

# Consultation on proposed changes to the way care is provided at Newington Court

# Frequently Asked Questions

The 6-week consultation will be open from 10th November to 18th December 2020.

If the proposal to change the way care is delivered at Newington Court is agreed, changes will not come into effect until November 2021, when the current care contract ends.

## 1. Why are you consulting on making changes to the way care is provided at Newington Court?

For a number of years, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) have found it more and more difficult to attract new residents with eligible care needs to Newington Court. This means properties are left empty and there are not enough people needing care to justify the 24/7 care team.

This has led to a change in the environment at Newington Court for existing residents, and ESCC wants to do everything we can to rectify this and support Newington Court to be a thriving community that is sustainable into the future. Reduced numbers has also led to financial losses over the years for both ESCC and Optivo, despite many attempts and approaches to fill the vacancies with new eligible tenants.

## 2. Is this consultation about saving money for ESCC?

As noted above, Newington Court has been generating a significant financial loss to both ESCC and Optivo, the landlord. The current environment is reported to feel empty and not as vibrant as it once was due to the persistent level of vacancies. ESCC needs to ensure that it is achieving value for money and making the best use of limited resources.

## 3. What are the changes you are proposing to make at Newington Court?

ESCC are proposing to change the way care is provided at Newington Court from an Extra Care scheme, with a 24/7 on-site care team, to a ‘Housing with Care’ scheme, as follows:

* Care would be provided by carers who visit the scheme only for scheduled care calls during the day. If you already receive care during the day, this would continue.
* Many residents currently have daytime care visits, so carers are expected to be at Newington Court for much of the day.
* There would, however, be an additional cost of £2.75 per week to contribute towards the emergency Lifeline service, which would be introduced to support residents during an emergency. ESCC is proposing to cover this cost for all residents for an initial 12 months, and then to review this annually.

Emergency calls through the pull-cord system would go through to Optivo’s commissioned Lifeline service (Welbeing). They would support you, connect you to an emergency service, if this was required, and contact your next of kin to let them know.

ESCC would pay for some additional on-site care and support if the proposals were agreed. This could offer residents support with speaking to a GP, ringing Adult Social Care, or providing a regular on-site activity – these are just some examples. ESCC would like to understand the views of residents on what additional daytime support may be needed or desirable. Any proposals from residents considered by Adult Social Care would need to be agreed with Optivo and Care at Home Services. Any non-care related support, e.g. repairs or help with benefits forms would continue to be supported by Optivo’s Scheme Manager.

## 4. If people do not agree with the changes, does that mean they won’t go ahead?

Everyone’s views will be taken into consideration and this will inform the proposals. We want to understand how these proposals might impact on you to help us make an informed decision. No decisions have been made yet. The Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health at ESCC will make a decision early 2021.

## 5. I have many care needs. How might I be affected?

Most of your care provision would remain the same and you would still have scheduled care calls. There may be an impact on the night-time calls you receive. If you currently need any night-time care, we would discuss with you the best way we can continue to support you, if the proposal went ahead.

## 6. I do not have care needs. How might I be affected?

You may notice a reduction in the presence of the carers on-site, particularly at night. Emergency calls through the pull-cord system would no longer go through to an on-site care team but to Optivo’s Lifeline service. They would support you and connect you to an emergency service if this is required.

## 7. What is ESCC’s role at Newington Court? What about Optivo? And Care at Home Services, the current on-site care provider?

ESCC commissions and contracts the care service at Newington Court. ESCC also commissions local home care services. Home care is supportive care provided by a professional caregiver in the individual home where you are living, as opposed to care provided in group accommodations like Extra Care.

Optivo own the building at Newington Court. They are a Registered Social Landlord. As a non-profit organisation, they are committed to providing affordable homes with a strong social purpose.

Care at Home Services is contracted by ESCC to provide care at Newington Court. This contract expires in November 2021. Care at Home Services are currently ESCC’s preferred home care provider in the Ticehurst area.

## 8. Even though there are vacancies now, how do you know that in the future, there might not be more demand for this service?

Should there be future demand, this would be met via the six other Extra Care schemes in the County, who traditionally have waiting lists of people wanting to move in. If demand exceeds our capacity, we would then review the countywide model of Extra Care.

## 9. How would Newington Court be available to new people in the future?

Rother District Council and Optivo would find new residents. The requirement to have a minimum number of care hours would be removed, thereby increasing the number of potential residents and hopefully reducing the number of vacant flats.

## 10. What other ways have you looked at for reducing losses at Newington Court?

We have already:

* reduced the hourly care rate paid for by ESCC;
* considered different ways of paying the onsite care provider; and
* introduced a new service charge.

However, none of these options are viable for ESCC or the on-site care provider.

## 11. How soon would changes happen?

Our consultation starts with you on 10th November 2020 and will end on 18th December 2020. We will share the consultation results with residents in January 2021 and this will include any recommendations to the Lead Member.

Pending the Lead Member decision in January 2021, any service changes would commence from November 2021. This will give us time to review residents’ care needs and discuss options with you.

## 12. Might there be any further changes to Newington Court?

Optivo have advised that they have no immediate plans to make any changes but may look into longer-term options for the scheme. If in future they propose any changes, they would consult residents. All residents have Assured Tenancies with Optivo, meaning residents have tenancy rights.

## 13. Would there be any other changes to charges?

For existing Adult Social Care funded clients, ESCC would pay any difference in care costs for the lifetime of your tenancy.

For private pay residents (who pay Care at Home Services directly for care and support), ESCC would pay any difference in care cost for one year, from November 2021 to 31 October 2022, and then review this on an annual basis.

There are no changes anticipated to the service charge paid to Optivo for communal utilities and other landlord services.

As noted above, there would be an additional small cost to contribute towards the emergency Lifeline service. ESCC is proposing to cover this cost for all residents for an initial 12 months, and then to review this annually.

## 14. I am used to seeing the same members of staff at Newington Court. Would this change?

Care at Home Services are also currently the lead home care provider for the Newington Court area. We do not expect significant staff changes and are working with Care at Home to try to ensure that the continuity of care and resident relationships are maintained.

## 15. Why can’t care staff stay on site like they have been doing?

Staff would continue to visit clients who have care packages in their own homes, but they would not be based on-site overnight between 10pm and 7am. This is because ESCC’s financial losses are not sustainable and the new model, ‘Housing with Care’ does not include on-site night cover.

## 16. What happens if I need help when no care staff are on site?

You’ll be able to use your pull-cord as usual and your call would be answered by Optivo’s commissioned Lifeline service. You may also be eligible for a Telecare alerting device, either a pendant or a wristwatch, which could be pushed in an emergency situation to raise the alarm. An additional small monitoring charge may apply.

## 17. Won’t it be harder to get help in an emergency when no care staff are on site?

If a doctor or nurse is required, you can request support with this from staff on site during the day. At other times, you can use your pull-cord system to contact Optivo’s Lifeline who would call the emergency services or get in touch with a carer or family member.

## 18. I get my care calls at certain times. Would this change?

ESCC would work closely with Care at Home Services to minimise any change to your scheduled care calls. Residents with scheduled night-time calls may be impacted. ESCC would review care needs if the proposal is agreed and discuss a range of options with any individuals impacted to ensure your needs are met.

## 19. Would I still be able to use Newington Court’s gardens and café?

Yes. Optivo have no plans to change this service.

## 20. Would there be any effect on the adjacent GP Practice?

There are no negative effects anticipated on the GP Practice and we are seeking the views of the GP practice as part of the consultation.

## 21. Would I still be able to take part in activities I like (coffee mornings, outings, film afternoons, evening meetings with other residents)? Would activities still run at the same times and on the same days of the week?

Yes. Optivo hope to get activities restarted once it is safe to do so and in line with COVID-19 Government guidelines.

## 22. Would other changes need to be made to the building when no care staff are on site?

Depending on the outcome of the consultation, Optivo may consider altering the front door entrance to enhance the safety and security.

## 23. Would I be able to keep the same flat?

Yes, you would remain living in your current home unless this is no longer suitable for your needs. If the proposal is agreed, Adult Social Care would review your individual needs and discuss these after the consultation process has completed.

## 24. I moved into the scheme because it was extra care. If the proposal goes ahead could I move to another extra care scheme?

Yes, subject to an individual review of your care needs and provided that these meet the requirements for extra care.

## 25. How can I take part in the consultation?

The 6-week consultation will be open from 10th November to 18th December 2020. There are a number of different ways for you to take part. Your family members and informal carers also welcome to share their views. If you need this information in another format or language, or you need help to take part, please do contact us. Your scheme manager may be able to help too.

Post your comments to us in the pre-paid envelope included with this letter.

Ask your scheme manager to pass them on to us.

Complete a short online feedback form at [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/newingtoncourt](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/newingtoncourt)

Email your comments to us at: [caroline.moyes@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.moyes@eastsussex.gov.uk) or [angela.yphantides@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:angela.yphantides@eastsussex.gov.uk)

Call us to arrange a time to talk about your feedback on 07701394642 or 07818 587 499

# Additional consultation questions

## Questions added 19 November 2020

## 26. Would I be able to move to another scheme?

All residents will be offered the opportunity of an individual review to discuss their care and support needs which will include any future accommodation options.

## 27. My care needs have increased and cannot now be met at Newington Court – can I request an early review?

Yes. Where residents have identified increased care and support needs that are not being met, an early review can be arranged to be carried out by Adult Social Care.

## 28. Could the building be adapted to accommodate both general sheltered housing plus half the building reserved for residents with extra care needs?

All the feedback collected as part of the consultation, which includes both residents and wider stakeholders, will be used to explore potential options for the model of care at Newington Court.