

A Guide to

Independent Living





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What is Independent Living?



Independent Living Schemes are designed to suit older people who do not need residential care, but are looking to move out of their present accommodation. This could be due to poor health or disability, because they want a home which is smaller and easier to manage or they need a little extra support and security but do not want to lose their independence. Independent Living is housing offering privacy. Residents have their own flat and own front door but there is a Independent Living Officer on duty Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm to call on for help if needed.



For peace of mind there is an alarm system where you can pull a cord to speak directly to the Independent Living Officer when on duty or to the Council's Central Control Team providing cover 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



Independent Living Schemes are available to persons aged 55 years and over. The schemes offer independent living in comfortable surroundings. Residents can make use of the scheme's facilities as well as participating in the various activities organised for their enjoyment.

Cannock Chase Council has four Independent Living Schemes within the district:-

Grace Moore Court

Cecil Street
Chadsmoor
Cannock
Staffs WS11 1HS



Longford Court

Bideford Way
Cannock
Staffs
WS11 1QB



Caxton Court

Caxton Street
Cannock
Staffs
WS11 3EA



St. Barbara House

John Till Close
Rugeley
Staffs
WS15 2AG



What communal facilities are there at Independent Living Schemes?



All of our Independent Living schemes have one or more of the following communal facilities:

A Common Room or Lounge - usually with a small kitchen attached. This is the centre of social life at your scheme. In some schemes you can use the common room for a private party if you arrange it with your Independent Living Officer. Our staff may need to use the Common Room for meetings or training, and we do allow other people to use it too - but residents' functions always have priority.

A Guest Room - where your visitors can stay overnight. This may be useful if you have family or friends who live outside the area. (There is a small charge for this.). To reserve the Guest Room, simply book it ahead of time with your Independent Living Officer. Bookings are normally on a first come first served basis. All overnight visitors should use the Guest Room. Just ask your Independent Living Officer about this. Be assured, we are more than happy for people to visit you at any time.



An Adapted Bathroom - with wheelchair access and shower facilities



A Laundry Room - washing machines and tumble dryers are provided for your use. Your Independent Living Officer will show you how to use them. Please note, these facilities are free for your own personal washing, and are not for the use of non-residents.

Gardens - and grounds are looked after by the Housing Office. If you would like to help maintain the gardens and grounds or just potter, this is normally possible and welcomed. Just ask your Independent Living Officer.



What do I pay for?



You are responsible for the payment of the rent, council tax, the housing charge, water rates and fuel bills.

We would also recommend that you arrange insurance to protect the contents of your home against loss or damage.

How can friends and family help



It is important that your friends, family and other carers continue to give you support when you move into Independent Living. Wherever possible, the Independent Living Officer will try to involve them in the scheme and, with your permission, will keep relatives informed of your health and well being. Things they can do include helping with meals, paying bills, giving medicines and helping with internal decoration and cleaning and responding to emergency calls from Independent Living Officers.

What can carers expect from us?



We are committed to recognising the role of carers and to involving them whenever possible, for example by working with your carer and you to assess your needs. We will also direct carers to information and advice, they need to help you.



Who can apply?



Independent Living schemes are suitable for people age 55 and over who can live independently or may need some form of support to live independently. You will first need to fill in our Housing Application form online or contact the Allocation Team if you need help. We will then assess the form and allocate you a banding.

Applications for housing can come to us by;

- Completing an application form online yourself;
- Homeswapper, which helps you to swap or exchange your home with another tenant (certain conditions apply):
 - Referrals from other agencies such as health authorities and social services; and
 - Transferring from other council accommodation or Housing Association.



Moving In



All Independent Living properties are advertised through the council's website. If you are offered and accept a property we will agree with you a date for signing the tenancy agreement. The tenancy agreement is a legal agreement between us - your landlord and you - our tenant. A date will be agreed for you to collect the keys to your new home.

To ensure you get all the service you require, soon after you move in your Independent Living Officer will discuss your needs and assess any risks involved in living in your flat, and agree a tenancy management plan with you, should you wish.



What will the Independent Living Officer do for me?

The list of services provided by our Independent Living Officer is almost endless. Here is just a partial list of some of the things they will do for you personally:

When you move in - they will welcome you, show you around the communal areas, explain the 'pull cord system' and other facilities, and tell you about the local services and social activities. They will ask you for the name, address and telephone number of your relatives, your doctor and any others that may need to be contacted in an emergency.



Once you are resident - they will contact you on a daily basis and when you request them to do so they will also visit you regularly, to find out if you need anything and make sure you are alright.

If you have an emergency - they will respond and make sure further help is provided if you need it.



If you are ill - they will contact your doctor and family and will help to make the best arrangements for your care, always respecting your wishes. If you have to go to hospital - they will give you a letter for the hospital staff to fill in, so that we can make the right arrangements for you when you return home.

If you are lonely - they will help you stay in contact with your relatives and with Social Services, health and other organisations which can help you.

If you want to talk - either for some special help or just to have a chat, they are there and they always respect your privacy and your right to confidentiality. If you want a long talk about something, they will probably arrange a special time for that, so that you do not delay their calls on other residents.



If you have problems with your home - such as a leaking pipe or a broken light switch, they will pass the message on to the Housing Office who will repair it.



If you have to fill in forms - about housing and other benefits, they will be happy to deal with them. They also have information about the services available through the Social Services, the health and voluntary organisations. If you wish, they will contact them on your behalf, helping you to get whatever help you need and are entitled to.



In every personal service they provide, the Independent Living Officer act impartially for all the residents for whom they are responsible.

What do the Independent Living Officer do for the scheme as a whole?

In addition to the personal services already listed, the Independent Living Officer have other responsibilities. Here is another list and, again, it is not everything they do:

Communal areas - they are responsible for the cleanliness of communal areas and appreciate your help in keeping these areas clean and tidy.

Site security - they look after security on the scheme site - and ask your help with this too. How you can help with security is explained later in this booklet.

Resident activities - they help organise activities and social events for residents. Often this is done by a social committee elected by the residents, but the Independent Living Officer is always there to advise and help.



Is there anything the Independent Living Officer do not do?

Yes. Although the Independent Living Officer do a lot of things for you personally and for the scheme, there are some things they cannot do:

Nursing - they are not qualified nurses, so they are not allowed to change dressings or give medication of any kind (such as administering drugs or helping with eye or eardrops). Nor can they do any other nursing functions. Instead, they will make other arrangements with your doctor or the Health Authority, such as regular visits by the District Nurse.

Cooking and shopping - cooking your meals or shopping for you is not part of their normal duties. (Remember, you are meant to be as independent as possible). However, if you urgently need a prescription, or cannot do your own shopping or cooking for a while after an accident or after coming home from hospital, they will find someone to give you the help you need - whether neighbours, family or the Home Care Service.

Cleaning - although they oversee the cleaners who clean the communal areas, they cannot help you clean the inside of your home. You are responsible for this. If you are having difficulties, please speak to your Independent Living Officer who will try to arrange for Social Services to provide help.

Banking - they are not allowed to handle your money. So, they cannot accept money from you, either for safekeeping, or for any other reason.

Despite all the support they give you, the Independent Living Officer cannot take the place of your family and friends. So we hope you will maintain contact with your family and friends and we hope they will continue to give you as much care and support as they did before you moved into your Independent Living accommodation.



When is my Independent Living Officer available?

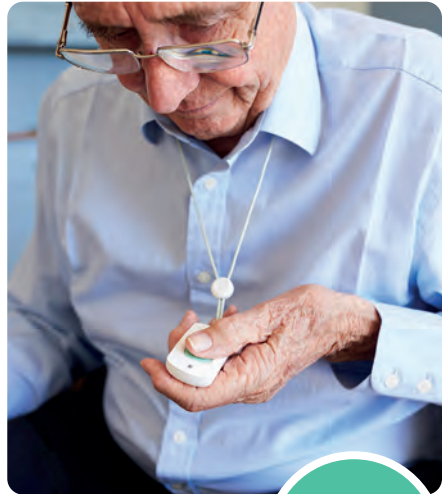
The Independent Living Officer's duty hours vary. Most are 'on duty' from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday and this will include doing work away from the scheme. The Council's Central Control Care Team provide cover via the pull cord system 24 hours a day, 365 days a year if help is required when the Independent Living Officer is not available.



How do I get help if I have an emergency?

We have an emergency-help system that gives you peace of mind, knowing that you can easily summon help if you need it.

The pull cord system - is directly connected to Life Line. This enables you to call for help at any time if you are suddenly taken ill, have an accident or are faced with a problem. Your call will be answered by the Central Control staff who are always on hand to speak to you and obtain any help required. Even if you cannot speak, the staff will know who is calling as each alarm has its own special call number.



The master key - is a key to your home kept by the Independent Living Officer in case they need to get into your home in an emergency; for example, if you have had a fall and cannot get to the door to open it.

Your Independent Living Officer will explain the emergency system to you when you move in and will show you how to use it. Remember, there is always someone available to help you in an emergency, or if you have a problem, 24 hours a day, every day.



How can I help the Independent Living Officer?

There are a number of things you can do to assist the Independent Living Officer. For example:

Personal data - give them all the information they might need in an emergency, such as how to get hold of your next of kin and your doctor. There are special forms for this which your Independent Living Officer will give you and help you fill in.

Health problems - tell them about any special health problems you have, such as diabetes or an allergy to certain antibiotics or medication.

Absences - tell them when you're going away for a while, especially if you will be away overnight, so they do not think you have disappeared unexpectedly. You do not want them to spend time looking for you if there is a fire alarm or the building has to be evacuated.

Security - do not let anyone into your home or the common areas, unless you know who they are and why they are calling. You will be able to see the person calling through the CCTV system, however, ask to see their identity cards if they say they are coming for a specific purpose. Keep doors locked and ask your visitors to do the same.

Helping hand - Offer to help other residents with shopping and other things they cannot do for themselves, then others can do the same for you when you need it.



Are there any things I cannot do in Independent Living?

We try to keep the limitations on our residents to a minimum, but with people living together and sharing some facilities, we have to have some 'rules'.

Pets - You may keep a small caged bird, or fish in an aquarium, but you must have written permission for anything else. Cats and dogs are not allowed. If you have a pet of any kind, you must arrange for it to be looked after if you become ill or are away on holiday. Please tell your Independent Living Officer what these arrangements are.



Smoking - No smoking is allowed in any of the communal or public areas, such as the lounge and its attached kitchen, the hallways or communal toilets. You and your visitors may smoke in the privacy of your own home, but remember you should never smoke in bed. You may also smoke outdoors in the gardens and grounds, provided it does not annoy others, and you do not litter these areas with smoking leftovers such as cigarette ends.



Fire precautions - Our schemes have a fire alarm system, including smoke alarms. All are tested regularly. Please do not ignore any alarms you hear; instead, know what to do if you hear the alarm - and do it. Please do not prop any fire doors open. They are designed to stop any fire from spreading, but obviously work only when closed. For the same reason, please do not interfere with (or remove) the self-closing mechanism on internal doors and, of course, do not use the lift in the event of fire; if there were an electrical failure, you could be trapped in it. If you have or find a fire, use the fire alarm system immediately. If you have any hearing difficulties please inform the Independent Living Officer.



Door locks - You must not fit extra locks to your front door, as this prevents people getting in if there is an emergency.



What is the lifestyle like within the scheme?

We are committed to excellent customer care for all our residents. We also encourage resident activities. Here are some typical lifestyle features:

Social Committee - you may find there is a social committee in your scheme, which organises social activities and outings. This committee is typically made up of residents and elected by the residents. The activities they organise can be open not only to residents, but to your family and friends as well.

Residents' Association - There may also be a more formal association that represents residents in discussions with staff. We will consult with such associations when considering changes in policy or other matters affecting you. Joining such an association can also be a good way of meeting people. Should you wish to get more involved please speak to your Independent Living Officer.

Communal Lounge - each scheme has a lounge in the communal area where residents can gather for informal activities such as watching television, playing cards or just chatting.

Other activities - we encourage you to organise as many activities as you like. If you want to pursue a hobby or a special interest, why not see how many others are interested and set things up together?

Other Changes - suggestions to improve schemes are always welcome if you have any ideas speak to your Independent Living Officer. The Council actively support your involvement in the running of the scheme.



What if I need more support than the scheme can provide?

Independent Living is designed for people who can live independently with a little support. If you find you need more support than you get in your home, it is best to talk to your Independent Living Officer about it. They can discuss with you other possibilities and help you make contact with the appropriate organisations.



We hope the booklet has answered most of your questions about Independent Living Schemes, but we realise that everyone is different with different needs and perhaps different questions. If you have any concerns or questions still unanswered, just ask us.

Remember we are here to help you.





Cannock Chase Council

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Tel: **01543 462621**

Email: **independentliving@cannockchasedc.gov.uk**

This document can be provided in braille, on audio cassette tape/disk, **large print** and in other languages on request to **Cannock Chase Council** on **01543 462621**.

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How we use your personal information

The information provided will be used by Cannock Chase Council, who are the data controller. We will only share your information when necessary, with other departments such as Housing benefits, Council Tax, Environmental Health and external agencies such as Social Services, Staffordshire Police, NHS Choices, or where the law requires or allows us to. For further information please see: www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/PrivacyNotice

Updated: December 2023