

# Case Study 18

## Carebright Community, Bruff, Co. Limerick

Carebright

*Ireland's first  
purpose-built  
community for  
people living  
with dementia*



Developed and managed  
by: Carebright Community

Architect John Quinn,  
Quinn Architects

[www.carebright.ie](http://www.carebright.ie)



3

bungalows

6

private living spaces  
in each

1

community hub  
with a café, hair  
salon and fitness  
centre

**Housing with Care providing a supportive environment for people living with dementia. This is a Dementia Village and is the first of its kind in Ireland with three bungalows, each containing six private living spaces.**

## Description

Carebright Community is Ireland's first purpose-built community for people living with dementia and is in the town of Bruff, Co. Limerick. The first residents moved in in March 2018.

The community is set on a four-acre site in the town, opposite the GAA grounds. It is made up of three bungalows, each containing six private living spaces and gardens, a community hub including a café (opening later in 2018), hair salon, fitness centre and large community room and office.

**The community focuses very strongly on the outdoors; each bungalow has its own communal outside space,** while each resident has their own private outside patio space off their living/bedroom space. There is a large kitchen garden, walking and seated areas and sensory and remembrance gardens.

The community will be home to 18 people living with dementia when it is fully operational. When we visited there were ten people living in the Carebright Community.

Each bungalow has six **private living spaces, which include a large bedroom, with a sitting area, large ensuite bathroom, storage and doors to an outside private patio area.** Each bungalow also has a large communal sitting room, kitchen and dining area, communal outdoor space and seated area.

The scheme has a resident dog, Sheila, and had a donkey for a while.



## Facilities

- Large Daycare/community room
- Café
- Commercial kitchen
- Hair salon for residents
- Exercise room/Gym
- 24-hour cover with carers in each house
- 24-hour cover by nurse
- Community space will be open for Daycare/social care of Carebright's clients living in the wider community
- Café will be open to the public with a large commercial kitchen
- Each house has its own sitting room, kitchen, dining area, utility room, outdoor areas. Large communal spaces
- All bedrooms open to private outdoor space



## Features/design & planning

The vision of this community is to provide a home for people living with dementia to live as independently as possible, and provide an alternative to a nursing home.

- A non-clinical environment. No uniforms, nurses and carers cook and take part in daily living activities with the residents. Residents are free to move around within the site and live as independently as possible
- Residents and carers in each bungalow organise the weekly shop and cook together
- Regulated by HIQA
- Interiors designed for lots of natural light, large windows, bringing the outside in
- Spent money on 'sun-downing' lighting which is special interior lighting to help people suffering with dementia
- A lot of thought went into colours and ensuring contrasts between spaces, objects, light switches, and between things such as toilet seat, handles, and rails in bathrooms
- Interior designer from Limerick Institute of Technology helped with the colour schemes in each house
- Bedrooms have flotex flooring, which feels homelier and carpet-like but is strong and can be cleaned easily
- Lighting comes on automatically in the bathroom ensuite and the bathroom is located within eyeline of the bed
- Air recovery system
- Underfloor heating



## Funding

Funding has come from a mixture of sources. The total cost is approximately €5 million. Sources of funding:

- €1.5 million from the Department of Health
- €1.2 million from the JP McManus benevolent fund
- CAS funding of €770,000 for one of the houses.
- DHPLG grant of €7,500 for communal spaces.
- HSE funded some equipment.
- Carebright's own reserves
- Leader grant for furniture
- Donations of furniture from furniture shops and private individuals
- Loan from Tomar

Most residents will come in on the Fairdeal Scheme (or some may pay privately). The payment through Fairdeal is the same as if residents were living in a nursing home as there is no specific funding model for this type of housing scheme. It is not known yet if operating costs will be higher than a nursing home.



## Allocations

Limerick Local authority have nominations for one house (6 places- in process of sorting through allocations for these. These residents will be integrated within the community).

The criteria to enter the scheme is a diagnosis of early to mid-stage dementia, and able to live and communicate within a group of six people.



## Staff views

- Homely atmosphere
- Open to families to visit
- Residents already have seen a reduction in the amount of medication needed since moving in
- Providing types of homes that were needed and not being provided
- People able to live more independent and fuller lives than perhaps they would if in a nursing home
- Some people will be coming from an isolated background and will be able to live more social, integrated lives



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## Lessons learnt

Took eight years to get from concept to opening – main hold-ups were to do with getting the right site and raising the funding.

- Important to take time to get the right mix in the model between social and clinical
- Vision development helped by Rodd Bond in Great Northern Haven
- Architect really understood what they were trying to provide. Was knowledgeable about designing for dementia
- Need to change medical mindset – to be less cautious or risk adverse so that residents can live more independently. Mindset of staff and families also need to change
- Took a while to get the right staff
- Nurses need to be comfortable with slightly different role; for example cooking and not wearing uniforms
- Difficulty getting GPs to take on the scheme and do house visits
- Importance of getting the right architect who could see the vision
- Visited dementia villages in England (Belong) and in Netherlands (Hogewey) for inspiration
- Finding the right site was very important – wanted to be in a community and within village or town boundaries
- Funding route not straightforward. With CAS, had to put a charge on part of the scheme on the mortgage which has an impact on Carebright
- Need for a new funding model for this type of housing
- Under HIQA regulations a nurse is required on site