracts in the 14 existing schemes in Essex have various end dates. For both new and existing schemes we plan to:

- award a 5-year contract, following a selection process, to the successful provider for the provision of the on-site care and support service.
- provide block funding towards the 24/7 on-site support of 84 hours a week to ensure a base level of at least one member of staff awake on-site at the scheme 24/7 and one member of staff local to the scheme on-call overnight.

### People with disabilities

The design of extra care housing and the services and care and support provided means that it is inclusive and can meet the needs of people living with sensory and/or physical impairments; learning disabilities; autism; cognitive impairment and/or decline; dementia; neurodegenerative conditions; mental health needs. We can offer additional training to care providers and landlords to upskill their staff to deliver services tailored to individual needs.

## 6. Existing extra care schemes

We currently commission care in 14 schemes with over 695 specialist apartments across the County, with ECC able to nominate into 618 of the apartments. Schemes are owned by Registered Providers or local housing authorities, with care provided by Care Quality Commission registered domiciliary care providers who provide planned personal care and 24/7 on-site support. Schemes are part of wider neighbourhoods with residents having access to health and well-being opportunities. In many schemes the community uses the on-site facilities with schemes being community hubs. Many of our schemes are 100% affordable or social rent, some include some shared ownership apartments, and one scheme has some market sale apartments.

**Figure 2: Existing extra care schemes in Essex**

District/City/Borough council area	Number of affordable/social rented apartments	Number of shared ownership/market sale apartments
Basildon	53	12
Braintree	55	0
Braintree	37	62
Braintree	35	0
Brentwood	26	0
Chelmsford	65	0
Colchester	38	0
Epping Forest	40	0
Harlow	42	0
Rochford	30	0
Tendring	70	0
Tendring	60	0
Tendring	30	0
Uttlesford	40	0

Source: ECC Information correct as at September 2025

## 7. Our plans for extra care housing

ECC plans to enable the development of circa 540 extra care apartments in 9 schemes. The schemes below are on land owned by ECC, except in Basildon (land owned by Basildon Borough Council) and Castle Point (where we are still site seeking). We would welcome proposals from providers on sites they are seeking to purchase or already own in Castle Point.

**Figure 3: Proposed extra care schemes on land owned by ECC**

District/City/Borough Council Area	Number of apartments	Planning status	Landlord	Care Provider
Epping Forest	60	Outline planning	To be selected	To be selected
Rochford	60	Detailed planning	To be selected	To be selected
Tendring	60	Detailed planning	To be selected	To be selected
Harlow	60	Seeking outline planning	To be selected	To be selected
Colchester	64	Seeking detailed planning	To be selected	To be selected
Chelmsford	60	Seeking outline planning	To be selected	To be selected
Maldon	60	Seeking detailed planning	To be selected	To be selected
Castle Point	60	Site seeking	To be selected	To be selected
Basildon	60	Site seeking	To be selected	To be selected

Source: ECC Information correct as at September 2025

This information is issued by:

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