



Staying at home, living well

**Housing and support plan for older people and carers
in Hastings and Rother 2007 to 2027**

Foreword

On behalf of Hastings and St Leonards Seniors' Forum and Rother Seniors' Forum, welcome to our housing plan for 2007 to 2027. We are delighted to have been involved so we can help older people (usually people aged over 65) in East Sussex.

Our original decision to combine Hastings Borough with Rother District in one plan was a stepping stone to future planning in this part of the county. We are very pleased that this decision to join districts now covers both towns and countryside communities.

We want to thank everybody for the work they have done to provide the facts and figures on which the housing plan was created. As we look forward to the plan being put into place, our task now will be to monitor how the plan is doing. We will work with all the organisations involved to help shape the future for older people's housing.

We and our partners produced this plan to cope with the increase of older people in Hastings and Rother. The housing plan also looks at the changing needs of older people and the amount of housing for them.

We congratulate everybody involved in developing this plan – it was a job well done.



Pam Brown

OBE
President, Hastings and
St Leonards Seniors' Forum



Ron Sunderland

BSc (Eng), CEng, F.Inst M&C
Chair, Rother Seniors' Forum,
Vice Chair, East Sussex Seniors
Association

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This plan has been produced by East Sussex County Council in partnership with Hastings and Rother Councils, Primary Care Trust, older people and carers, and voluntary and independent organisations.



Introduction

We have talked to older people, their carers, our partners in Hastings and Rother Councils and health, voluntary and independent organisations (such as Age Concern and local housing associations) about how we can improve housing and support services for older people in Hastings and Rother.

We all agreed that the best way to do this would be to work closely together, and develop a housing and support plan to promote the wellbeing and independence of older people and carers in Hastings and Rother.

The plan for housing and support services will include:

- special housing designed for older people;
- help with gardening and minor repairs;
- housing support workers to visit you in your home to give you information and advice about your housing questions;
- help with finding out about benefits you could be entitled to;
- information about how to keep your home warm; and
- help with grants to do up your home.



Our plan's aim

Our plan aims to create a range of services that will be available to all older people and carers in Hastings and Rother. The plan will help older people and carers to live in their own homes for as long as they want to and will promote their wellbeing and give them an equal part in society.

Older people and carers have told us they want to have choice and to fully understand the housing and support options available to them. They also want services to be affordable.

In putting the plan together we have created aims and outcomes. We have taken national and local priorities into account.

These include:

- promoting physical and mental wellbeing;
- providing local services to people who live in the community; and
- helping older people to be actively involved in how services are planned and delivered.

We have listened to:

- what older people and carers say they need;
- what changes we need to make to our services; and
- what resources are available.

Although this plan addresses the needs of people over 65 and their carers, we recognise that we are living in an ageing society. We need to plan for the future when there will be more older people.



Our vision

Our vision is:

'To enhance the social inclusion, wellbeing, dignity, choice and independence of older people and carers living in Hastings and Rother.'

We will do this through:

- helping people to stay in their own homes for as long as possible or help them move to a more suitable home;
- helping to develop a range of long-term options for housing, care and support for older people; and
- helping older people to make active and informed choices.



This is only a summary of our plan. You can get a full version from the Strategic Commissioning Team. You can find their contact details at the end of this booklet.



What people in Hastings and Rother want

Older people, carers and our partners have been actively involved in developing the housing and support plan.

They have done this by:

- holding four consultation and information sessions in October and November 2007;
- taking part in consultation questionnaires;
- putting a draft housing and support plan on local websites;
- giving information about the plan on local radio, in the press and in a range of local organisations' newsletters; and
- holding meetings with various agencies, such as Age Concern and the Alzheimer's Society.

A summary of the main issues raised were to:

- give older people choice and information about housing and support options, whatever tenancy they have;
- make services affordable;
- offer support to help older people make the most of their income;
- give older people help with benefits they could be entitled to;
- consider carers' needs;
- help older people with dementia;
- help older people keep their links to their community; and
- make public transport accessible so people can get out and about.



Hastings and Rother – some facts and figures

We looked at information on older people in the local area, adult social care, public-health statistics, housing registers and housing-needs surveys.

We found the following.

- The number of people over 65 who live in Hastings and Rother is above the national average. Over the next 20 years this number will increase.
- Most older people in Rother live in the Bexhill wards.
- More than 40% of older people who live in Rother live in the countryside and are less likely to use services because they cannot get to them easily.
- Most older people in Hastings and Rother live in private housing with a large number of these owning their own home.
- There is a higher level of deprivation in Hastings than Rother. This is because a lot of older people are on low incomes, have long-term illnesses and live in poor housing.
- The number of older people with mental-health needs, and in particular dementia, will rise. This is most likely to happen in Rother where there are more older people.
- Many older people need special housing and support services such as extra-care housing.
- The number of older people from black and ethnic-minority groups in Hastings and Rother is relatively low at the moment. This number will probably increase over the next 20 years, particularly in Hastings.
- We need to find out the needs of older people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered (living as the sex opposite to that on your birth certificate).
- Hastings and Rother have a large number of people over 65 who provide care for their partners or relatives.



We looked at the current supply of housing and support services.

We found the following.

- Most sheltered housing, care homes and nursing homes in both Hastings and Rother are in towns. There are few in the countryside.
- There is only one extra-care housing scheme in Hastings and Rother respectively. (Extra-care housing is a special housing scheme for older people which provides on-site, 24-hour care and support services to people in their own homes.)
- Both Hastings and Rother councils are concerned about the quality of private-sector housing. Poor-quality housing will affect older people's housing, health and care needs.
- Older people who live in private housing get most services from home-improvement agencies, community-alarm services and voluntary organisations.
- Support services are most widely available to older people who live in social housing, then to a small number of older people who live in private housing.
- There are not enough nursing homes and care homes in Rother's countryside to meet demand.
- Housing information and advice services are usually only available in built-up areas. Older people who live in quieter areas, such as in the countryside, find it difficult to use these services.



What we want to achieve

We and our partners have agreed that we will develop our services together. We will aim to meet the housing, care and support needs of the following priority groups of older people.

- Older people with mental-health needs and learning disabilities, for example those with depression or Down's Syndrome.
- Older people who live in private housing.
- Tenants who live in social housing.
- Vulnerable older people, such as people with physical disabilities like cerebral palsy.
- Older people's carers.
- Older people from black and ethnic-minority communities.
- Older people who live in the countryside.
- Older people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered.
- Older people who are Gypsies and Travellers.



We are using the seven outcomes in the Government paper 'Our health, our care, our say', published in 2006 to help measure our achievements. We have given a summary below of what we plan to achieve over the next three years.

'Improved quality of life for older people'

We will:

- make sure all social homes meet the Decent Homes standard;
- make sure all new scheme developments follow Housing Corporation guidelines for quality and design and make sure new homes can meet the future needs of older people;
- make sure older people can get help with managing their money, keeping warm and living in secure housing;
- improve access in older people's homes, such as providing ramps for wheelchair users;
- increase support services in towns and the countryside, focusing on hard-to-reach groups;
- increase the range of, and access to, low-level support services and activities, such as 'handy person', gardening and repair services; and
- use sheltered housing and extra-care schemes as a central point for community services. Hopefully this will mean isolated people (in towns and in the countryside) will be able to take more of a part in society.



'Improved health and well being'

We will:

- make sure older people's housing is near to transport links, health and leisure services and other services (such as libraries and shops) if possible;
- influence transport planning by working with our partners and planning organisations; and
- Improve the range of healthy activities such as exercise classes.



'Making a positive contribution'

We will:

- Create a plan to help older people and carers to contribute their ideas about the design and delivery of specialist housing and support services; and
- research what the changes to sheltered housing have meant for older people and make sure we take their views into account when we introduce new services.



'Economic wellbeing'

We will:

- help older people and carers to make the most of their income;
- help people work out the costs of housing and support services; and
- give older people information on insulation and fuel-related grants.

'Increased choice in accommodation, housing and support options'

We will:

- influence the housing market by working with housing providers to make sure private-and social-housing developments meet older people's needs;
- develop an extra-care housing scheme in Hastings and Rother (including care for older people with dementia and learning disabilities, intermediate-care beds and support for carers);
- work with our partners, older people and carers to redesign sheltered-housing schemes and how we run our services;
- increase support services in towns and in the countryside, targeting groups that are usually excluded (see below);
- take into account the needs of older people with mental-health needs, older people from black and ethnic-minority groups, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender older people and Gypsies and travellers;
- improve the range of information and advice available for housing and support, grants and equity-release schemes;
- improve support, information and advice for older people living in private housing; and
- improve access to care-home and nursing-home places for older people who live in the countryside.



‘Freedom from discrimination’

We will:

- make sure all our services are accessible to groups that are sometimes excluded, such as black and ethnic-minority groups, people with mobility problems, carers, people with mental-health needs, people with disabilities, people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered and people who are Gypsies and travellers.



‘Increase partnership working’

We will:

- create a housing-and support-provider forum for older people which will bring older people together with housing and support organisations to discuss how they can all work together to develop and improve services for older people; and
- make county-wide partnership agreements for all new housing developments.

Making sure we achieve our goals

To reach our goals, we have drawn up action plans for Hastings and Rother. We have taken local characteristics and priorities (such as the fact that many older people in Rother live in the countryside and that we need to help older people with dementia) into account. The plans give details of a range of housing and support services that we and our partners will provide.

These housing and support services are provided by a range of organisations (such as us and housing associations) along with social-care services (that we provide) and community services (that our health partners provide). You can find details of these services in our other plan reports. You can get these from our Strategic Commissioning Team (see the opposite page for contact details).

When we are working with the action plans, our progress will be monitored regularly by the ‘Hastings and Rother Housing and Support Locality Group for older people’. Every year, we will review the plan, update it and talk to everybody involved to make sure that we take any changes to national and local priorities (such as helping vulnerable older people with housing and support services) into account.

Your views

We welcome your views, comments, ideas and suggestions on this plan. They will help us to make any changes to the plan as we put it into action.

For more information, or to let us know what you think about this plan, please contact:

Geraldine O'Shea

Strategic Commissioning Manager for Older People

East Sussex County Council

County Hall

St Anne's Crescent

Lewes

East Sussex

BN7 1SW

Phone: 01273 482751

E-mail: geraldine.o'shea@eastsussex.gov.uk

You can get a full copy of the plan by phoning our Strategic Commissioning Team on 01273 482533 or by e-mailing policystrategyadmin@eastsussex.gov.uk.

Getting this information in other languages and formats

You can get this document in:

- large print;
- Braille;
- on audio tape;
- on CD; and
- other languages.

It is also available in PDF format which you can download onto your computer from our website at eastsussex.gov.uk.

Please phone 01273 481565 to ask us for a different language or format.



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- East Sussex County Council
- 1066 Housing Association
- 'In Touch' Home Improvement Agency
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- Rother District Council
- Rother Homes

