

The Extra Care Model

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If you've been reading these articles on a regular basis then you'll realise by now that retirement property comes in all shapes and sizes, they can be in urban or rural locations and services can range from the basic to the extensive. Most blocks of retirement apartments that you will see when you are out and about are 'standard' apartments with some adaptations for older people, limited communal facilities and basic services.

On the other hand, the 'model' of retirement property that the Department of Health recommends is based on a model called extra-care. They support this model because people who live in extra-care retirement property maintain their independence for longer and spend less time in hospital than those of equivalent age in standard retirement properties.

In an extra-care development you live in a self-contained private apartment but have access to communal facilities to encourage you to socialise. There are times when we all want to shut our front door and enjoy our own company, which you can always do in this type of development, but arguably the biggest cause of ill-health among older people is depression caused by loneliness so the communal facilities and services are there to tempt you out to meet people, make friends and enjoy being part of a community.

In extra-care developments there are also additional services you can call on such as cleaning, laundry or personal care and a hot meal will be served every day in the communal restaurant. Some support, usually 90 minutes per week, is built into the service charge and most people use this for apartment cleaning or laundry but you can add to this if you need additional help such as personal care. In the best designed developments you are not locked into paying for services until you need them but can build up a package of support as your needs change.

Of course, service charges in extra-care developments are higher than in standard apartments but so are the services you receive and the benefits are clear. A more comfortable retirement, peace of mind from knowing someone is around to help you 24 hours a day should you need it, reassurance for your family that you are being well looked after and the likelihood that you will maintain your independence and health for longer.

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