

## **CARE SUITE CONCEPT**

Increasingly, the Providers of Care Homes for the Elderly have become more attuned to the requirements of the potential future occupiers with regard to their needs but also their future aspirations. The ageing profile of the population of the country as a whole is continuing to rise, particularly in the upper age brackets as the population continues to live longer. However, longevity does not necessarily mean that people can continue to be self-sufficient and many people have to be cared for in Nursing Homes for a variety of reasons.

Traditionally, the majority of residents in Care Homes live in spacious single rooms, within a 'Care Home' environment. Increasingly, however, there is an identified demand from prospective residents who wish to achieve the security and care provided by a Home, but also retain their independence in a small self-contained unit.

It is important to understand that not every potential resident has the same needs and, there is a cohort of older residents who are capable of being largely self-sufficient, for a period of time, and who are seeking to retain their independence for as long as possible. The concept of Care Suites enables residents to benefit from the security of being located in a safe and "*social*" building which can also provide professional 24 hour care should this be required.

In essence, the Care Suites enable a choice for residents and should they subsequently become more fragile; they have the peace of mind to know that they can, should they so wish, be moved to a single room.

For the most able residents, these units create a more independent lifestyle; their families and friends can visit them in the comfort of their 'own' suites. However, the same level of nursing care and support is available to all the residents of the home as required. It is quite clear from the submitted layout plan ref: 17-132-123 Rev A, that a substantial area of communal space comprising a lounge/dining room, library, which enables the residents, as in other parts of the building to benefit from a community environment.

"Tackling intergenerational unfairness"

Report of Session 2017-19  
Submitted 25<sup>th</sup> April 2019

has not performed detailed checks as to whether local authorities have spent the additional income generated on planning."<sup>132</sup>

105. The Minister also raised the fact that capacity could be a problem for local authorities as they may occasionally need "a level of expertise and a senior planner which it would not necessarily have on a day-to-day basis." His preferred solution for this was to pool that central expertise so that it could be shared between local authorities.<sup>133</sup> The NAO's investigation into the planning system found that the Department did not understand the extent of the skills shortages and only has "patchy" data on staff numbers.<sup>134</sup>
106. ***The Government should give powers to local authorities to set their own planning fees up to cost. Local authorities should ensure that additional fees are retained by planning departments.***

### Housing for older generations

107. Gareth Lyon, Head of Policy and Communications at the Associated Retirement Community Operators (ARCO) told us that the UK had much lower levels of people living in retirement communities than comparable countries. He stated that in "Australia, New Zealand and the US, between five per cent and six per cent of older people live in retirement communities. In the UK, that figure is 0.5 per cent to 0.6 per cent."<sup>135</sup> One positive feature of retirement communities is that they reduce overall care costs:

"The cost of providing lower level social care in a Retirement Community has been found to be £1,222 (17.8 per cent) less per person per year than providing the same level of care in the wider community. The cost of providing higher level social care has been found to be £4,556 (26 per cent) less per person per year. NHS costs reduce by 38 per cent for those moving into Retirement Communities, an average saving of £1,114.94 per person per year. This relates to GP visits, nurse visits, and hospital visits."<sup>136</sup>

108. One problem that stops more retirement communities from being created is the inconsistency of planning use class assigned to them. Care homes are classified as C2 whilst regular houses are classified as C3. Properties classified as C2 can face fewer planning restrictions as to where they are built and have fees waived.<sup>137</sup> ARCO states:

"There is a large body of case law and precedent confirming that genuine housing-with-care schemes often fall within the C2 use class, as they are capable of delivering high levels of care to older people. However, there is much confusion and inconsistency between different councils' approaches to specialist older people's housing-with care in terms of what Use Class such specialist accommodation falls within."<sup>138</sup>

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132 *Planning for new homes*, p 39

133 [Q 201](#) (Kit Malthouse MP)

134 *Planning for new homes*, p 41

135 [Q 122](#) (Gareth Lyon)

136 Written evidence from ARCO ([IFP0014](#))

137 Harrison Clark Rickerbys Solicitors, 'C3 or not C3? Planning use classes for retirement housing' (November 2016): <https://www.hcrlaw.com/blog/c3-not-c3-planning-use-classes-retirement-housing/> [accessed 28 January 2019]

138 Written evidence from ARCO ([IFP0014](#))

109. Age UK presented a slightly different case, stating that “the debate around whether there should be reforms to planning gain rules to incentivise retirement developments is finely balanced, and it can be argued they should make a reasonable contribution to affordable homes for lower income groups and community infrastructure costs, especially developments at the top end of the market.” It suggests instead that there should be a focus on a wider range of housing options for older people, including properties built to higher accessibility standards and encouraging the development of integrated age friendly homes and communities that bring younger and older generations together.<sup>139</sup> On our visit to Doncaster we saw the positive effect that extra care housing can have by offering somewhere that can provide care whilst still helping residents remain part of the local community. As these facilities can provide care it is not clear why they are not more consistently classified for the basis of planning in the same use case as care providers. In the long-term, as ARCO recommends,<sup>140</sup> it may make sense for them to have their own specialised planning use case.
110. *The Government should issue guidance clarifying that extra care retirement communities fall within the C2 use class as they are capable of delivering high levels of care to older people and so should be treated as the same planning use class as care homes.*

#### Planning for each generation

111. Different age groups can have differing housing needs and it is important for these to be considered. ARCO told us that currently only 11 per cent of Local Plans in England and Wales have specific policies to address older people’s housing needs, with only four per cent of plans including land allocations for housing for older people. This is despite the expectation that 30 per cent of the population will be over 65 by 2036.<sup>141</sup> The Minister told us that two thirds of local planning authorities have no older people’s accommodation in their local plan. However, he stated that under the National Planning Policy Framework, local authorities are supposed to consider the needs of older people in their area and that this had not happened yet because we “are in a transition phase on planning.”<sup>142</sup> The National Planning Policy Framework specifies that:

“the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).”<sup>143</sup>

112. The Minister suggested that as plans are submitted to inspectors they will be assessed on whether they have a sound evidence base.<sup>144</sup> However, he did not state that a failure to consider the needs of older people would lead to inspectors rejecting the local plan. It is too early to say whether the new

139 Written evidence from Age UK ([IFP0047](#))

140 Written evidence from ARCO ([IFP0014](#))

141 *Ibid.*

142 [Q 196](#) (Kit Malthouse MP)

143 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, *National Planning Policy Framework*, CP 48, February 2019, p 17: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/779764/NPPF\\_Feb\\_2019\\_web.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf) [accessed 4 April 2019]

144 [Q 196](#) (Kit Malthouse MP)