

Age - a positive experience 2018-2023

Age - a positive experience is West Kent's strategy for older people. Since our first Age strategy in 2008 we have promoted the positive aspects of getting older. We have made significant progress and investment in our existing and new homes, as well as changing the way services are provided. West Kent's long-term aim through our Emerald homes and services is to be a 'leader in meeting the accommodation needs of older people in Kent'.

We believe that with Kent's increasing population of older people there is strong demand for suitable homes and services that support active ageing and promote well-being, by maintaining independence, reducing hospital admissions and the number of older people needing to enter the care home environment.

We have had significant achievements over the years, since 2013 we have:

- ◆ Developed a detailed 20 year Emerald Accommodation Strategy to ensure all our homes are fit for the twenty-first century and to help us meet our aim of providing 1300 homes by 2016.
- ◆ Changed the use of or demolished around 140 homes that were no longer suitable as homes for older people and built or taken into management over 300, with another 33 homes due in 2018.
- ◆ Changed the way we manage our homes for older people to provide services from one location to a wider community.
- ◆ Provided a range of services such as a Freephone telephone service, tailoring support to meet individual requirements, introduced a programme to replace the inflexible hard-wired warden call systems in homes to more tailored 'plug and play' equipment.
- ◆ Run a successful community Care Navigator service, which helps people to stay independent in their homes, in Sevenoaks for all older people, not just Emerald tenants.
- ◆ Became a dementia friendly organisation running and supporting many dementia focused projects, such as memory cafes and craft activities.

Age - a positive experience 2018 – 2023 looks to build on this success, with a vision of 'Celebrating age to support active, meaningful lives and independent living.'

We will achieve this by:

- ◆ Providing 1300 quality homes (by 2026) in good locations, with a range of design choices to meet individual needs and options of different arrangements to support individual lifestyles as part of active aging.

- ◆ Offering a range of services to support older people to remain in their own home safely and independently. We will have strong partnerships with health, social care and other organisations to be able to provide a tailored response to the different needs of residents.
- ◆ Preventing loneliness for older people by offering opportunities for them to come together with others to take part in activities, to learn new skills and to encourage them share their experience and knowledge with others.

Key activities we are looking to deliver include:

- ◆ Building at least 200 new homes over the next ten years for older people within Kent
- ◆ Designing homes to reduce running costs, so that people can afford to heat them
- ◆ Expanding the types of homes we offer
- ◆ Providing at least one specialist dementia scheme in partnership with a care provider
- ◆ Supporting at least 80 older people living in accommodation larger than they need to move to smaller homes
- ◆ Providing residents with the skills to manage some of the upkeep of their accommodation and to work together to keep their homes comfortable
- ◆ Increasing the use of community alarms and technology that can help residents to live fuller lives
- ◆ Ensuring easy access to advice and guidance for all older people living in our communities
- ◆ Developing in partnership with health services an offer of respite/rehabilitation service in at least one extra care scheme
- ◆ Engaging effectively with older people so their voices are heard, influencing West Kent's agenda
- ◆ Finding and supporting digital opportunities to enable people to use technology and access online services, with at least one digital champion in each Emerald community
- ◆ Supporting successful befriending and volunteering opportunities
- ◆ Influencing the wider agenda around housing and care throughout Kent
- ◆ Lobbying government to ensure adequate funding for social care and health services for older people is made available.

Overall, we will be successful if by 2023:

- ✓ The Emerald brand is recognised across Kent and Medway
- ✓ Our website has relevant up to date information and easy to use online services, such as online booking of our handy person
- ✓ West Kent is recognised as a leader in meeting the accommodation needs of older people in Kent and commissioners see us as their partner of first choice.