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Wellwood House Newport, is a purpose built extracare housing scheme for older people that opened in May 2002

Newport City Council and Glamorgan & Gwent Housing Association, working in partnership, have developed extra care housing in Ringland, Newport. The housing is for older people who are at risk of losing their independence. Prior to the opening of Wellwood House, admission to a residential home would probably have been the only alternative to staying in unsuitable accommodation.

The purpose built scheme has been partly funded by a National Assembly Social Housing Grant and partly by a private mortgage taken out by the Association. The housing was built by Glamorgan & Gwent Housing Association, which owns and manages the building.

The housing costs for tenants have been kept at affordable levels. In 2002 1 person occupying a 1 bedroom flat would pay £119.80 in rent and service charges. Of these costs, the bulk can be met by housing benefit and Supporting People, leaving the tenants with only around £30 a week to find from their own pocket. This covers a midday meal 7 days a week and cleaning of each flat.

Care for tenants is provided by the Council's home care team. It is provided on an individual basis according to the plan agreed with the tenant. They can, however, choose their own care provider if they wish. Support can be provided over a 24 hour period, to the same sort of level that was previously available only in a residential home. One interesting outcome during its first 6 months of operation is that the number of care hours residents required has halved.

The scheme provides 37 one-bedroom flats and 3 two-bedroom flats, all easily accessible to people who use wheelchairs. Each has a lounge, kitchen and a bathroom with easy entry shower, full central heating and a reliable way of seeking help if needed.

The tenant of each specially designed flat has full tenancy rights; the flat is *their home*. The tenant keeps their rights to benefits, and lives as independent a life as possible. This is the first scheme of its type in Wales and emphasises Newport's commitment to enhancing the quality of life for frail older people and preserving their independence.

The scheme has a restaurant where a midday meal is provided every day, a small shop, library, hairdressers and a laundry. There is a recharging facility and garage for electrically powered buggies. Social activities are organised for those people who want to take part but of course there is no obligation to do so.

If you would like to know more about Wellwood House or extracare housing please contact either Tina James, *extracare* Manager, on telephone 01633 280241 (email: wellwoodhouse@btopenworld.com), or Robert Smith, Development Services Director, on telephone 029 2047 37 67 (email: robert.smith@ggha.co.uk)
