

Retirement Living

your guide to our
independent living service
for older people

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. What is retirement living?..... | 3 |
| 2. Registration and eligibility requirements..... | 4 |
| 3. The role of the Housing Officer..... | 6 |
| 4. Safety and security..... | 8 |
| 5. Useful information for friends and relatives..... | 10 |
| 6. Contact us | 11 |
| 7. Contact Careline..... | 11 |

1. What is retirement living?

North Hertfordshire Homes (NHH) is one of the largest Registered Social Landlords in Hertfordshire, providing over 9000 homes including around 600 units of retirement living accommodation for older people.

Retirement living is for people aged 55 years and over in the North Hertfordshire area (or 60 years and above for people who wish to live in the St Albans district) with low level support needs. It offers the opportunity to live somewhere with your own front door and maintain your independence, while having the use of communal facilities and the assurance that advice is at hand if you need it.

We offer each of our residents a weekly visit (or contact of their choice) by one of our Housing Officers (Retirement Living). There will also be a Housing Officer on site between Monday - Friday should you need to talk through any concerns; office opening times will be displayed on the scheme office door. If you require help with daily tasks to maintain independence then you will need the support and care of family, friends or a member of staff can signpost you to an external agency.

As a resident you are free to come and go, just as you would be if you lived elsewhere.

As a specialist housing provider for vulnerable older people we do not permit lodgers to live in your flat. As a resident you can book the guest on site for a maximum of 14 nights.

Please speak to a Housing Officer if you have any specific questions about allowing another person to live with you.

2. Registration and eligibility requirements

In order to be considered suitable for retirement living you must:

- Be 55 years and over in the North Hertfordshire area (or 60 years and above if you wish to live in the St Albans district) and have low level support needs
- Have the ability to manage a tenancy, if support is required this must already be in place. Housing Officers do not provide support with day to day tasks or personal care
- Be able to live independently.

You will need to complete and return a Common Housing Register Form, Medical Assessment Form and Retirement Living Self Assessment Form to register for a North Hertfordshire Homes property.

The allocation of vacant properties is made by Choice Based Lettings (CBL). Following registration you will be given a personal application number. A suitable vacant property will be identified and you will be required to express an interest (bid). The prospective tenants with the highest points who have expressed an interest will be invited to view the accommodation. This visit will be conducted by NHH staff. If you are interested in the accommodation and are the applicant with the highest points, you will be offered the property on a conditional basis.

Needs and Risk Assessment

On receipt of the conditional offer an appointment for a Needs and Risk Assessment will be made. The assessment will be carried out by a member of our staff. Subject to the outcome of the Needs and Risk Assessment a final, permanent offer will then be made to you.

The Needs and Risk Assessment will cover areas such as:

- Ability to live independently with minimal support
- Health and mental health issues
- Mobility and individually specified accommodation requirements
- Concerns relating to the misuse of alcohol or other substances
- Finance and rent arrears issues

Refusal and appeals

If you have a support need we will carefully consider whether you are suitable for this type of accommodation. This may depend on whether appropriate support is in place, what your support needs are and whether your support needs exceed what the service can accommodate.

In the event that an accommodation offer is withdrawn we will write to explain our decision to you. The letter will also signpost you to more suitable housing or service providers.

The letter will also let you know about our appeals procedure.

3. The role of the Housing Officer

Each scheme has a Housing Officer who is based there either in the morning or afternoon every weekday.

Housing Officers are experienced professionals who can provide advice and guidance to you. They can also liaise on your behalf for the assessment and provision of other care and support services.

When the Housing Officer is not on site and you have an emergency you can dial 999 for urgent help or use the pull cord/pendant system which will be responded to by Careline.

The role of the Housing Officer is varied. Some of the key tasks include:

- Meeting prospective tenants to discuss your needs and how to achieve the best outcomes for you
- Identifying possible support needs, and co-ordination of other support service
- Responding to emergencies while on site
- Management of the building, including responsibility for monitoring health and safety, fire safety, security and repairs
- Management of the scheme office, including maintaining all records and equipment
- Providing advice and early interventions in relation to rent arrears and assisting or co-ordinating help for other financial issues and maximising income
- Monitoring and managing nuisance and anti social behaviour issues and working with the Customer Service Team to resolve escalated issues
- Assisting with requests if you want or need to move home

Shortly after you have moved in your Housing Officer will contact you to make an appointment to meet you in your home. This is your opportunity to raise any concerns you have about your property, your rent and any health and well being issues that you currently have or that may have arisen since you moved in.

Housing Officers will:

- Welcome and introduce you to the retirement living scheme and provide information about the facilities and services that are available locally
- Maintain regular contact with you by way of intercom call, personal visit, or telephone call. The type of contact will be discussed and agreed with you and then recorded on your file
- Assist you to access services such as Community Meals or Home Care
- Respond to emergencies when on site, call for the necessary assistance and notify your named contact if applicable. This can be a relative or friend
- Encourage community links between you and your neighbours living in the scheme and older people in the local community
- Keep you informed and consult you on issues relevant to your scheme

Housing Officers are not able to:

- Administer drugs or medication of any kind
- Clean, cook or shop for you (except in the event of an emergency until other agencies or relatives can take over)
- Nurse, bathe or assist to bathe you
- Lift you. Should you have a fall, the Housing Officer will summon assistance from the ambulance service
- Arrange removals, connections or disconnections of gas, electric or telephone services (these tasks are the responsibility of you or your representative)

4. Safety and security

Good security helps everyone.

All staff carry an identification card with a photograph when they visit your home. If anyone calls claiming to be a representative of NHH, always ask to see their identification. If in doubt do not let them in and immediately contact our Customer Service Team on 0330 343 0016 or the police.

Careline system

An alarm system is provided in each property and in communal areas giving two-way speech communication to Careline.

- Pulling the red alarm cord will automatically alert the Housing Officer (if they are on site) or Careline (the response centre at all other times). Should it be set off by accident the Housing Officer or Careline operator will check that all is well and then reset the system
- The system is used to summon help in an emergency at any time of the day or night
- Careline is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If the alarm is activated, Careline will respond by answering the call and take the appropriate action
- Information about your medical history, relatives, GP etc is held on your file and by Careline. This helps us to assist you in an emergency.

Pull cords and pendants

Pull cords must not be removed or tied up as they may be needed in the event of an emergency. All pull cords and pendants are tested on a regular basis by the Housing Officer.

Not everyone needs a pendant, but these can be made available to you if you become frail or have had a prolonged stay in hospital. They can be worn around the neck or on your wrist for easy access.

Access to your flat

We will respect your privacy at all times. The Housing Officer has access to a master key to all the flats in the building but he or she will only enter your home:

- By invitation
- With your permission if you are away and we need to access your home, for example to carry out repairs
- In an emergency

Please do not fit extra locks to your front door as this may make it difficult to get help to you in an emergency. We will recharge you if we have to put this right.

What happens at the weekends?

We do not visit or call you at the weekend or on Bank Holidays. If you need assistance you should pull the red alarm cord or use your pendant to contact Careline.

In the event of anyone pulling the emergency alarm cord or activating the pendant and a response being required, Careline will alert the named contacts, necessary emergency service or the security company to attend.

5. Useful information for friends and relatives

How can I contact the Housing Officer?

Housing Officers work from 08.30 to 16.30 Monday to Thursday and 08.30 to 16.00 on Friday. Each team of Housing Officers has an office contact number and an answerphone.

The numbers are printed in the Welcome Pack which will be given to you when you move in to the scheme. Alternatively, if more urgent contact is required a message can be left with the Customer Service Team by calling 0330 343 0016. A Housing Officer will call you back.

What should I do if I am worried about my friend or relative?

If you are trying to contact a retirement living resident and are concerned about their welfare, Careline staff can help by contacting the Housing Officer or putting a call through to the property to check all is well. If necessary the Housing Officer will attend and investigate.

6. Contact us

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| Website | www.nhh.org.uk |
| Email | customer.service@nhh.org.uk |
| Telephone | 0330 343 0016 |
| Write | North Hertfordshire Homes Rowan House Avenue One Letchworth SG6 2WW |
| Visit | North Hertfordshire Homes Blackhorse Road Letchworth Garden City SG6 1HA |

7. Contact Careline

Telephone 0300 999 2999



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