ANNEXE TEN

SHELTERED HOUSING STANDARDS
STANDARDS FOR SHELTERED
AND
EXTRA CARE ACCOMMODATION
INDEX

PART ONE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION 3

INTRODUCTION 5

PART TWO: DEFINITION OF SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION 7

PROPOSED RE-DEFINITION OF SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION 8

PART THREE: DESIGN NOTES FOR SERVICE USERS WITH VISUAL OR DEMENTIA IMPAIRMENT 11

DESIGN FEATURES: EXTERNAL 18

INTERNAL 20

REQUIREMENT ONLY OF EXTRA CARE 27

INDIVIDUAL DWELLINGS 29

STAFF FACILITIES 32

PART FIVE: REMODELLING EXISTING SHELTERED AND EXTRA CARE PROJECTS 33

APPENDIX 1 NEW STANDARDS FOR EXISTING PROJECTS 36

APPENDIX 2 FURTHER INFORMATION 38
PART ONE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

It is recognised and accepted that many existing sheltered housing projects are no longer suitable for the purpose, for a variety of reasons covered in more detail below. Recent Best Value reviews by District Councils and the County Council have highlighted this.

Current issues about appropriateness of dwellings arise mainly from the fact that most of the sheltered accommodation in existence in Devon was constructed some years ago for people over retirement age who were physically active. Increasing numbers of people applying for sheltered accommodation, or already living there, are older and frailer than the properties were designed to accommodate.

Social Services policy and a significant reduction in the number of residential/nursing bedspaces available have placed further pressure on the design and availability of existing accommodation.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has produced a draft Sheltered Housing Review Tool based on ‘home for life’ scheme reviews and the proposed procedures for working with sheltered housing providers. The documents considers the purpose of the review, the role of sheltered housing and the way in which support may be delivered, the existing buildings and how the design and facilities offered may be a barrier to achieving current and future objectives. It also identifies the changes that may be needed.
The Housing Corporation within its Scheme Development Standards (SDS) now concentrates upon design and quality issues relating to the whole living environment (latest edition April 2003). In addition, it has recently published a paper setting out proposals for re-defining sheltered housing to reflect the changes that have taken place within the sector. It suggests a continuum, rather than categories, to focus on the outcomes of each scheme. A priority is to bring housing and social care together to meet the higher support needs of many tenants and to link with the government’s policies and ethos for care, reablement, choice and independence.

Joint commissioning and inter agency working is therefore essential to assist people to remain in their own homes. In many cases this will include joint funding for capital and revenue costs.

Consideration needs to be given to necessary changes in the levels of support/ care needed and wanted by the tenants. A separate draft paper “Service Standards for Sheltered Housing” (being drafted) provides criteria for services.

There are a number of options where a landlord is planning new dwellings, or is considering the remodelling of existing accommodation. Ideally all new accommodation should be built to a “home for life” standard which would meet any current/future needs. Where existing accommodation is being remodelled
it may be impossible to improve on some features e.g. size of dwelling. In such cases properties should be improved to the highest possible standards (see section 4).

However, capital cost is a major consideration, as housing grants are limited and private finance may not always be available. Funding options from other sources, including Social Services and Health should also be explored. For many Registered Social Landlord’s work to their sheltered housing is prioritised against a larger general needs stock. Unless major repairs are required or voids are high then improvements would not necessarily be the highest priority.
INTRODUCTION

DRAFT STANDARDS FOR SHELTERED AND EXTRA CARE ACCOMMODATION

The Devon Supporting People Strategy required the Joint Commissioning Body to have a strategic plan for the long-term provision of sheltered housing to take into account the balance of needs and range of provision for a diverse older population in the future. This paper has been prepared at the request of the Supporting People, Sheltered Housing Project Group for Devon. Housing providers in the public and private sectors have also acknowledged their willingness to review the guidelines and requirements that they have been working to for over twenty years.

The paper attempts to: -

(a) identify standards for future accommodation for older people (or where refurbishment or re-modelling of housing for older people is planned).

(b) provide a benchmark against which project reviews for sheltered housing which will be undertaken by the Devon Supporting People Team for from April 2003.

(c) provide standards which can be used when undertaking Best Value and Comprehensive Reviews.

The intention is to provide accommodation that is designed and developed, or remodelled, to meet the needs and requirements of older people in the early years of the 21st Century.

(please see Part Four which outlines the requirements for existing accommodation where full compliance is unachievable)

In September 2002 the initial draft standards were discussed with the Housing Corporation’s West Region Office.

September 2002 the initial draft standards were issued to all sheltered housing providers in Devon and to appropriate staff in other partner agencies. e.g. district councils, social services and health.

September 2002 an afternoon session was arranged at Eaton House, Exeter to meet with sheltered housing providers to discuss the initial draft.

October 2002 the initial draft updated taking into account the outcome of the above
April/May 2003 – draft standards updated taking into account the Housing Corporations latest Scheme Development Standards. The second draft issued to sheltered housing providers and stakeholders for further consultation.

June/July 2003 – providers consult and involved their existing sheltered housing tenants for their views on the draft standards


September 2003 – Presented to Supporting People’s Core Strategy Development Group for consideration and initial approval. If initially approved, to be presented to Supporting People Joint Commissioning Body and other partners for endorsement by their Committees/Boards.

October 2003 – Presented to sheltered housing providers (local authorities, RSL’s, charities etc),

For the purposes of Supporting People the agreed Standards would be effective from September 2003
Prior to the implementation of Supporting People it was necessary for those wishing to access support to move to a specialist sheltered housing project. This was not always satisfactory as it resulted in the upheaval for the individual of leaving the existing home, where the person may have lived for many years (and often down-sizing, with the issues of disposing of possessions). The change often required a move away from the area where relatives, friends, social and informal support links had been formed.

2.1. CURRENT DEFINITIONS. Until now older peoples supported housing has been defined as: -

Designated sheltered housing. Some projects have been developed on the basis of being designated for letting to older people. These properties may be grouped or incorporated in larger general needs projects to meet local need at that time. Many have planning conditions limiting use to tenants of retirement age, or in some cases the landlord may have made a policy decision to this affect. Designation has proved to be an effective method of avoiding the right to buy for some landlords.

Category 1. Housing designed for older people who were able to live independently but wished to down size, or be closer to relatives. These
dwellings are usually on one level, with one bedroom, a small compact kitchen and small, or no, garden. In providing these properties consideration was given to access and the location of local shops, etc..

All have an alarm call system for emergencies and a number have a limited warden’s service, often delivered by a peripatetic warden. Properties of this type are often grouped together to create small communities of older people and are typically owned by local authorities, registered social landlords (housing associations) or charities.

**Category 2.** Properties in this type tend to be grouped together in schemes in the traditional sheltered housing model. All have alarm call systems and a dedicated warden or scheme manager, either on site or peripatetic, who makes daily visits and provides a higher level of support. Communal facilities, such as a common room and laundry, are usually available on site. Tenure types include rented, leasehold, or shared ownership in the private or public sector. In Devon the main provision to date has been within the rented sector. Only a very limited number of private sector dwellings have been developed to date.

**Category 2 ½.** This type of accommodation has become known under several names e.g. category 2, very sheltered or, more recently, extra care. Developments are larger to provide economy of scale with typically one or
more blocks on a single site. Accommodation may take the form of shared or self-contained units and provision is for single people or couples.

Higher level support services and care are available as required on site. Care and support packages, available 24 hours per day are provided and adapted to meet the needs of the individual. Packages as flexible and ensure that the tenant has the highest possible level of choice and independence.

More extensive communal facilities are included within the part of the complex. This can include hairdressing and hobby rooms and gym facilities. Some services and parts of the project may be open to use by the wider community e.g. providing day services, luncheon clubs or assisted bathing for example. Meals are often available in a restaurant style setting and additional help with household chores can be purchased from a “menu” system.

**Category 3.** This category is mentioned for the purpose of clarification only and does not fall within the remit of this paper. Projects of this type provide residential and or nursing care and must be registered with the Care Standards Commission, which has responsibility for setting and monitoring their standards.

PROPOSED RE-DEFINITION FOR SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION

Up until April 2003 only people with tenancies are eligible to be considered for the funding of their housing related support costs. This is applied for through the local Housing Benefit Department. With the full implementation of
Supporting People on 1 April 2003 owner occupiers will also be eligible to be considered for funding subject to means tested from that date (see separate guidance on this).

The Housing Corporation has also ceased to recognise Category 1 accommodation for grant purposes, acknowledging that many older people with lower level housing support needs may be equally well catered for within general needs accommodation.

With these changes a re-definition of accommodation for older people is needed and the following is proposed.

**Floating Support**

Where older people are living in general needs accommodation and need support there is limited provision and opportunity for floating support to be provided into their homes at present.

This is set to change under Supporting People as support will be person centred e.g. it can be delivered to people where they currently live rather than them having to move to specially designated schemes. Floating support services, particularly for older people, are expected to expand significantly. This may include for a limited period of time and/or for a set number of hours per week, not necessarily delivered on a daily basis.

Many older people, with lower level support needs, will continue to live in their existing homes with support, and if necessary care, provided there. Where care packages are also provided Social Services closer working between the statutory agencies will be essential to ensure the co-ordination of the services.

**Sheltered**

Accommodation designed for people with limited mobility i.e. with some requiring a frame to walk or wheelchair use. Tenants will need daily support with pop in visits, assistance with admin matters, requiring help with domestic/household activities including shopping, cleaning etc.
Dwellings should be on one level with lift access as well as stairs where not located on the ground floor.

Projects must provide a sheltered scheme manager who is accessible during normal working hours i.e. 9am –5pm on weekdays (this service may be delivered through a peripatetic warden) with an on-call service out of hours. All properties must have an alarm call system, backed up by pendants, bracelets etc as required. Support must be accessible at any time and in larger projects this may include additional support staff.

The layout, general design and decoration of the projects and individual units should take into account the housing needs of people in the early stages of dementia.

New technology should be incorporated to maximise the independence of residents e.g. through the use of passive alarms.

A full range of communal facilities (such as a common room and laundry) should normally be provided on site.

**Extra Care.**

Extra care housing provides either shared or self-contained supported accommodation for frail elderly people. There are some exceptions e.g. Abbeyfields, where the accommodation is not self contained. People below retirement age may also be housed if they have mobility problems, are in the early stages of dementia or require a higher level of support.
Schemes will have a full time on site sheltered housing scheme manager/co-ordinator and additional support and care staff will be available as required twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. Tenants will have the opportunity to have individual support and care packages provided, to meet their needs which will be managed by a scheme co-ordinator. Schemes may also provide a range of other services e.g. day care for people living in the community or a base for community support staff. There is an issue of shared use of communal lounges by people coming into schemes for day care only, which needs to be addressed. ‘Outside Community’ activity rooms should be separate from residents recreation/own rooms.

In addition to a communal lounge and laundry a wider range of communal/community facilities are usually provided within extra care schemes which may include a restaurant, exercise room, clinic room or a craft/hobby room.

PART THREE

Design notes for clients with visual or dementia issues.

PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

1. Background. The following information was provided by Professor Juliene Hanson (Architect who is currently Professor of House Form and Culture for University College London) when she spoke at a conference on design for older people held in London in July 2003.

Her presentation was based on the findings of a recently completed study of the needs of 400 older people with visual impairment living in Plymouth, Birmingham and London. The study was commissioned by Thomas Pockington Trust. Its purpose was to inform housing and service providers about older people’s experiences of sight loss, their coping strategies, support needs and preferences, home environments and views on supported housing and social contact and inclusion.

2. Statistics. The average age at which sight loss (or a degree of) began to affect the participants of the study was 57. A very high proportion of participants also had one or more long-standing chronic complaints. 12% also had a hearing problem. 60% lived alone.

Another recent study in the UK found that 10% of people over 75 years of age were visually impaired and 2% were blind. Three out of four women will develop a serious eye difficulty by the age of 75, as well as living longer women are more likely to live alone.

3. Scheme design. Concern was expressed that there are “no guidelines” for the design of property for people with little or no sight. People in purpose built settings tended to be more critical than those in “mainstream” housing.
3.1. External and Communal areas. With regard to location the enclosed, segregated nature of many of the schemes often exacerbated the isolation felt by the individual. Six out of ten of those interviewed were disengaged from their local community. Seventy five percent said that they would like to get out more. A particular obstacle to doing so was the difficulty in accessing public transport.

One in five of those interviewed had made changes to the approach to their homes by installing ramps or painting the leading edge of the steps. Poor external lighting and a lack of security were also referred to.

Within communal areas reference was made to poor designs included a “labyrinthine” of public circulation areas, large unused lounges, hushed corridors, eerily quiet atmosphere, intrusive noise from lifts and doors close to individual flats and inadequate soundproofing. Steps, limited hand and guard-rails were also mentioned.

3.2 Individual dwellings. Many people relied on a mental map of their homes and did not want major changes.

Interviewees stressed the importance of having enough space in their homes to offer hospitality, entertainment and to have people to stay overnight.

They were most concerned about accessibility of spaces, problems with doors (heavy, danger of left opening doors), locks and handles on doors and windows, changes to lighting, security and safety features.

The rank order of change noted by interviews were found to be lighting, furniture arrangements (by pushing back to the walls, decoration and use of lighter colours, floor finishes, planning and layout and changes to work surfaces.

3.2.1. Bedrooms. Inadequate space. Small, one bedroom units were noted as a particular problem.

3.2.2. Kitchens. Two out of five interviewees had made changes in the kitchen e.g. installing a smoke detector, adding tactile information to white goods and purchasing special gadgets such as liquid level indicators. Cupboards and work surfaces. Inadequate storage space was most commonly raised in relation to the kitchen. This ranged from “very small working space” to the potential danger of badly located cupboards and doors. Side hung doors can give problems or injury when open. Sliding cupboard doors (may be difficult for people with arthritis) or open shelves may be a better alternative. Larger handles may be useful for those who want side opening cupboard doors.

3.2.3. Bathrooms. A third of interviewees had made changes to their bathrooms. These also tended to be low cost e.g. bath boards or grab rails. A few had replaced a bath with a walk in shower. Many interviewees expressed a preference for a shower and those that had them valued them highly.
Comments were noted about affordability of adaptations by the individuals themselves.

3.2.4. Lighting and switches. A third of interviewees had already made or would like changes to domestic lighting. Lighting needs to be tailored to the individual’s needs. This may include strip/spot/florescent/halogen lamps, reading/standard and Angle-poise lamps. Some residents had reduced the lighting as they were unable to stand the level of artificial light provided as standard.

Inadequate wiring/sockets switches were also mentioned. Coloured switches and sockets may be helpful as white is often too similar to the wall colouring.

3.2.4. Sensory indicators. Colour and texture contrasts had proved useful where provided. Other ideas mentioned were aromas, air movement and auditor clues. User control panels for individual units should be considered.

Of those participating in the survey eighty percent had no plans to move house and seventy five percent considered their current home as a home for life. A third of those with limited sight said that they would consider moving if further deterioration occurred.

Many of those living in sheltered housing and purpose built settings for older people with visual impairments felt let down by what they considered as poor quality design.

“If the last generation of sheltered housing is anything to go by, it would seem that a complete understanding of the design issues that are entailed in specialised provision can be best achieved by working in partnership with older people with visual impairments, if we are not to prescribe another generation of dysfunctional housing”.

PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

The following are notes from the Design and Dementia Summer School run by the University of Stirling in July 2003.

1. General. Design should compensate for disabilities, maximise independence, enhance self esteem and confidence, reinforce personal identity, understandable and orientating, be welcoming for residents, relatives and the community and should allow control of stimuli. Need an unobtrusive concern for safety.

Projects should be domestic, homely in style and plenty of opportunity for ordinary everyday activities.

Enterance. Front doors of identifiable, period style. Should be friendly and welcoming – avoid large areas and high ceilings, views of storage or functional aspects of scheme e.g. laundry.
Some schemes have provided for people with dementia away from the ground floor level for reasons of safety. This is not necessary if the scheme is properly designed and those with dementia are known to significantly benefit from the opportunity to go out. Staff cover is more difficult when support staff need to take residents from first floor (and above) to ground floor gardens.

Lifts need to be large enough for coffins.

Use coloured light and socket switches. Conceal vital service controls.

2. **Internal Layout.** Avoid H and U plan layouts which are hard to orientate. Avoid long corridors.

Use different levels of ceiling or beams to artificially divide. Picture and dado rails and panels help to split up a large wall surface.

Corridor ends can be designed to provide distracters e.g. fire exit not on facing wall but to the side. Consider the creation of seating areas within corridors. Rummaging cupboards are helpful within corridors.

Where stairs are unavoidable ensure that step and wall edges are easily identified. Research has shown that skirting that follows the step levels is very helpful in providing a prompt for people with dementia. Good lighting is essential.

Families frequently ask for small private areas where they can visit their relative, bedrooms and large lounges don’t offer this element of choice. Small semi-private “niches” can provide this. A quite room for residents, visitors or staff is essential.

Pictorial signs should be used where possible.

2.1. **Lounges and dining areas.** Provide separate, or specific, areas for lounge and dining. Lounges need “homely clutter”. There is frequent criticism of hotel type surroundings e.g. furniture and pictures etc are bulk purchased rather than being age appropriate and assisting in the activity of reminiscence. There is a need to link lounges to other areas within the building e.g. patio, tea kitchen, toilets and activity areas.

Avoid restaurant type dining rooms. Locating the main kitchen adjacent to a lounge and ensuring that seated residents are able to watch some of the daily activity can enhance appetites and create a more homely environment.

2.2. **Therapeutic kitchens** should be included to allow the opportunity for residents to carry out domestic activities. Small cupboard locks may be necessary for safety reasons on some cabinets. Also a central control to switch off services.
2.3. **Activity Rooms.** Activity areas should be of sufficient size and not just “quite” areas used for activities.

2.4. **Bathrooms, toilets and hairdressing rooms.** Avoid bathrooms and hairdressing rooms with clinical finishes e.g. shower curtains and tiles. There should be the ability/space to fit/operate hoist for bathing and toileting. Shower curtains should be located to minimise the chance of becoming caught up in. Traditional taps (capstan style) are often easier to use and are more familiar to today’s elderly.

Integral cisterns are not as easily identified by people with dementia – the pedestal style is considered more appropriate. Cistern leavers should be easily identifiable. Toilets seats benefit from black or strongly coloured toilet. Bidets are confusing.

2.5. **Bedrooms.** Doors should be made as individual as possible, including door handles. Use is more frequently being made of small display areas on or adjacent to the individual's room to assist in recognition.

Ideally flats should have two bedrooms. One bedoomed properties need to have sufficient spaces for wheelchair access around twin beds plus appropriate storage space. In shared accommodation consideration should be given to residents bringing furniture, pictures etc to furnish their own bedrooms.

Exposed shelving in cupboards/ hanging rails assist residents to find their belongings and avoid stress.

En suite toilets. The access to en suite toilets should be located so that the toilet can easily be seen when the resident is in bed. There should be the ability to provide variable lighting and lighting controlled by sensors where required.

2.6. **Doors** Door differentiation (internal and external). To encourage use paint in bright colour (this can be colour coded e.g. all yellow doors are toilets). To discourage paint the same as surrounding walls and consider excluding architrave’s. Larger, coloured handles may be helpful.

Consideration should be given to the direction in which doors will open. If the intention is to encourage access the door should open to provide the greatest view of the inside of the room. If the intention is to discourage access the opposite is true. However, those with little of no sight need to be considered especially where a door may open outwards.

Bedrooms are expected to be lockable. This builds confidence and security for new tenants. In an emergency the master key can be used.

2.7. **Storage.** As with all projects adequate storage, both communal (for wheelchairs etc) and within the individual flats/ rooms is essential. Storage
should also be provided for bedroom furniture where incoming residents bring their own.

3. **Fixtures and fittings.** Consideration needs to be given to the provision and location of mirrors. Including lifts.

   Handrails should be colour contrasted to background walls to assist in recognition. This applies to door handles unless residents are being discouraged to use in which case “same” colour applies. Soft ends to handrails.

   Door handles should have a smooth finish and be easy to grip i.e. “d” shaped. Grab rails must be appropriately positioned with the users needs the priority.

   Floor coverings. Consider the use of colour and texture changes to emphasise different areas within the building. This can provide route guidance and visual barriers. Bathrooms and kitchens must have non-slip floor coverings. Avoid “wet” look flooring.

   Light floor covering with dark insets immediately in front of areas where the residents are discouraged from going e.g. fire doors can be very effective.

4. **Glazing.** As much natural light should be provided as possible but need to avoid extremes in temperature.

5. **Ventilation.** People with dementia can become particularly stressed in hot conditions.

6. **Use of Colour.** Muted colours are not helpful to those with dementia whose eyesight (often due to age) may be reduced. (a good test is to look through pale yellow cellophane to identify contrasts in colour)

7. **Staff/private space** is often extremely inadequate. An area for staff to work, with interruption, while providing a discrete overview of the communal areas is necessary. Staff also need a quite area to work away from the main areas of activity.

8. **SMART Technology.** Where user involvement required some equipment may be too large or too complex for people with dementia to use.

9. **Gardens.** This is an important feature and the facility will be well used if designed properly. Extend the living area with lounges opening onto patios. Assist access to the garden with the use of handrails, level access, ramps or well-defined gentle slopes. Provide fixed seating. Handrails can also assist with a circular route. Include features of interest e.g. bird feeder and appropriately positioned washing lines. Small garden gates which residents can access on their trip around the garden can fulfil some of the needs of residents to open doors/gates etc. without safety issues.
Courtyard gardens can often provide less obtrusive monitoring of residents by staff while they continue to work indoors. Use raised planting. Ensure plants are non-toxic. Boundary walls/fencing should be as secure as possible.

**PART FOUR**

**DESIGN FEATURES FOR BOTH SHELTERED AND EXTRA CARE HOUSING**

**EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT**

Location, site layout and building orientation should provide a convenient, safe and attractive environment which provides visual and acoustic privacy.

All providers of accommodation will need to comply with planning requirements and Building Regulations. In addition Registered Social Landlords will comply with the Housing Corporation’s Scheme Development Standards (2003).

**Roads and Pathways**

- Public, communal and private space and pathways and roads should be clearly defined and well lit at night.
- Dropped kerbs must be provided at appropriate locations and painted white.
- Easy access for wheelchair users and those who have difficulty walking. Gradients of paths to be a maximum of 1:20. Steps and stairs should be avoided.
- Ramps to be a maximum of 5 metres at 1:12 or 10 metres at 1:15 with handrails fitted.
- Maximise natural surveillance and avoidance of hidden areas.
- Access paths should be a minimum of 900mm wide and with good, appropriate lighting.
- All paths should have a smooth slip resistant surface 900mm wide, max cross falls 1:40 shallow crossings
- Handrails are required where area adjacent to the path has a drop of 380mm or more.
- A clear opening of 850mm is required on gateways.
- Gateways need openings that provide easy access for wheelchairs and tenants with shopping trolleys.
- Entrances to all schemes should be plainly marked where appropriate ‘Private Access to Residents only’.

**Landscaping**

- The landscaping should enhance the design of the project and include soft landscaping, including ground cover plants, shrubs and grassed areas.
- Garden areas must have maximum gradients of 1:12.
- Raised planting areas.
- Seated open areas.
- No drops of over 600mm without handrails or planting,
- Shaded area where possible, where tenants could sit and enjoy sunny summery day

Parking

- Car parking for the project should reflect the current and future needs of the project for residents, visitors and staff. (Planning authorities usually require 1.5 spaces per person) but a lower provision may be acceptable. There will be issues around land acquisition/costs, target rents, staff parking and scheme financial viability.
- One third of parking in sheltered and extra care schemes should be designated for the extra care properties.
- Ninety percent of parallel parking spaces should be 2.4m x 4.8min size (with 10% a minimum of 3.3m x 4.8m where spaces are grouped). All spaces must be clearly defined.
- Parking for residents should be as close as possible to their dwellings (30m should be considered the maximum).
- Parking for emergency vehicles to be provided within 30m of dwellings.
- Communal parking areas should be identifiable with the group of dwellings that they serve.
- Covered parking spaces (minimum size 5700mm depth x 3600mm wide) should be provided where possible.
- For extra care and sheltered schemes where day care is provided a drop off space/turning point for vehicle is essential.
- Where grouped; parking spaces and associated access paths are well and sensitively lit.

- Official & eye catching signs indicating parking ‘for residents and visitors only’

External Lighting

- Lighting should increase security and safety and be vandal proof.
- A sensor based system activated by reduction in natural light should be provided. In some locations lights activated by movement after dark may be more appropriate.

Security and Safety Systems

- External and internal layouts should be designed to increase safety and security.
- 24 hour alarm call system fitted in communal areas and individual dwellings.
- External doors/frames/fixing/locking meet Secured by Design standards.
- Intercom Systems on all entry doors where appropriate
- CCTV covering main entrances where appropriate
**Drying Areas.**

- Sufficient external and internal drying facilities to be provided for Sheltered and as appropriate for Extra Care. Suitable hard paved drying area with firm even access

**Refuse**

- External storage bin stores to be provided which are convenient easily accessible to all including wheelchair users, in a well-lit inconspicuous secure area.
- Lockable external stores/sheds provided for dwelling occupants of Sheltered accommodation.
- Facilities provided for collection of waste recycling

**Layout of Building/s**

- Schemes must meet Secured by Design standards.

- Buildings should be designed in such a way that natural light and sunlight is maximised

- Where possible living rooms should be south facing.
- The grouping of dwellings should maximise privacy and reduce noise.
- Clear and concise signage for those living at and visiting the scheme
- Where possible laundry room on level ground – no steps

**INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT**

Internal environments should be comfortable, convenient, capable of sensibly accommodating the necessary furniture and equipment associated with specific room activities and be suitable for particular needs of intended user groups. (Housing Corporation requirements does have regard to the environment section of the National Housing Federation’s (NHF publication Standards and quality in development)).

In some projects services, such as day care, are offered which result in non-residents requiring regular access to facilities within the buildings. These
areas should be located separately from the tenants accommodation to ensure a greater degree of privacy and security for those living there. Clear and concise signage of properties, lifts, and facilities must be provided.

**Entrance to main blocks.**

- The main access to the project should be level and clearly marked on approach to the building.
- A canopy (minimum 1200mm x 1200mm), should be provided outside all external doors. In particular, a canopy or porch (with illumination) provides shelter to the dwelling main entrance.
- All external doors should be wheelchair accessible
- The entrance landing should be a minimum of 1.5m x 1.5m (clear of any door swing), with a level threshold (or maximum of 15mm upstand).
- The entrance should be well lit.
- Main entrance to the dwelling (including main entrance from communal lobby or landing should have a clear opening minimum 800mm, normally flat threshold (max up-stand 15mm). *Front* doors, including automatic should open inwards unless Fire Regulations require otherwise.
- Other main doors should provide a minimum clear opening of 800mm. Level threshold or a maximum of 15mm upstand.
- An inner set of doors should be included to provide a lobby area.
- The access doors into the building and from reception, to the rest of the project, should be capable of use by a remote control door opener or magnetic opening devices wired into smoke & fire alarms for internal corridor doors.
- all external doors should be wheelchair accessible.

**Reception Area.**

- A reception area should be located at the main entrance.
- Large enough to accommodate a number of people arriving at the same time and for wheelchair users to access comfortably.
- Notice boards, seating, planters etc should be provided at an appropriate height so they can be viewed by people using wheel-chairs.

**Access within the building.**

- Some projects will offer facilities available to the wider community these should be located separately from the accommodation.
- All self-closing doors must be capable of independent operation by wheelchair users.

Circulation Areas (corridors)

- Any self closing doors are to be capable of independent operation by a wheelchair user.
- Internal doors to corridors etc must provide clear openings of a minimum of 800mm and passageways to be 900mm (to allow for radiators, handrails etc) for Sheltered accommodation and should be 1400mm for Extra Care housing.
- Door handles etc must be positioned 600-1200mm above floor level and be lever type which are easy to use for people with disabilities.
- Doors to individual homes must have a letter box, door bell and property number.
- **All areas should be well and evenly lit.**
- **Two way switches should be provided where necessary.**
- All circulation areas to have easy access to a warden call alarm type system.
- Handrails needed in all corridors.
- Corridors free of steps – ramps to be provided instead.

**Staircases**

- Staircases should be straight flight where possible and be capable in all cases of future stair lift fitting to British Standard, while allowing sufficient space for others to have access. (This may not be necessary where there is an existing passenger lift).
- Suitable lighting (including emergency) must be fitted and building design to ensure natural light from windows wherever possible. Timing of lights which are on ‘automatic switch off’ should be delayed to allow sufficient time for use of stairs with appropriate lux levels for people with visual difficulties.
- Half landings are preferable on straight flights of stairs.

- Easy rise staircases (max 35 degrees or a halfway landing) with a handrail on both sides.
- Heights and depths of treads on stairs should not disadvantage older people.
- Handrails needed in all stairways

**Lifts**

- Passenger lifts are required in all projects where residential accommodation is provided above ground floor entrance level.
- The lift must be capable of taking a wheelchair, its occupant and an accompanying person.
- A fold down seat must be provided and all passenger controls must be capable of being operated by someone in a wheelchair.
- Warden/ emergency call button to be fitted within lift at height and location accessible to wheelchair users.
- An eight person size lift is sufficient for sheltered schemes but extra care housing requires a thirteen person size lift. (except in schemes of less than 13 flat size)
- Voice announcement system for floor levels is helpful for frail older people.
- Lifts should have an emergency call button at floor level.
**Windows.**

- In living rooms and bedrooms window sills should be no higher than 810mm from floor level, to maximise natural light and provide views for those sitting.
- All window handles should be easily accessible. Particular consideration should be given in the kitchen area (having to reach across worktops) and opening controls operable by wheelchair users.
- Opening and ventilation systems must be able to be operated independently by wheelchair users.
- All windows must be capable of being operated and cleaned without risk.
- Upper floor windows must have restrictors for safety reasons.
- No windows to open onto paths or access ways for safety reasons, on ground floor levels or where raised paths meet upper floor windows.
- Ground floor and other easy accessible windows and tested to BS 7950:1997 standards for enhanced security.
- Key operated locks or laminated 6.4mm glass to ground floor or easily accessible windows.
- Every room to have a small top opening window to allow fresh air in with the exception of rooms eg. bathrooms, WCs that have mechanical ventilation at a high level (complying with Building Regs.) or where there is passive ventilation providing fresh air (no mechanical appliance).

**Communal toilets.**

- Toilets (including those for wheelchair access) should be available close to the reception area and communal lounges.
- Toilets should be located to allow doors to open outwards without causing difficulty to those using main corridors. Outward opening or sliding doors (if outward openings aren’t possible) is required to enable access to someone who may have fallen behind door (building Reg. require this).
- Slip resistant flooring.
- Thermostatic controls must be fitted to taps.
- Warden/ emergency call button to be fitted within each toilet at a height and location which is accessible to wheelchair users.
- Tile banding at appropriate height above sinks, toilet cisterns and baths needs to be used to promote visibility of handles etc. for those with sight impairment.
- 2-way opening doors in toilets and bathrooms or external opening to enable access to someone who may have fallen behind door.

**Common room/ sitting room.**

- The room should be large enough to accommodate all residents and occasional social functions for residents and guests and be wheelchair accessible.
- It should have the ability to be sub divided to allow for quiet areas and social/ activity areas.
- Double doors required to and from this main room.
- A chair store, coat area and toilet should be provided close by.
- The furnishings should be comfortable and homely.
- The room should be well lit and have even heating.
- Where day care is to be offered providers will need to meet the requirements of the Care Standards Commission.
- Hearing loop system should be included.
- It should be near to a WC with basin
- It should be provided with an adjacent tea kitchen.
- There is an issue of shared use of communal lounges by people coming into schemes for day care only, which needs to be addressed.

Communal Kitchen/ Tea Bar

- Located adjacent or within the communal room.

- Of sufficient size to cater for refreshments and light snacks for all tenants, a reasonable number of visitors and guests.
- Adequate storage e.g. for fridge, foodstuffs and utensils.
- Must comply with all Health and Hygiene regulations.
- Slip resistant flooring.
- Thermostatic controls must be fitted to taps.
- Storage areas in the kitchen must be lockable for safety reasons taking into account older people suffering with dementia.
- Tile banding at appropriate height above sinks, toilet cisterns and baths needs to be used to promote visibility of handles etc. for those with sight impairment.

Laundry Room

- Washing and drying facilities for use by tenants on raised platforms.
- Thermostatic controls must be fitted to taps.
- Sink and worktop area – tile banding at appropriate height above sinks, toilet cisterns and baths needs to be used to promote visibility of handles etc. for those with sight impairment.
- If not in main building then ensure adequate heating.
- Extract ventilation.
- Slip resistant flooring.
- Taps which are accessible by residents must be fitted with Thermostatic controls
- In Extra Care a separate sluice room/sluice washing machine for use by care assistants (appropriately positioned within the project).
- Access to laundry room MUST NOT be via any kitchen or food preparation areas and must be well ventilated with fans and naturally.

**Electrical**

- Electrical outlets and switches suitably positioned for use by the older person.
- Well lit halls and corridors.
Heating

- A constant temperature of 22°C should be maintained throughout the building when the outside temperature is –1°C. 16°C in common corridors.
- Where possible room temperatures are maintained by low surface temperature radiators or other equivalent.
- Individual tenant control of room temperatures.

Services

- Suitable access and control of water stopcock, gas or oil (where appropriate) electric main consumer units to be provided for residents.
- All switches must be positioned 900 – 1200mm above floor level.
- Socket outlets positioned 450 – 600mm above floor level.
- Isolating valves to be provided for sinks, washing machines, baths, basins, wc’s etc.
- **Flexible plumbing systems**
  - Two telephone points per dwelling, cabling for terrestrial television.
  - Fuse boxes must be easily accessible by tenants.

Security, Personal Alarms, Smoke Alarms, CO2 Detectors and Sprinkler Systems

- Alarm call systems to be fitted in communal areas and individual dwellings.
- Smoke alarms must be provided in every communal corridor on every floor and within individual dwellings.
- CO2 detectors should also be fitted where gas is available on the premises.
- Sprinkler systems must be considered for communal areas after a risk assessment has been undertaken with Fire Authority and Building Regulations.
- Entryphone security to main entrance of blocks of flats.

**Bathrooms in Communal Areas.**

- In larger projects (20+ units) one bathroom with standard bath on each floor with bath lift, dependent on facilities within flats. Numbers of baths need to be appropriate to ratio/scale of the scheme.
  - Slip resistant flooring.
  - Thermostatic controls must be fitted to taps.
  - Tile banding at appropriate height above sinks, toilet cisterns and baths need to be used to promote visibility of handles etc. for those with sight impairment.

Guest Room

- Wheelchair accessible throughout.
- Double guest room with twin beds.
- Adjoining shower, wash hand basin and w.c. with slip resistant flooring.
- Tea and coffee making facilities.
- Thermostatic controls must be fitted to taps/shower.

Public telephone

- **Pay Phone provided in a location which is easily accessible, including wheelchair users, which affords privacy.**

Wheelchair store

- Located internally near to main entrance where possible. Storage should be appropriate to accommodate an appropriate % wheelchairs/buggies/scooters relative to size of scheme. An appropriate % of units should be able to accommodate wheelchair/boggie charging points. Consideration must be given regarding meters on the electrical supply to ensure tenants pay for their own electrical usage.

- An easily accessible, well-lit, secure wheelchair store with sockets for battery charging to be provided with appropriate ratio of sockets to the size of the scheme.
- Sufficient space to transfer to second wheelchair
- Alarm call point to be included.
- Slip resistant flooring.

Storage

- Sufficient lockable storage areas for all the projects equipment, furniture etc.

**Day Care Room**

- Sheltered and Extra Care schemes may include a separate room for day care clients.
- Small kitchenette provided as a minimum.
- Communal lounge for social activities/interaction.
- Luncheon club area may be provided.
- **Other considerations suggested by providers**

Suggested band of strong colour on hand rail – different colour on each floor, to promote orientation.

Consideration should be given to colour co-ordination to promote awareness of architrave’s, doors, alcoves etc.

All Notices should be printed in appropriate font size to take regard of those with
sight impairment.

Emergency Exit areas – well signed and illuminated at night.

REQUIRED ONLY IN EXTRA CARE SCHEMES

THE LISTED ESSENTIAL ITEMS ARE IN ADDITION TO THE SHELTERED HOUSING CRITERIA.

A common sense approach needs to be taken to ensure the scheme is viable. The facilities listed below need to be relevant to the size of the scheme, so that a sufficient number of flats be a minimum to support these facilities (suggest 20 units). It is reasonable to expect that all new schemes over and above 20 units should achieve this level and that it is good practice for existing services to remodel wherever possible.

**Restaurant**

- Adjacent to the kitchen.
- Should be separate, or be able to be sub divided, from the sitting room.
- Well lit with as much natural light as possible.
- Suitably furnished, allowing for those with limited mobility and for wheelchair users.

**Quiet Room**

- Projects of ten or more people should include at least one quiet room for residents. (Books tapes etc).
  (Suggestions from service users: there should be regular changes of books & tapes and a computer available for those who may have mobility problems but who are mentally alert.)

**Recreational Room**

- It is recommended that a room be provided where tenants can spend time involved in hobbies and social interaction.
- A sink, worktops, storage and appropriate tables and chairs to be provided.
- Thermostatic controls must be fitted to taps.
- Slip resistant flooring.
- Tile banding at appropriate height above sinks, worktops - needs to be used to promote visibility for those with sight impairment.

**Exercise Room**

- If possible a room where activities and exercises can be enjoyed under supervision. (A service user suggested there should be regular supervised gentle excise classes provided)
- Provision of a fitness suite suggested by providers
Hairdressing Room

- A fully equipped hairdressing room for men and women should be provided.
- Sinks, worktops, storage and lockable cupboards to be included. One sink for forward hair washing to assist people in wheelchairs.
- Slip resistant flooring.
- Thermostatic controls must be fitted to taps accessible to tenants.
- Tile banding at appropriate height above sinks, toilet cisterns and baths needs to be used to promote visibility of handles etc. for those with sight impairment.

Health Workers Room/Multi purpose room

- To be provided for visiting health and care staff.
- Location should allow for easy access and privacy for tenants attending sessions.
- Wash hand basin and work top, table, chairs and lockable storage to be provided.
- Slip resistant flooring.

Carers Facilities

- Staff room, toilets, changing room and sleep-over room.

Tea Bar (may also be provided in a sheltered scheme)
(adequate central and/or dispersed catering facilities)

- Of sufficient size to cater for all tenants, a reasonable number of visitors and guests and other regulars e.g. day care lunches. Thought should be given to the future catering needs of the project.
- Adequate and lockable storage for equipment e.g. freezers, foodstuffs and utensils.
- Located next to dining room area.
- Service of meals possible into dining area without interruption of access to others.
- Must comply with all Health and Hygiene regulations.
- Slip resistant flooring.
- CO2 detectors to be provided where gas is available.
- Where dispersed 1(min.) catering facility to be usable from a wheelchair.
- Tile banding at appropriate height above sinks, toilets cisterns and baths needs to be used to promote visibility of handles etc. for those with sight impairment.

Laundry Room (in addition to standards for sheltered accommodation)
- In Extra Care a separate sluice room/ sluice washing machine for use by care assistants (appropriately positioned within the project).
- Provision of hand washing facility, plus the facility to ‘spin dry’ only.
- Central Linen Store plus ‘ordinary washing machine’ for those who retain their independence and may wish to continue using the facilities themselves. Forremodelling purposes, if it is not possible to have a central linen store, a large lockable cupboard adjacent to the laundry room will suffice.

**Bathrooms in Communal Areas.**

- In Extra Care projects a fully equipped assisted bathroom as minimum for every 20 households and thereafter one ordinary bathroom with bath/hoist dependent on facilities within flats. Numbers of baths need to be appropriate to ratio/scale of the scheme.
- Shared bathrooms and WCs conveniently located.
- Communal toilets near the common room and dining room.
- Tile banding at appropriate height above sinks, toilets, cisterns and baths needs to be used to promote visibility of handles etc. for those with sight impairment.

**Open Area**

- Maintained garden or seated open area

**INDIVIDUAL DWELLINGS WITHIN EXTRA CARE AND SHELTERED SCHEMES**

- Each dwelling should be on a single level.
- Dwellings should be designed to ensure that there is sufficient space for turning a wheelchair within all rooms.
- All individual units in extra care schemes to be wheelchair accessible
- Layouts must be designed to minimise noise transmission and have sufficient sound insulation.
- Flexible internal walls to facilitate expansion of room sizes for those with mobility difficulties or who may be using their beds for most of the day and need wider visual space.
- All rooms and corridors to have easy access to a pull cord warden call alarm system.
- Providers may wish to issue pendant/ wristband alarms to all tenants.
- Adequate space to allow for furniture and facilitate movement of larger items of furniture.
- Telephone points in living room and bedroom.
- Each dwelling should have at least one sink, one wash-hand basin, one walk in shower and one w.c. Thermostatic controls must be fitted to taps/showers.
- Electrical outlets suitably positioned for use by the older person. Adequate number of electrical outlets within the unit
- accessible fuse boxes
- accessible stop cocks if located in individual units
- Space and standards should meet lifetime homes criteria with the following minimum square metre sizes to apply:

Recommended Space Standards for Dwellings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of persons in dwelling</th>
<th>1/2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total area of dwelling</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living room</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining/kitchen</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom (main)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14 + 6.5 minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined living room/kitchen</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Energy Conservation

Standard Assessment Procedure (or SAP) rating required 100

or Carbon Index (CI) 8.1

All dwellings up to and including 3 occupants must have 1.7m³ of domestic storage space (excluding airing cupboards) that is easily accessible. A minimum of half should be within the kitchen. Secure storage for harmful substances, medicine etc is required.

Schemes should incorporate cost-effective energy efficiency measures

Bedrooms.
- A percentage (10%) of new dwellings should provide two bedroom accommodation.
- Main bedroom 14m² to allow for twin beds and wheelchair transfer to either. Where a secondary single bedroom is also provided 6.5m².
- Dining rooms/second bedrooms where provided must be a minimum of 6.5m².
- Sockets outlets, TV/FM points, two way lights, telephone point and entry phone point must be sensibly positioned in each main bedroom.
- Turning space for wheelchairs 1500mm minimum diameter clear and sufficient space to transfer from a wheelchair should be included.
**Kitchens.**

- Internal kitchens should have natural light.
- Sink and at least one drainer. Lever taps should be provided.

- Cooker space to be a minimum width of 625 mm and must not be located under a window or next to sink or fridge spaces (minimum of 500mm clear area on either side of the cooker space).
- Total work space, which must be no less than 600mm wide, must be at least 1.5 m total with no less than 300mm on any one length).
- Minimum of three appliance spaces (to allow maximum flexibility for fridge and freezer and consideration to washing machine and dish washer space) with plumbing points provided.
- Wall cupboards must be accessible.

- Kitchen floor slip resistant.

- All controls and sockets to be accessible and remote switching labelled.
- Suitable internal refuse arrangements which are manageable from a wheelchair are to be provided.
- Alternative height worktop in extra Care housing (in sections to allow maximum flexibility and optional on Sheltered schemes.)
- For wheelchairs a minimum clear manouevring area of 1.8m x 1.4m is required.
- Electric cooker boxes and where available gas connections for cookers.
- CO2 detectors where gas is available.
- Switches, sockets, heater controls etc must be located between 600mm and 1200mm from the floor to allow ease of access.
- extractor ventilation provided.
- Tile banding at appropriate height above sinks, toilet cisterns and baths needs to be used to promote visibility of handles etc. for those with sight impairment.

**Bathrooms/ shower rooms and wc’s.**
- Internal bathrooms should be avoided.
- Toilets and bath/shower rooms must be fully wheelchair accessible
- Walk in showers (to wheelchair standard) to be provided with graded floor (not shower tray sunk into floor) and shower seats (within folding legs) fitted to the wall. Shower, non slip with side seat (optional in lieu of a bath).
- Where provided showers should have thermostatically controlled mixing valves.
- Baths (if provided exceptionally) must have space 400mm minimum for a seat or platform at the end (away from the taps)
- All bathroom and toilet walls must be capable of taking grab-rails and hand-rails.
- All bathroom and main bedroom ceilings must be of sufficient strength to be able to take a track system and hoist. Where connecting doors are not originally provided a removable panel should be included, from floor to ceiling, to enable the tracking to connect the two rooms.
- Position of fittings and type to be chosen for ease of use.
- Lever taps must be provided. Mixer taps are not acceptable.
- Thermostatically controlled water temperatures.
- Sufficient space to transfer from a wheelchair should be included.
- Non slip flooring must be provided in all toilets and bath/shower rooms.
- Toilet and bath/shower room doors should open out wherever possible, or sliding where internal space is limited and be fitted with override door locks.
- Basins must be minimum of 450mm above floor level, with knee space beneath.
- Tile banding at appropriate height above sinks, toilet cisterns and baths needs to be used to promote visibility of handles etc. for those with sight impairment.

**Internal doors** minimum of 775mm clear openings.

**STAFF FACILITIES**

**Office**
- Manager’s office capable of accommodating computer desk, lockable cabinets, etc
- Quiet Room/Relatives Room. A small room for private meetings with residents, relatives and staff
- Staff rest room located away from the main areas of activity.

- Secure lockers for staff belongings.
- Lockable cupboards for cleaning materials and equipment.
PART FIVE
REMODELLING EXISTING SHELTERED OR EXTRA CARE SCHEMES

5.1. Review of Schemes. Most providers of existing Category 1 and Cat 2 accommodation are currently reviewing their housing stock. This is expected to result in many properties being re-designated to general needs, with support services where required, or upgraded to the new definition of sheltered housing. (see page 8). Re-designation may also be required for properties which are below acceptable space standards, are too far from local shops and community facilities, or are hard to let.

Depending on the current provision of accommodation and services a number of projects (currently designated sheltered Category 1, Category 2 or Extra Care) may need to be considered for re-modelling fully, or in part. Providers should be working with their Local Authorities and the Supporting People Team to meet the strategic needs identified within the Supporting People Devon Strategy. This may include making the project and its facilities available to others e.g. luncheon club.

The Supporting People Strategy requires the Joint Commissioning Body to have a strategic plan for the long-term provision of sheltered housing. It must take into account the balance of needs and range of provision for a diverse older population in the future and the assessment of current provision against current and future objectives.

The three yearly Supporting People scheme reviews, which commence from April 2003, will highlight services and accommodation that are no longer meeting the needs and or the agreed standards. Where providers have identified that a change to accommodation or services is necessary they should contact the Supporting People Team to request an early review. Discussions must take place with the Local Authority and the Supporting People Team and agreement reached prior to any changes being finalised or made.

Apart from the need to meet the current strategy for older people there may be funding requirements (capital and or revenue). Under Supporting People housing related support services will be jointly planned and commissioned by Housing, Health, Social Services and Probation. This needs to be extended to capital costs where appropriate.

Current Issues. Information collected indicates the following problems with existing accommodation: -

• Location. An increasing number of tenants/applicants for sheltered housing consider that properties are in the “wrong” place i.e. not close enough to shops, public transport, community facilities, etc. This is despite an increase in car ownership within this client group over the past decade, which has in itself lead to inadequate parking provision at some projects.
(low ratios of spaces per sheltered property were often approved by planning departments in the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s).

**Key requirement**: accommodation must be within 0.5 miles of shops and community facilities e.g. health centre, post office etc.

- **Size**. Existing dwellings are often too small for current/future use and properties are unable to be adapted substantially. Internal layout can also be poor. The majority of sheltered dwellings have one bedroom. This can be a disadvantage where a carer needs to be accommodated or partners sleep apart. This results in less flexible and increasingly difficult to let properties.

**Key requirement**: 51 square metres per new dwelling for minimum internal size. 45 square metres in existing accommodation.

**Key requirement**: 2 beds in 10% of new provision.

- **Disabled access**. Only a limited number of wheelchair properties are available throughout the County.

**Key requirement**. All new accommodation must have full disabled access. Existing extra care housing should be fully accessible by wheelchair users. The requirements for existing sheltered housing are defined in Section Five.

- **Heating**. Many sheltered properties have night storage heaters or have electric heating systems. These have often been criticised in the past as being inappropriate for less active people. Discussions with providers indicate a nervousness about providing gas heating and cooking facilities for frail elderly on the grounds of safety.

**Key requirement**: central heating or night storage heating in lounge, bedroom and hallway as a minimum. Housing corporation requirements is that room temperatures are maintained by low surface temperature radiators or other equivalent.

- **Bathrooms**. There is now a trend towards fitting walk in showers where possible but many dwellings still have baths. This may no longer be appropriate due to the need for disabled access.

**Key requirement**: walk in showers for all new and refurbished dwellings.

- **Higher customer expectations**. Tenants and applicants for rented housing have higher expectations than was the case ten years ago. They are more aware of standards and monitoring of landlords (by regulators, lenders, etc) on performance, standards etc. They are also more likely to make comparisons with the private sector.

**Key requirement**: accountable consultation process with user group.

**Minimum Standards**. It is accepted that it may not always be possible for existing properties to be improved to the standards listed e.g. minimum unit size. It is therefore proposed that three lists be agreed (Mandatory, Essential, and Recommended) as shown on the next page. All items from the Mandatory list should be achievable and are expected to be met. Those on the Essential
list should also be provided but where it can be proved that those cannot be implemented there would be an option to increase the provision from the Recommended features to compensate. The “trading” of options must be agreed with the Supporting People Team.

These Standards would form the basis for assessment of projects under the scheme reviews and be used by providers as a benchmark for their current housing stock.
APPENDIX 1

NEW STANDARDS FOR EXISTING PROJECTS

Minimum standards for existing, self contained, dwellings.

Mandatory (all standards to be met).
Maximise natural surveillance
Paths 900mm wide
Paths to have non slip surface
Handrails on paths
Automatic switches to internal communal areas
Central heating or similar
Thermostatically controlled hot water
Twenty four hour alarm call system
Kitchen workspace minimum of 1.5m (no less than 300mm on any one run)
Lever taps for kitchen and bathroom
Floor coverings in kitchen and bathroom slip resistant
Wheelchair dwellings -minimum clear manoeuvring areas of 1.8m x 1.4m.
Suited key system
Coded key safe

Essential (all standards to be met or reasons for non-compliance agreed and further items from the optional list to be provided instead)
Close proximity to shops and community facilities
Minimum individual dwelling size 45m square (desirable 51m square)
Car parking within 30m of dwelling
Wheelchair standard for 25% of dwellings across all stock
Mobility standard throughout
External ramped access to properties
External and internal drying facilities
Dwellings on single level
Lift available for all properties above ground floor level
Main doors should have clear opening of 800mm
Internal doors minimum clear openings of 775mm
Level thresholds
Internal passageways 900mm
Living room and bedroom windows no higher than 810 above floor level
Minimum of three appliance spaces in kitchen
Walk in shower with graded floor (or low shower tray if limited by existing construction) and wall mounted seat
Smoke alarms, CO2 detectors and sprinkler systems to be fitted.
All bathroom and toilet walls capable of taking grab rails and handrails
Low surface temperature radiators
Door entry control system

Optional (to be provided where possible)
Separate kitchen
Second bedroom
Lockable wheelchair storage
Meet lifetime homes criteria
Fully adjustable worktops in kitchen
Bathroom and main bedroom ceilings capable of taking ceiling hoists

Other Standards listed on pages 11 - 23 and not included above
For further information see also:-


Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations 1994


Energy Efficiency. BRE Good Practice Guide 79 and 155.

“Wheelchair Housing design Guide” pub Construction Research Communications Limited

Housing Corporation Scheme Development Standards (and Design and Contract Criteria and Good Practice Guides where not superseded) April 2003. The Housing Corporation requirements does have regard to the National Housing Federation’s publication standards and quality in development

“A New Model of Ageing for Housing Providers” from HOPE (Housing and Older People in Europe Network). Funded by the Housing Corporation.