

EAC data products

May 2008



Finalist in EAC's annual Over 60s Art Awards 2006

EAC's national databases of housing and care homes for older people contain detailed information on nearly 26,000 specialist housing developments and 13,000 registered care homes in the UK. A range of sub-datasets are available to inform strategic service planning and investment decisions.



Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC) is a charity with a mission to help older people make informed choices about meeting their housing and care needs.

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About EAC

EAC is a charity that offers information and advice nationwide about accommodation and care options for older people. To support this service, it undertakes research into all forms of specialist accommodation and associated care & support services.

Between 1992 & 1995, we compiled the first national picture of sheltered and retirement housing in the UK. This was subsequently expanded and updated between 1997 & 1999, and has been maintained through a continuous research programme from early 2000 onwards. In late 2007, we introduced the EAC Quality of Information Mark to encourage housing providers to supply much more detailed information about their provision, and to update this regularly.

In parallel, we maintain a database of those residential care and nursing homes which cater exclusively or primarily for older people. Although containing less detailed information than the housing database, this too is updated continuously, drawing on questionnaire surveys and registration authority data.

In 2008 our focus is on combining these two datasets in recognition of the trend towards proving care in housing settings, and also to provide better descriptions of new complexes which may combine independent living accommodation, supported housing and a registered care facility on the same site.

Definitions relating to EAC's data

Retirement housing

A group of self-contained flats or bungalows reserved for people over the age of 55 or 60; some shared facilities such as residents' lounge, garden, guest suite, laundry; plus on-site supportive management. Developments usually built for either owner-occupation or renting on secure tenancies. Also called sheltered housing and supported housing.

Housing-with-Care

Retirement housing with additional services to enable older people to retain their independence in their own home for as long as possible through the provision of meals, domestic assistance, 24/7 staff support, and sometimes with on-site personal care staff. Also termed extra care housing, assisted living, close care, continuing care.

Care homes

Residential settings where a number of older people live, usually in single rooms, and have access to on-site care personal care services (such as help with washing and eating).

Care homes with nursing

These homes are similar to those without nursing care but they also have registered nurses who can provide care for more complex health needs.

About EAC's data

Housing

Our housing database contains information on 25,700 housing developments, of which nearly 22,000 were built for rent (mainly by local authorities, housing associations, Abbeyfield Societies and almshouse charities), and around 4,000 for sale (whether outright or through shared ownership arrangements).

Around 80% of developments were built as retirement / sheltered housing (but see below); the remainder are other forms of 'age exclusive' settings, typically lacking on-site support services and with only limited communal facilities. The latter may be known as Category 1, amenity housing, or even 'elderly persons dwellings' in the social rented sector.

Specialist housing for older people has never been regulated (outside Scotland) in the way that care homes are, and prior to EAC's initiative there was no single source of even basic data. Collecting data has therefore involved – and continues to involve – a number of approaches, of which distributing questionnaires to providers is only one. We therefore cannot guarantee that our database contains 100% of retirement / sheltered developments, but we are confident it contains the vast majority.

Maintaining the database is ongoing work, but whilst closures and openings are generally picked up, we receive detailed questionnaire returns for only around 15% of developments each year. Changes to management arrangements and services may therefore not be captured for some time.

'Sheltered housing' and 'retirement housing' are also imprecise terms. Provision for rent, largely by local authorities and housing associations, has been shaped by several funding regimes since the 1950s, so that accommodation standards, the number of communal facilities and the

level and type of support services have initially been different in different eras.

For many years we adopted a rule of thumb to differentiate sheltered / retirement housing from other 'age exclusive' housing. Our definition of sheltered was: *"a group of dwellings intended for older people and served by a resident or non-resident warden/scheme manager with specific responsibility for the group"*.

However in recent years, many rental providers have reconfigured their sheltered provision. The most noticeable change has been in the 'warden' or scheme manager service – first from a live-in to a non-resident arrangement, and then frequently to part time. More recently, the level of support provided has become extremely varied, with some landlords determined to maintain the 'traditional' sheltered model, whilst at the other extreme some have eliminated the scheme manager function entirely, in favour of roving 'housing support' services available equally to all local residents assessed as needing them, regardless of where they live.

In the owner-occupied sector, change has been less dramatic because of the contractual terms contained in most Leases. Scheme managers have become increasingly non-residential, and frequently part time, but the principle of a dedicated scheme manager as integral to the sheltered / retirement housing model appears alive and well.

These changes have demanded refinements to EAC's databases, and equally bring complications for those making use of our data. Using our earlier definition to classify developments as 'sheltered' now rules out an increasing percentage of rented provision.

At the other end of the spectrum of provision, extra care and other forms of 'housing-with-care' provision bring their own problems of definition. Depending on the criteria chosen, EAC's database contains somewhere between 250 and 1,100 developments. We are working towards a typology of housing-with-care models.

The overall point to note is that users of EAC's data for statistical and market appraisal purposes cannot avoid considering these questions of definition, and making their own decisions as to what they want to measure. EAC's data is becoming more sophisticated and it will become possible to classify developments more finely than was necessary or possible in the past. However this process will take time.

Care homes

Our care homes database contains information on 12,600 homes that cater exclusively or primarily for older people. They include around 8,000 that provide personal care only and 4,600 that also provide nursing care.

The database is updated annually against the registers maintained by the national care homes inspection authorities, supplemented by EAC's own questionnaire surveys.

We can be confident therefore that we know of all home openings, closures and changes of ownership within 12 months. An area where we plan to do more work is in providing more descriptive detail about the culture and ethos of homes, and their approach to supporting residents with dementia.

About licensing EAC's data

What purposes do we supply data for?

We supply data for use in all forms of research, market research and modelling, including within GIS systems.

We do NOT provide mailing lists or licence our data to be used in this way.

How much detail can we provide?

We aim to collect around 400 pieces of data on housing schemes and 150 on care homes. However except for very specialist purposes, few users require this level of detail. Most prefer simplified datasets of between 10 and 20 data fields.

What data formats can we provide?

MS Access is our native format (soon to migrate to SQL), but we can translate into MS Excel and delimited text formats also.

What geographical options are there?

We can supply UK, national, county or district level data.

What licensing options are there?

We licence the use of data either for a single defined purpose or for unlimited use for one year.

What does it cost?

Sample prices, based on the basic level of detail illustrated in 'Sample data sets' below. But please treat these as a very broad guide only – and discuss your requirements with us.

	Housing only	Housing + Care homes	Housing only	Housing + Care homes
Coverage	England	UK	One county	One county
Detail	Basic	Basic	Basic	Basic
License	Single use	Annual unlimited	Single use	Annual unlimited
Price	£1,000	£10,000	£200 - £400	£1,000 - £2,000

All prices are plus VAT.

Sample data sets

Housing

Field	Field type	Notes
SchemeID	Number	
ManagerName	Text	
ManagerID	Number	Can link to information on managers
DeveloperName	Text	
DeveloperID	Number	Can link to information on developers
SchemeName	Text	
Postcode	Text	
Complex includes a care home	Yes/No	
CareHomeID	Number	Can link to details of care home
Properties	Number	
Year built	Number	
Year remodelled	Number	
Tenure 1	Number (code)	Main or only tenure available
Tenure 2	Number (code)	Secondary tenure, if any
Tenure 3	Number (code)	Ditto
GridN	Number	National grid coordinates
GridE	Number	National grid coordinates
Country	Text	
County	Text	
CouncilArea	Text	
EAC location code	Text	Code for council area; can convert to match GIS requirements
Housing without support	Yes/No	
Housing with support	Yes/No	
Housing with care	Yes/No	
Extra care housing	Yes/No	

Care homes

Field	Field type	Notes
HomeID	Number	
Owner	Text	Includes both individuals and organisations
CareGroupID	Number	Can link to information on organisations
OwnerType	Text (code)	Private, Voluntary or LA
Name	Text	
Postcode	Text	
BedsTotal	Number	
RegisteredFor	Text (code)	Personal or nursing care
Client categories	Text	Can also be provided coded
YearRegistered	Number	
GridN	Number	National grid coordinates
GridE	Number	National grid coordinates
Country	Text	
County	Text	
CouncilArea	Text	
Complex includes housing provision	Yes/No	
HousingSchemeID	Number	Can link to details of housing scheme

Sample data tables are available on request.

Additional data

Additional detail is available for housing developments only, including:

- Staffing arrangements
- Property sizes and types
- Communal facilities
- Extended data for housing-with-care / extra care developments

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