



Safe spaces for lesbian, gay,
bisexual and trans people

Housing options for older people

Many people start to think about their housing options as they start to get older. There are a number of different options for older people in housing need, which this fact sheet will cover. Although there are no LGBT specific housing options, all services have a duty to cater to the needs of all sections of the community. You may find it helpful to call our advice line so that an adviser can guide you through the different options and where necessary advocate on your behalf.

Sheltered housing

Sheltered schemes consist of self-contained flats or studios (with your own bathroom and kitchen), and are designed to meet the needs of older people and help them to live an independent life but be able to get help when needed. They generally have a scheme manager or warden, who may be resident or non-resident, who calls on residents every day to check on their well-being. There is normally an alarm system so that you can call for help if you have any difficulties. There are often communal facilities such as a resident's lounge and/or guest bedroom. The scheme manager often organises social events for the residents such as days out and parties. It is often rented accommodation through the council or a housing association and it can also be purchased privately. In the private sector it is commonly referred to as retirement housing.

Your local housing department should be able to give you a list of schemes in your area. You can contact each housing association you wish to apply to find out what is available and whether you can apply for housing with it. Housing associations have different rules about who they will offer housing to but unlike general needs housing, you can often apply directly to housing associations for sheltered housing.

Extra care sheltered housing

For people who wish to live independently but have higher support needs, some sheltered accommodation units can provide extra care where home care support is available and carers can

provide domestic and personal assistance. You will usually receive a visit to assess your needs, to work out whether either sheltered accommodation or extra care sheltered accommodation is suitable for you.

Buying retirement housing

If you currently own your home or have enough income/savings you can look at buying a retirement home in the private sector. These offer similar facilities to sheltered housing schemes for rent.

For details of private sheltered accommodation for sale contact the Elderly Accommodation Counsel. You can also contact Retirement Homesearch who are a private agency dealing with sheltered properties for sale.

Almshouses

Almshouses are affordable, supported accommodation provided by charitable trusts to enable people in need, mainly older people, to retain their independence and to live in their local community. For details of individual schemes contact the Association of Almshouses.

Mutual exchanges

If you are a council or housing association tenant it may be possible for you to swap homes with another tenant anywhere in the country. You would need to get your landlord's permission before you go ahead and exchange and it would be worth contacting your landlord to find out more about this.

Staying at home

If you would like to continue living in your own home but need some support such as help with bathing, going shopping or cooking your local authority can assess your care needs and arrange the support you need to stay living at home. This often involves contacting social services and explaining your situation and asking for an assessment of your needs.

Repairs and adaptations

Your home may need some repairs to make it easier for you to stay at home. If you are a homeowner with savings, this will probably be your own responsibility. It is important to find a reliable firm to carry out the work and ensure you get three quotes in order to make your decision. You may know someone who has used a builder and has recommended them to you. There may be grants available within your area to help with one off work: contact Age UK (www.ageuk.org.uk) for more details or contact Stonewall Housing, and an advice worker will assist you.

Useful contacts

Elderly Accommodation Counsel

EAC Advice Line: 020 7820 1343

W: www.eac.org.uk

Helping older people make informed choices about meeting their housing and care needs.

Retirement Home search

T: 0845 880 5560

W: www.retirementhomesearch.co.uk

For private retirement housing

The Almshouse Association

T: 01344 452922

W: www.almshouses.info

A major provider of older persons' accommodation in the UK.

Anchor Trust

T: 08457 75 85 95

W: www.anchorhousing.org.uk

Anchor Trust is the largest not-for-profit provider of housing, support and care in England.

Mutual Exchanges

W: www.homeswapper.co.uk

Foundations

T: 01457 891909

W: www.foundations.uk.com/

The national body for home improvement agencies.

Age UK

Advice line – 0808 169 6565

W: www.ageuk.org.uk

Counsel and Care

Advice Line – 0845 300 7585

W: www.counselandcare.org.uk/

National charity working with older people to get the best care and support.
