



# Services for older people

**Tenants Handbook**  
HOUSING DIRECTORATE



## A guide to services for older people living in council properties

### Sheltered housing

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Many properties let by Epping Forest District Council incorporate special features to make them suitable for older people. Some are simply ground floor flats or bungalows that have no stairs. Others are fitted with alarms connected to the Epping Forest Careline emergency alarm system. Older tenants may be visited by 'Scheme Managers'.

All the properties we provide for older people are either flats or bungalows. They offer convenience, safety and security. They are not 'care homes' and they do not provide clinical care.



### The role of the Scheme Manager

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Scheme Managers are employed by the Council to help people in sheltered housing to live as independently as possible. They are on site every working day in sheltered housing schemes. Area Scheme Managers visit tenants living in other properties designated for older people on housing estates.

Scheme Managers are not nurses or home carers. Their job is to keep a "friendly eye" on the well-being of their tenants and support them to live independently. Tenants can turn to the Scheme Manager for help and advice, particularly when dealing with organisations like Social Care or the Council. They keep information about doctors and relatives, and work with Epping Forest Careline to get help quickly in an emergency. For more about Careline see page 4.

The personal independence of tenants is a top priority. Scheme Managers encourage community spirit and help with social events, particularly where communal facilities such as lounges are available. Activities could include bingo, coffee mornings, parties, day trips, jumble sales and bazaars. Social gatherings may include older people living locally, as well as tenants of sheltered schemes. Tenants always decide for themselves whether to take part.

If you are a tenant of retirement age you could be finding the upkeep of your property a burden - especially if it is large or has a garden. You may also be looking for somewhere a little more secure. If so, and you would like to find out more about sheltered housing, contact the Housing Options Section at the Civic Offices.

Most pets are not allowed in sheltered housing schemes as they may disturb other tenants.

Smoking is not permitted in the communal areas by tenants or their visitors.

**Note:** Tenants living in sheltered housing schemes pay a support charge for the cost of the Scheme Manager and communal facilities. Applicants may be entitled to a 'Supporting People Grant' if they cannot afford the rental charges. Advice is available from the Council's Benefits Division.

## Epping Forest Careline

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### A 24 hour emergency alarm service

Epping Forest Careline is a service which may help older or disabled people who do not want to give up the freedom and independence of their own homes. Most Council properties reserved for older people have Careline alarms installed.

Careline uses a two way speech unit in the person's home and is connected to a control centre in Loughton, staffed 24 hours a day. In case of emergencies the centre holds user information about doctors, relatives and medical conditions.

In an emergency, the user alerts Careline by pressing the button of a pendant worn around the neck, or by pulling a cord suspended from the ceiling. The operator will then try to speak with the person to find out what the problem is. The speech system can pick up a voice from anywhere in the home.

Even if the user is unable to speak, Careline can contact the emergency services or Scheme Manager and get help within minutes once the alarm has been raised. Careline can also make regular calls to anyone living in sheltered accommodation considered especially vulnerable. This backs up the service provided by the Scheme Manager.

If you do not live in sheltered accommodation you could still have a Careline alarm. For an annual rental fee, the service can be installed in any property connected with a telephone line. In some cases part of the cost of the alarm system is met by Essex County Council Social Care. Various telecare sensors, such as smoke or flood detectors, can be linked into the system.

If you think Careline might be of benefit to you, and would like further information, please call the enquiry line on tel: (020) 8532 1065 (24-hour answerphone), or write to the Housing Directorate, Epping Forest District Council, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex CM16 4BZ.

## Adaptations

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Whenever possible, the Council will do its best to make your home more suitable if you suffer from a disability. Please refer to the section on Adaptations in the Tenants Handbook leaflet 3, 'Repairs and improvements to your home'.

## Internal decorations

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The Council's internal decoration service is for older people who need help with home decorating. To apply, you must meet all these conditions:

- Your property is part of a sheltered housing scheme, designated older person's accommodation or a one bedroom flat.
- All the tenants in your property are receiving a pension or a benefit due to a disability.
- In the past five years the Council has not carried out any internal redecoration in your property.
- Your rent account is clear.



You can decide which room you want to have decorated, and you can choose the paint colour or wallpaper (from a range). If we accept your application, we will put your name on our waiting list, but due to the demand for this service we can only decorate a room for you once every five years.

Please telephone 01992 564203 for more information.

## Concessionary television licences

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If you live in sheltered accommodation and are under 75 years of age you may be entitled to a Concessionary TV Licence which is available at a reduced price. The scheme is run by the National TV Licence Records Office in Bristol. They make the rules and decide who is entitled. The Council carries out the administration of the scheme on a local basis but has no influence over the rules.

If you are moving into a new home where you will have the concession for the first time, you must discuss this with your Scheme Manager immediately.

A Scheme Manager will visit each year to collect the payment and issue a receipt.

For further information, please write to the Housing Resources Section, Housing Directorate, Epping Forest District Council, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex CM16 4BZ, or phone 01992 564000 and ask for the Housing Resources Team.



## Central heating welfare scheme

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The Council operates a scheme to replace central heating systems in homes where a member of the family suffers from ill health or a disability that could be improved by installing a different system.

Limited money is available for this scheme and help is only given to those in most need who also have a doctors letter of recommendation. For more information phone 01992 564052 and ask for the Housing Officer (Adaptations) in the Housing Assets Section.

## Concessionary fares

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If you are 60 or over, or eligible disabled, and live in England you can receive a free off-peak travel pass for local buses anywhere in England.

Off peak hours are from 9am until 11pm Monday to Friday in Epping Forest District (9.30am until 11pm nationally), and all day weekends and bank holidays.

You can pick up an application form at the Civic Offices, High Street, Epping and the Council Information Centres at Loughton Library, Traps Hill, Loughton and Waltham Abbey Town Hall, Highbridge Street, Waltham Abbey.

The application form can also be downloaded from our website:

[www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/community/transport/buspass.asp](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/community/transport/buspass.asp)

For more information visit [www.direct.gov.uk/buspass](http://www.direct.gov.uk/buspass) or telephone Epping Forest District Council's Finance Directorate



## **Epping Forest Community Transport**

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This project is for people who have difficulty accessing conventional transport because of restricted mobility, or because there is no alternative form of passenger transport. It uses a team of volunteer drivers who may use their own cars or be trained to drive one of the minibuses operated by the project. You can use the service for shopping, health and other appointments, visiting friends and family, or for social events.

Epping Forest Community Transport is a project of Voluntary Action Epping Forest. You can contact them for more information on 01992 564040 or write to Voluntary Action Epping Forest, Homefield House, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex CM16 4BZ.

## **Free Fall – The home safety check scheme**

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Free Fall is an initiative of Voluntary Action Epping Forest, designed to reduce the number of falls by older people in their homes. The scheme is available to all older residents in the district. It involves a visit to your home to check whether you have any unstable furniture, inadequate lighting or stair rails, loose floor coverings, inaccessible cupboard and shelves, or other hazards. The co-ordinator will make some recommendations as to what action should be taken to reduce the risk of a fall. If you agree, he will then arrange for the repairs to be carried out free of charge.

For further information, or for a home safety check, contact the Free Fall co-ordinator on 01992 711 008.

## Home safety scheme

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The Epping Forest Safer Communities Partnership is working with Help the Aged to provide security products such as locks, bolts, door safety chains, window locks, door viewers, and smoke alarms. These products are installed free of charge in your home by an experienced fitter, providing you are over 60, you live in Epping Forest District and you have less than £20,000 in savings.

Phone the Council on 01992 564272 to find out more about the Home Safety Scheme, or you can phone Help the Aged direct on 01255 473999. For crime reduction advice, or to report anything suspicious, phone Essex Police on 01279 641212 and ask for your local Community Police Team

## Garden maintenance

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Mow and Grow is operated by Voluntary Action Epping Forest and targets vulnerable council tenants. You must meet the following criteria to qualify:

- There is no one physically able under the age of 70 years living at your property
- You have a clear rent account (subject to a right of appeal)
- You may also be eligible if you have a disability and there is no other physically able person living at your property under 70 years of age, and you are receiving relevant benefits.

For more information tenants should contact their Housing Management Officer.

## New Horizons

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New Horizons is the Council's special leisure programme for people aged 60+ (and those 50+ that have 'free time on their hands'). It provides daytime opportunities to take part in a whole range of sports and social activities, from yoga and gym fitness, to tea dances and trips out to places of interest. All classes and sessions are provided at concessionary rates and equipment is provided where needed.

It is the Council's longest running leisure programme and provides a great social and health improvement outlet for men and women alike.

Within this programme you will find details of a range of sporting, social and leisure pursuits. In addition to the Council's own sessions are details of other activities and courses such as those provided by SLM (an organisation contracted to run leisure facilities on behalf of the Council).

New Horizons brochures contains details of these extensive opportunities and copies are available from Information Centres at the Civic Offices, Epping, Traps Hill, Loughton, Buckhurst Hill Parish Council and Waltham Abbey Town Hall.

For further details telephone Epping Forest District Council's Community Services on 01992 564567.



Please phone 01992 564292 if you would like this information provided in any other way, as a large print version for example.

The information given in this leaflet was correct at February 2009. Please be aware that there may have been changes since that time, such as new laws or council policies.

Epping Forest District Council  
Housing Directorate, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex CM16 4BZ  
Telephone: Epping (01992) 564000 [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/housing](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/housing)

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