

Blackwood hands over ten homes to help with housing crisis

Independent living expert offers properties to ease Edinburgh's emergency

Ten specialist homes have been handed over to the City of Edinburgh Council to help it address its housing crisis.

Blackwood Homes and Care has offered up the properties to assist the Council, which is in the midst of a profound housing shortage.

As a specialist in providing homes which enable those with disabilities or age-related condition to live as independently as possible, Blackwood has more than 1500 properties across Scotland.

Doug Moyes, Director of Customer Service at Blackwood said: "We have a small number of vacant properties in Edinburgh at the moment, so when the city announced it was suffering a housing emergency, we immediately made those available to help.

"We appreciate this is a relatively small number, but when there is a housing emergency, every available property can make a huge difference to the lives of those most badly affected.

"We are pleased that our long and strong working relationship with Edinburgh Council has enabled us to turn this around so quickly and look forward to seeing new tenants in the

properties.”

Blackwood is renowned as Scotland’s most tech-focused housing specialist, deploying cutting-edge technology to help its customers to live independently. With 600 staff across Scotland, the charity’s headquarters are in Edinburgh.

Eight of the 10 properties handed over to the city council are specially adapted homes for wheelchair users or other people with mobility issues – and could be ideal for potential tenants being discharged from hospital or with other emergency needs.

Blackwood will work closely with the Council’s Access to Housing team to ensure the properties go to suitable tenants, thereby freeing up properties elsewhere in the housing chain to help ease Edinburgh’s burgeoning homelessness problems.

Earlier this month (NOV) Edinburgh officially declared a housing emergency, becoming the first city in Scotland to do so. The capital has 5000 households in temporary accommodation, the highest number in Scotland.

Jane Meagher, Edinburgh’s Housing Convener, called for an emergency action plan, seeking urgent funding from the Scottish Government to help meet “severe challenges”. The Council cited record homelessness numbers, a severe shortage of social rented homes and rocketing private rent rates.

Councillor Jane Meagher, Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Convener, said: “We very much appreciate the offer of these 10 homes, which means we will be able to quickly move tenants with mobility needs into more suitable accommodation. The Council has worked directly with Blackwood over a number of years, especially with regards to delayed hospital discharge, and we are grateful for this assistance in light of the exceptional housing pressures within the city. We all need to work together to address Edinburgh’s housing emergency.”

The 10 homes being provided by Blackwood are in Craigmount, Abbeyhill and Portobello. The specialist properties have features including wet room bathrooms and adaptable kitchens. Two of the properties are classed as general housing.

Many Blackwood properties feature its CleverCogs technology which is personalised and links users to care and health services, home automation, local information, entertainment, and video access to family and friends. The CleverCogs digital system lets users customise it to suit their life.

As Scotland's most tech-focused housing provider, its Blackwood House design guide – developed in partnership with architects Lewis and Hickey – is the gold standard for accessible housing.

Over the next five years Blackwood aims to build 400 such homes, that can adapt to tenants' future needs. Each can be adapted to include a host of benefits such as lift access, remotely controlled automated functions, and digital care and housing systems.

The housing specialist puts customers at the heart of everything it does, and their satisfaction is critical to Blackwood's success. As a modern, supportive employer it also provides individuals with pathways towards achieving long and rewarding careers in roles that make a positive difference.

<https://www.blackwoodgroup.org.uk/>

