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Joint Press Release: West Devon Borough Council, Devon County Council, and the Guinness Trust

## **Extra care housing is on track for Okehampton**

Work to transform the old Castle Hospital site into modern flats for older people with care needs is progressing well, with the development on track to open in summer 2009.

33 one bed and 17 two bed self-contained flats will be for rent, clustered around four courtyard gardens. Each flat will be equipped with the latest telecare technologies to support people with care needs. They will be wheelchair accessible, have level access showers, and will be broadband and satellite TV ready.

Alongside the flats will be a restaurant / café, and kitchen where meals will be freshly cooked, a hairdressers, laundry, and a guest suite.

Each flat will have its own bathroom, but there will be an additional larger bathroom designed for people who require assistance with bathing; and a consulting room.

Three further adjoining rooms can be used for a range of communal activities and by clubs.

But what makes the development special is the fact it includes the provision on-site of care and support services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

A care and support team will respond to planned and responsive care and support needs, meaning that people will receive as much or as little care and support as they need.

Extra Care developments like this are becoming genuine alternatives to traditional residential care, because they provide greater independence:

People have their own self contained flats; they continue to look after themselves or with help if it's required; prepare their own meals or choose to eat in the communal restaurant; choose how they want to spend their time, with the choice of activities and clubs on site.

Another benefit of extra care is that it enables couples to remain living together even when one of them develops complex care needs, allowing caring by the other partner to continue. This makes extra care an option for people with early on-set dementia for example.

The Okehampton development will also lend itself to becoming a community hub, providing facilities that could be used by the wider community.

The partnership responsible for the development, which estimated to cost around £7 million, includes Devon County Council, West Devon Borough Council, and the Guinness Trust. Funding is also provided by the Home and Communities Agency (formerly known as the Housing Corporation).

Cllr Diana Moyse, Chairman of West Devon Borough Council's Future Planning and Housing Committee, said:

"We have worked extremely hard to improve housing opportunities for the elderly and it is a main priority for the Council.

"This development will meet so many different needs for our residents and we are delighted that it is on track for completion next summer.

"We are now looking at how we can bring a similar scheme to Tavistock."

Devon County Council's Executive Member for Adult and Community Services, Cllr Hugo Barton, said:

"This will be a housing scheme for life, where people will live at home rather than in a home. With 24 hour care accessible on site, this model of housing and support will give people peace of mind about their futures."

Ryan Hosken, Area Programme Manager for Guinness Developments Ltd, said:

"With construction now well underway, we are looking forward to the successful completion of this project. Our aim is to provide residents with high quality, specifically designed new homes, alongside excellent communal facilities, allowing them to retain their independence and improve access to care and support services."