

Review of Extra Care Housing

Healthwatch Hounslow
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Executive Summary

Extra Care Housing is a type of housing that supports residents to live independently, whilst still receiving support on daily tasks based on individual needs. From January to March 2026, Healthwatch Hounslow visited four extra care housing sites. As a result, we found several things that work well and things that could be improved:

What works well :

- **Resident activities** supported residents to stay active, socialise, and enjoy being part of a community.
- **Resident meetings** gave people a chance to share their views and have a say in decisions that directly affect them.
- **Mental wellbeing** was improved through communal aspects of the extra care housing schemes' helping to reduce loneliness.
- **Physical wellbeing** is supported by having opportunities to move around and stay active.
- **Care and support from staff** was viewed positively by most residents, who said they were happy with the help they received.
- **Building independence** was one of the main benefits residents spoke about, as they were able to live independently while knowing support was available when needed.

What could be improved:

- **Access to resident activities** for residents with mobility and health issues was a key theme that arose across all four homes.
- **Lack of variety of food** available at the restaurant for residents with different dietary needs was also a common theme.

Executive Summary – continued

- **Follow-up and communication** on actions from resident meetings.
- **Consistency and continuity** of care staff, to reduce frequent changes in carers.
- **Opportunities** for residents to develop independence through literacy, reading, and other life skills.

Recommendations

Resident activities:

- Provide residents with a range of activities suitable for different age groups.
- Consider accessibility needs to ensure that all residents can participate.

Resident meetings:

- Support residents' concerns and actively show what actions have been taken.
- Allow a resident representative to support their peers.

Restaurant scheme:

- Provide a variety of food choices that cater to different dietary needs.
- Regularly involve residents in commenting on food choices and preferences.

Building independence and personal care:

- Communicate with residents about their ideas for building independence, e.g. what they would like to improve.
- Regularly check in with residents to gather updates on any changes to their personal care.

About the project

Extra Care Housing is a council-run service that helps Hounslow residents maintain their health, independence, and wellbeing, while managing a variety of complex health needs that require personal care and support. In Hounslow there are four extra care housing schemes available:

- **Bristol Court (Feltham)** for residents aged 18 or over
- **Park Lodge (Hounslow)** for residents aged 50+
- **Greenrod Place (Brentford)** for residents aged 55+
- **Bridgewater House (Isleworth)** for residents aged 55+

Extra care housing in Hounslow aims to support resident independence. Therefore, resident views on services are essential in understanding how services are currently running, where challenges persist, as well as service strengths.

This report is based on five visits to extra care housing schemes conducted by staff and volunteers at Healthwatch Hounslow. During each visit, our team interviewed residents and carers of residents living in extra care housing in Hounslow. We were able to meet residents in their own homes and view some of the activities and restaurant facilities at different extra care housing schemes. Following our visits, we briefly shared findings with extra care housing scheme managers. We then shared this with local commissioners.

The aim of this report is to highlight resident experiences of extra care housing in Hounslow, to understand what works well.

Some of the service areas of extra care housing we focused on were:

- **Communal aspects** (resident meetings, activities and restaurant services).
- Resident views on **independence**, personal **needs and outcomes** at Extra Care Housing Schemes in the borough.
- **Mental** and **physical** wellbeing, alongside aspects of general care.

Methodology – We developed the interview questions following consultations with our commissioner. The full methodology including interview questions went through a structured internal review before data collection.

Data collection

- We conducted 36 interviews, including 3 by telephone with family and friends.
- The interviews consisted of 15 questions exploring views on care, activities, the restaurant, resident meetings, and independence.
- We conducted 5 visits to extra care housing, split across Brentford, Feltham, Chiswick, and Hounslow West and Central.
- Residents were informed about the interviews prior to our visits, and we received a list of consenting residents. We also approached residents during our visits.
- Interviews were carried out in residents' flats, communal areas, or private spaces, depending on individual preferences.
- We provided our contact details for further support and signposting to health and adult social care services.

Limitations

- **Sample size:** We spoke to 36 residents; this is less than 25% of each service provider's residents. While this is a limited number, their views are valuable and represent individual experiences.
- **Resident representation:** We spoke to residents who were consenting and able to take part, therefore residents with additional complex needs that did not have the ability to consent were not included in this research.
- **Additional access needs:** Some residents couldn't complete interviews due to communication or cognitive challenges (referred to as **spoken incapacity**). In these cases, we spoke with family, friends, or carers when available.
- **Psychological risk:** We assessed the risk of distress during interviews and were trained to halt interviews if any harm or trauma was evident. We flagged any safeguarding concerns to staff promptly. Two interviews were halted during visits.

Acknowledgments

We would like to kindly thank all residents of Extra Care Housing in Hounslow, along with their relatives, carers, and friends, for sharing their experiences.

We also thank the Healthwatch Hounslow volunteers and staff who supported data collection, the Extra Care Housing managers and staff who facilitated our visits.

We would like to thank Hounslow Council's commissioners for their support in the delivery and reporting of this project.

Key findings



What do you like about the care and support provided to you?

"I think everyone is very pleasant, very nice and very helpful. We just came up from playing a game and always enjoyable."
[Park Lodge]

"They [carers] give me the help I need; they do help you. Sometimes I think they understand me."
[Bridgewater House]

"Willing to help you with anything, and I found them very professional (carers). I am happy with the support I have; it is not too much or little, it is just the right amount."
[Greenrod Place]

"They're excellent, Maria always has an excellent smile. Because I've known her since she's been here. She listens to everyone's problems. It's like a weight off our shoulders."
[Bristol Court]

What do you think makes for good care and support, generally speaking?

"The management and rest of the staff have good communication, and their skills reflects on the way they treat us."
[Park Lodge]

"Having an understanding that everyone is different. I think they are all very good."
[Bridgewater House]

"Being compassionate towards one another, helping one another, I can't think of anything else."
[Greenrod Place]

"Listening and caring, just having patience."
[Bristol Court]

1. Resident Activities

Among the four extra care housing schemes we visited, we found that 64% (n=23) of residents engaged in activities. The range of resident activities differed amongst the schemes including bingo, karaoke, arts and crafts, exercise classes and occasional trips. Residents described wanting to engage in activities due to benefits like socialisation, improved physical and mental wellbeing, and for fun and enjoyment.

Resident quotes

- *"I like them because I get to talk to people. I wouldn't change anything about the activities."*
- *"I do go to the classes; It keeps my mind busy for a little while. They do an art group and a keep fit class; I go everyday."*
- *"Playing games helped with his mental health. Because it was a secure space, he was able to move around."*

Around 22% (n=7) of residents did not attend activities due to health and mobility issues. A majority of residents who could not attend were interested in activities if held within their flat. This is not presently offered. Residents also reported they would take part if given more of a variety of activities.

Resident quotes

- *"I don't take part in any of the activities as I cannot walk now. That means I cannot even get out of bed or go downstairs."*
- *"No, I didn't want to be involved in the activities. They don't appeal to me because of my health condition, and it just isn't appropriate for the current state I am in."*
- *"The activities I would join are going out and socialising with friends. Maybe more work support activities like CV editing."*

2. Resident meetings

Across all extra care housing schemes, resident meetings were held regularly to provide a space for residents to voice concerns. We were able to speak with residents to understand their experiences of resident meetings.

We found that 39% (n=14) of residents across the four extra care housing schemes attended resident meetings regularly. Some of the reasons behind attendance for residents were to hear updates from staff, socialise with other residents, and to be able to raise any concerns about accommodation. 11% (n=3) of residents previously attended but had stopped due to health issues; however, they were willing to be involved in discussions remotely.

Resident quotes

- *"The meetings are alright; you get updated on current affairs. Meeting once a month and I have attended them all. Set at the right level and right pace, not too much information."*
- *"I attend resident meetings, I do attend the meetings, and I got my own meetings. They have us talking about anything that goes wrong. I can learn things, sometimes a fireman comes in and talk about fire and all that."*

47% (n=16) of residents reported they did not attend resident meetings. The key reasons we gathered from responses were around health and mobility issues, and lack of follow-up on points raised at meetings.

Resident quotes

- *"I used to, no I don't anymore. I think nothing happens and no one listens."*
- *"I think having more regular meetings every two weeks. They should do in smaller groups like a workshop or something like that. People might not feel comfortable to say out loud."*

3. Scheme Restaurants

Among all the residents we interviewed, meals were the most common topic discussed. Each scheme's restaurant differs based on price, food choices and in some cases catering providers. Some residents utilised restaurant services, where others received meals from family and friends, or prepared food in their own home. Dietary requirements also varied, with some residents unable to eat solid foods. Feedback on the restaurant accounts for resident views on variety, quality, and portion size.

We found 75% (n=27) of the residents we interviewed ate regularly at the restaurant. Many residents mentioned the reason being that the food was affordable, readily available, and that it gave them an opportunity to dine with their peers.

Resident quotes

- *"I eat lunch everyday except when I am not well. The food is eatable, sufficient and sorted out. I like the variety of food. The food is good value for money [...] everyone is approachable and it is like one big family."*
- *"Yes, I used to eat at the restaurant before my diet changed to liquid only. The food was good in my opinion, from what I can remember."*

We also found that, based on the scheme, resident experiences of the restaurant differed. Some residents mentioned not eating at the restaurant due to lifestyle choices and personal preferences.

Resident quotes

- *"Food that is unhealthy, sometimes not the right food just slopped on your plate. Everyday because I am paying, if I had the chance, it's cheaper for me to make it at home. Generalised for everybody."*
- *"They don't really serve for different diets or allergies. Don't cater to diabetes, offered the same as everything else."*

Resident views on independence, health and personal outcomes



In what ways do you feel the scheme contributes to your personal independence?

"I think it has been good for me physically and mentally because I got my own space, and I think you got the ability to grow to become more of myself and have an identity."

"I feel happier here, I've got my own freedom and I got more space. I've got my own voice, moving out of my mum's place."

"If I need anyone all I have to do is just press this buzzer and they come pretty quick, my family has peace of mind because there's someone to help straight away."

"I am happy here. I don't want to move to a care home where my needs are stripped away. I like having a flat to myself and the carers/staff make me feel comfortable here."

In what ways do you feel the scheme contributes to your personal independence?

"I can't become more independent because of my health, but I am happy because I have my own space, which I guess is part of my independence."

"Yes, I feel independent living here. Every Saturday is my shopping day, they take me out."

"I see as one big family, it only now and again someone new comes, so we know each other. I feel independent because I can press this [buzzer] and someone would come; I can watch what I like."

"I can live like this without any changes. It becomes your own home. I needed that support. It has made me more independent in a way; I don't always see it."

1. Resident needs and personal outcomes

Our research highlighted a wide variance in the levels of care across the four sites. Each resident received a different level of care individual to their needs. A majority of residents (72%) we spoke with felt that their needs were met whilst living in extra care housing. The following key themes were identified: **good communication by staff, tailored support from carers, and access to a range of activities.**

Resident quotes

- *"I think my needs are met, there is a good understanding of people's own needs here and they are very empathetic."*
- *"I think so, because if we have any problems there are carers on site."*
- *"I've gotten everything I can get help with for my disability. The carers are there for each task and there are no problems there."*

Where residents felt their needs were not met, concerns were raised about continuity of care due to staff turnover; communication with local services; and accommodation.

Resident quote

- *"I would like specific carers who I can talk to because I suffer from severe depression, there are certain carers I go to a certain trance."*

Resident needs and outcomes – continued

When discussing personal outcomes, most residents (70%) felt their outcomes were met. Residents commonly described feeling supported, safe, and able to maintain or develop their independence.

Resident quotes:

- *"Because when I request something, I know I'm going to get help."*
- *"I don't feel scared. I wanted money for Valentine's and then the manager contacted someone who handles finances to get a Valentine's gift and that was sorted."*

Some residents (30%) felt their outcomes were not fully met. The main reasons included equipment needs, financial concerns, health-related limitations, and restrictions on independence.

Resident quotes:

- *"No, because everyone kept on saying she's independent. I need the right equipment and one of the [occupational therapists] said I need to go out with my wheelchair."*
- *"It's down to the cost as well, contribution cost is too high for all the care services. I need more help in the community than here."*
- *"My goal is to get up from the bed and be independent, but I can't do that."*

2. Support plan and concerns

When discussing support plans, residents gave mixed responses about how often they spoke with staff about their plan. Some residents told us they had not recently discussed their support plan or had not been updated on reviews; whilst others felt comfortable speaking with staff when they needed support or wanted to discuss a particular issue.

Resident quotes:

- *"I don't talk to staff about my plan. No one talks to me about my care plan."*
- *"No, they haven't updated me with a support plan."*
- *"There's no need to. Yes I have spoken to them only a few days ago about my wheelchair, it's on its way."*

Most residents told us they would feel able to raise a concern if they needed to, although many had not needed to make a complaint. Residents generally described staff as approachable and willing to listen when issues were raised.

Resident quote:

- *"I can talk to them, I haven't raised an issue, but I will be heard if I do. Whenever I speak to them, they always listen."*

Recommendations



Recommendations

Below is a list of recommendations for Extra Care Housing in Hounslow, based on our findings.

Personal care and support

1. Ensure staffing is consistent and that residents are regularly updated about staff changes.
2. Aim to schedule care calls and visits regularly for residents that prefer a maintained routine.
3. Provide support for residents experiencing loneliness and monitor mental health needs.

Resident activities

1. Provide residents with a range of activities suitable for different age groups.
2. Consider accessibility needs to ensure that all residents can participate.

Resident meetings

1. Support residents to feel involved in meetings and improve communication around actions.
2. Encourage peer-led meetings, allowing for resident perspectives to be shared.

Restaurant

1. Ensure that meals meet dietary needs and preferences, whilst also offering a variety of options.

Support plan

1. Ensure residents are aware of their support plan and have regular opportunities to discuss with staff.
2. Regularly review personal outcomes with residents to support their goals.

Appendix



Resident demographics

DISABILITY	Percentage %	No of Reviews
Yes	83.3%	30
No		6
Total		36

LENGTH OF STAY	Percentage %	No of Reviews
0-2 Years	27.8%	10
3-5 Years		15
6+ Years		8
Total		36

LEVEL OF CARE/SUPPORT	Percentage %	No of Reviews
Support with meals	36.1%	13
Support with medication		12
Cleaning calls		9
Personal care		11
General support/Mobility		10
Shopping		2
Total		36



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