

## Advice Guide

# Information on housing options for older people

**A decent home is fundamental to people's wellbeing. As people grow older their housing needs can change. Older people spend between 70 and 90 per cent of their time in their home, thus a warm, secure environment that meets individual requirements is crucial.**

*ODPM, A sure start to later life: ending inequalities for older people, 2006*

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## Housing Options for older people

The term 'older people' usually refers to those who are aged 65 or over, although this is not a strict definition. For example, due to health problems or lifestyle factors such as alcohol misuse, people younger than 65 may require services or accommodation for older people.

## Options and facilities for older people

### Staying in your own home

Support and care provided in the home can help people live as independently as possible without the upheaval of moving. Services offered to people in their own home range from help with shopping and budgeting, meals on wheels and care services, such as help with dressing, washing and administering medication.

Care and support services for older people in Exeter are provided by Devon County Council, [Adult Social Care Department](#). Charges for these services depend on the amount of money an older person has available to them.

You can contact this team on **0345 155 1007**.

### Adaptations

Adaptations to the home and equipment provided for people to use can make staying in your own home a feasible option where existing accommodation would otherwise have become unsuitable. They can prevent the 'Slips trip and falls' and other household injuries such as burns that can be especially dangerous to older persons.

Exeter City Council provides [disabled facilities grants](#) to adapt homes for people who are or could be registered disabled and who, without the adaptation, would be unable to live safely and conveniently in their home. If you are a Council Tenant then Exeter City Council will pay for the adaptation.

### Living at home safely

If you're struggling with any areas of living independently, there are a range of solutions to help you. Find out more about the [equipment and personal care that can help you to continue living safely at home](#).

## Moving out of your home

If you can still live safely at home you may be considering downsizing to a smaller property. This is a big decision, so make sure you get independent advice first. [Which? has detailed information](#) if you are thinking about this option.

If you're not ready to move out but need more support you may want to look at [a support scheme like Shared Lives](#), which can offer short breaks, day support and more long-term support. This could be useful if you need help to get out and about or want to learn skills to live independently.

## Housing options for disabled residents

If you are disabled you may be considering whether you can adapt your home to better meet your needs, or thinking about moving to another more suitable property. [Further information about housing options for the disabled can be found here](#). Additionally, you can find information about [adapting your home](#).

## What to do if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness?

If you are homeless or threatened with homelessness then it is important to seek advice at the earliest opportunity.

## Contact details for Exeter City Council's Housing Solutions Service

Online: [Contacting us for housing advice - Exeter City Council](#)

Address: Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter EX1 1JN

Tel: 01392 265726

**If you are homeless outside of normal office hours (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, excluding bank holidays) or at the weekend then please contact Exeter City Council's Out Of Hours Number:- 01392 265147 for assistance**

## Providing Temporary Accommodation

If you are homeless and have nowhere to live and we have “reason to believe” that you are in [‘Priority Need’](#), then Exeter City Council may have a duty to provide you with temporary accommodation whilst we assess your application and help you to secure more settled accommodation. For further guidance on accommodation duties see [Chapter 15](#) of the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities. Section 193(2) of the 1996 Act requires housing authorities to secure accommodation for applicants who have a priority need for accommodation.

Old age alone is not sufficient for the applicant to be considered vulnerable. However, it may be that as a result of old age the applicant would be significantly more vulnerable than an ordinary person would be if homeless. Housing authorities should not use a fixed age beyond which vulnerability occurs automatically (or below which it can be ruled out); each case will need to be considered in the light of the individual circumstances.

## Older Persons Accommodation

Exeter City Council has **553** units of Older Persons Accommodation (formerly known as ‘Sheltered Housing’) across 22 schemes in Exeter. To be eligible for Exeter City Council’s Older Persons Housing you have to be 60 or over. There are other Older Persons Accommodation schemes in Exeter, run by partner Registered Social Landlords, who will accept tenants 55 and above. To see what options are available please go to the [Devon Home Choice Page](#).

## What is Older Persons Housing?

Older Persons Housing is usually specialist accommodation grouped together to provide independent living for older people. Each unfurnished flat or bungalow is self-contained with its own bedroom/living area, bathroom and kitchen. Each scheme may also feature a range of communal facilities such as a communal lounge and kitchen, guest room, communal gardens, drying area and so on. Not all schemes have the same facilities

The benefits of older persons housing include:

- Living in a comfortable, well-maintained home
- Having your independence and your own front door
- Having the reassurance of 24-hour emergency cover
- Living in a safe and secure environment
- The chance to enjoy social activities if available

## What services does Exeter City Council offer?

Exeter City Council has an Older Persons Property Services Team who provide a dedicated service to Exeter City Council's Older Persons Housing Tenants. You can contact this team on **01392 265 338**

The officers in the team are usually the main point of contact with the Council to:-

- Make weekly visits to each of the schemes – this is to identify health and safety issues, and assist with alarm testing
- Help to report repairs
- Help to signpost tenants to relevant services
- Check that the communal areas are safe

## What we do not do

There are certain services that the Older Persons Property Services Team do not perform. These include:-

- Shopping
- Administering medication of any kind
- Cleaning
- Helping residents move in (for example unpacking, connecting cookers and so on)
- Cooking or preparing food
- Nursing services
- Bathing services
- Dressing / Undressing
- Driving residents (for example to doctors, hospital, shops and so on)
- Looking after pets (for example if a tenant went into hospital)
- Taking clothes or other articles to hospital (this would be responsibility of family members or health care professionals)
- Becoming involved in tenants' personal financial affairs, such as collection of pensions, payment of bills, making any collections of money, signing wills and so on.

## Cost

You will pay rent and a weekly charge towards the Older Persons Property Services Team. Rents are below market levels and vary from scheme to scheme. If you are on a low income then you may be eligible for [housing benefit](#) to help towards the rent.

If you need to contact the Housing Benefit team, their number is **01392 265440**

You will have to pay your own fuel charges, water rates, council tax (unless you qualify for council tax benefit) and telephone charges.

## How to Apply

All our Older Persons Housing are [advertised through Devon Home Choice](#). Devon Home Choice is a way of looking for council and housing association homes.

Under Devon Home Choice you can:

- Choose which homes interest you
- Move within Devon

Anyone over 16 years old can register with Devon Home Choice, except for:

- Certain people from abroad with limited rights to remain in the United Kingdom. For more information please [contact the local housing team in the area of Devon you would like to live](#).
- People who are not subject to immigration control and have a right of admission to the UK but have not been habitually resident in the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland (the Common Travel Area). For more information please [contact the local housing team in the area of Devon you would like to live](#).
- People assessed by Devon local authorities as being guilty of unacceptable behaviour. For example, significant rent arrears or anti-social behaviour. For more information please see the Devon Home Choice policy on the [Useful Information page](#) or [contact the local housing team in the area of Devon you would like to live](#)

## How to register with Devon Home Choice

The easiest way to register with Devon Home Choice is by [completing the online application form](#).

It should take about 30 minutes to complete the online form. Please ensure that you make a note of your unique login reference number, password and memorable date.

Your application will be saved each time you complete a Section and click 'Next Section' or 'Previous Section'. You can return to a part-completed application by clicking 'Log In/My Account' and entering your reference number, memorable date and password.

Please note that you may be asked to provide further information once your online application form has been assessed.

Your online application must be completed within 28 days of initial registration. Any incomplete application forms will be cancelled after this time.

If you are not able to apply online [please contact the local housing team in the area of Devon you would like to live](#).

For your application to be processed and accepted you need to:

- Complete the application form fully, ensuring you answer all of the mandatory questions. These are marked with an \*
- Provide any extra information requested on the application form or by the local housing team in the area of Devon where you would like to live once they have received your application

[Please contact the local housing team in the area of Devon you would like to live](#) if you:

- Have any questions about the application form
- Would like help filling the form in
- Need the form in another language, in large print, on audio tape or in other formats
- Require further support, such as translation services, to help with your application

**Please note that it is a criminal offence to either make a false statement, or to deliberately withhold information in order to seek housing through Devon Home Choice.**

We aim to provide confirmation of your Devon Home Choice application within 20 working days of you providing all of the required information.

When your application to Devon Home Choice is accepted we will write to you to confirm:

- What band your application has been placed in, and the reason for this
- Your band start date
- The size of home that you are eligible to bid for
- Whether you need a certain type of home, or an adapted home, because of your mobility needs
- Whether you need older persons housing

You must tell us if there are any changes in your circumstances. Any change may affect your housing need and the priority your application should be awarded. We will then reassess your application. If necessary we will change your band and band start date.

Failure to notify us of any changes in your circumstances could lead to you not being made an offer even if your bid is successful.

## Other Devon Local Authority Contact Details

The following local authority areas are supported by Devon County Council:

- [East Devon District Council](#)
- [Exeter City Council](#)
- [Mid Devon District Council](#)
- [North Devon District Council](#)
- [South Hams District Council](#)
- [Teignbridge District Council](#)
- [Torrige District Council](#)
- [West Devon Borough Council](#)

These are Devon Unitary Authorities and provide their own support

- [Plymouth City Council](#)
- [Torbay Council](#)

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