

Bulletin for Regional Agencies, Local Authorities Housing and Social Services Teams, Primary Care Trusts, Private Sector Housing, and Housing Associations in the South West

From **Healthier Homes** to **Healthier Lives**

Role of Housing in Improving the Health and Wellbeing of Older People in the South West Region

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This bulletin is a joint publication from the South West Regional Public Health Group, the Housing Learning & Improvement Network in the Change Agent Team at the Care Services Improvement Partnership and the National Housing Federation.



NATIONAL HOUSING FEDERATION
south west

Care Services Improvement Partnership **CSIP**

Health and Social Care
Change Agent Team



business for neighbourhoods

DH Department
of Health

Aim of the bulletin

Public health aims to improve the health of the whole population, not just those with specific ill health needs.

Hence, regionally, a significant proportion of the public health effort should be focussed on the health needs of the over 50s. Our key challenge is to promote, support and extend healthy, active life and make appropriate provision where this is not the case. This includes ensuring that housing provision is appropriate and improves health.

The aim of this bulletin is to promote the housing needs of older people in the South West, specifically as they relate to maintaining and improving their health and wellbeing. The bulletin describes the issues, challenges and what needs to change in the South West to meet the changing demands and expectations of older people. It is estimated that older people spend between 70–90% of their time in their home. Hence, where they live and how they live, has a significant impact on their health.

Setting the scene

This work needs to link together what older people say they want, the current policy context and relevant regional strategies:

What older people want

It is increasingly important to ensure that older people are consulted and their views taken into account when housing and services are developed. A number of policy documents from both government and voluntary agencies have highlighted the main concerns of older people around housing. In essence the feedback says that older people want:

- to be consulted on issues which concern their lives;
- to be provided with better information which can be accessed easily;
- to be given a choice in the type of housing and services available;
- to remain independent and in their own homes for as long as possible.

The policy context

The Government recognise that housing and social care and support are linked. ODPM, Department of Health and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), have collaborated, and continue to work together, on capital and policy initiatives that reflect

this link, e.g. the development of Extra Care housing and the Housing and Older People Development Group.

The appropriate support and care services can help people to remain independent and enjoy living in their own homes for as long as possible. Well-maintained, warm, secure and appropriate housing can help prevent unnecessary admissions to hospital or institutional care. To this end, the DH have set aside a total of £147m for 2004–2008 to enhance the housing with care choices of older people. The Housing Corporation South West have allocated £17.7m for older people's housing in 2004–06 through their Approved Development Programme. This includes eight frail elderly schemes. Out of their overall budget of £28.7m for supported housing, they have allocated £5m to remodelling/repair of existing stock.

In addition, the Housing Corporation have recently announced a further £24m for 2006–2008 for older people's housing, including new build Extra Care Housing and remodelling existing schemes.

Housing is an important factor in enabling older and vulnerable people to live successfully as part of the community, and the right support also plays a vital role in helping people to retain their tenancies and in preventing homelessness. Provision of housing-related support through the Government's Supporting People programme is one of the main ways that vulnerable people, including vulnerable



older people, are given the opportunity of achieving or maintaining independence and a better quality of life.

Recent policy documents which support this approach are:

Living Well in Later Life (Audit Commission, Health Care Commission and Commission for Social Care Inspection, March 2006)

Our Health, Our Care, Our Say: a new direction for community services (DH, February 2006)

Independence, Well-Being and Choice (DH Green Paper March 2005)

Opportunity Age (DWP March 2005)

Excluded Older People (ODPM/SEU March 2005)

Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People (Cabinet Office January 2005)

Consultation Responses to Independence, Well-Being and Choice Green Paper (DH October 2005)

Building Telecare in England (DH, July 2005)

Supporting People Review (ODPM November 2005)

A Sure Start to Later Life (ODPM/SEU, January 2006)

Another useful document is the recent Wanless Report, ***Securing Good Care for Older People*** (King's Fund, March 2006).

South West regional strategies

The most important of these are *The South West Regional Housing Strategy* (2005), *Supported Housing Position Statement* (2004) and also the link to the *Local Authority Supporting People Strategies* (2005). The new Local Area Agreements which include a block specifically relating to "Healthier Communities and Older People" will also be a key tool in ensuring better partnership working across statutory and voluntary agencies at local level.



Key Issues

1. The proportion of older people is higher in the South West than in any other English region, (people over 50 make up nearly 40% of the population). Consequently, a larger proportion of housing is occupied by older people than in other regions. 27% of all households in the south west are currently all pensioner households. Projected growth in the 65+ population is 60%, and by 2028 it is estimated that more than one million people will be over 65.
2. Some notable features about the housing of the older population are:

Tenure

The majority of older people are owner occupiers. (see Table 1 below)

Location

Rural and coastal areas have a greater percentage of older people within their population. Urban areas have greater numbers, but represent smaller proportions.

Age differences

Very elderly people (85+) are less likely to be owner occupiers than younger age groups. The numbers living in social rented housing in urban areas rise with increasing age.

Migration

About 10% of migration into the South West is in people over 65.

3. Levels of poverty are lower than other regions but still 12.1% of population over 60 are income deprived. This group have more limiting long term illness, and tend to live in social housing in urban areas. There are also some pockets of rural deprivation.

For a fuller description of the demographic and inequality issues see: **Second Blooming: towards achieving a healthy and active mature population in the South West**. South West Public Health Observatory (2006). <http://www.swpho.nhs.uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=9114>

Table 1: Where people over 50 live in the South West by age and tenure (Census 2001)

Tenure	Urban, Rural or Fringe	Age group			
		50–59	60–64	65–84	85+
Owner occupied	Fringe	14.9%	14.9%	14.4%	13.4%
	Rural	17.2%	17.0%	14.2%	11.5%
	Urban	52.1%	51.9%	50.6%	45.8%
Social rented	Fringe	1.3%	1.6%	2.5%	3.5%
	Rural	1.0%	1.3%	1.7%	1.9%
	Urban	6.0%	7.0%	10.1%	13.2%
Private rented or rent free	Fringe	1.4%	1.2%	1.3%	2.1%
	Rural	2.1%	1.8%	1.6%	2.2%
	Urban	4.1%	3.4%	3.7%	6.4%

Bridging health, housing and care: CASE STUDY 1

Hanover Housing Association is working across health, care and support, and housing in a number of projects in the South West Region. In Cirencester, a sheltered housing scheme has been remodelled with funding from the Housing Corporation. One flat furnished and specially equipped with Smart Technology has provided Intermediate Care enabling local older people to move out of hospital and regain skills before returning to their own homes after a few weeks stay at the Hanover scheme. This initiative has been supported by funding from Cotswold and Vale Primary Care Trust.

For further details contact southwest.housingservices@hanover.org.uk

Linking housing with health

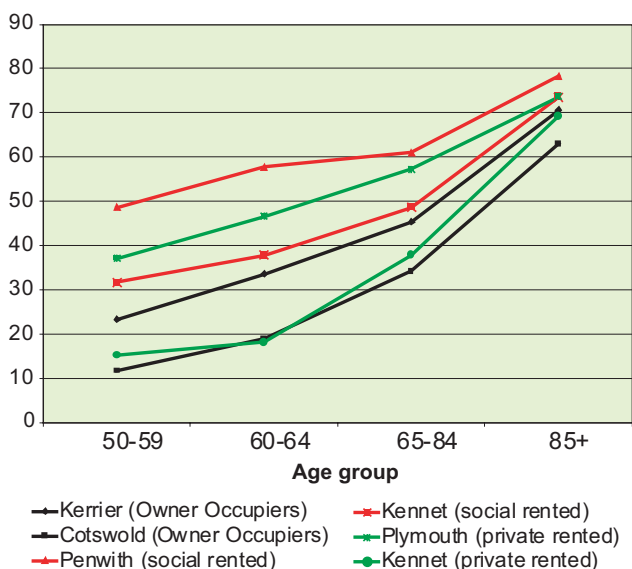
Health issues, which are affected by housing, can be divided into the following areas:

- Linking information on ill health with housing tenure and area
- Poor housing conditions leading to ill health
- Ensuring housing is adapted for disability and mobility problems
- Importance of community safety issues.

Ill health and housing tenure in the South West

Chart 1 shows how different types of housing is linked with self reported health issues from Census information. Information is taken from individual Local Authorities (LAs) showing the highest and lowest levels by each type of tenure. This demonstrates that there is significant variation in levels of limiting long term illness both by tenure and also by area. However, with increasing age there are fewer differences. For very elderly people most will have some health issues, and these will affect how and where they live and the level of support required.

Chart 1: Limiting long-term illness by tenure (highest and lowest LAs) by age group (Census 2001)



Poor housing conditions

Aim 2 of the South West Regional Housing Strategy is “Achieving good quality homes” and aims to ensure that existing and new homes improve over minimum standards of quality, management and design by 2016. The English Housing Condition Survey showed that older people (aged 50+) make up the largest proportion of those living in non-decent homes. In 2001, 4.5% of all homes in the

region were classed as “unfit”, which is higher than the English average.

Cold, damp and thermally inefficient homes contribute to preventable illnesses and excess winter deaths in the South West. The most striking illustration of this public health problem is found in the incidence of excess winter mortality in the region where, on average, more than 3,000 people die prematurely each year. The vast majority of these people over 75.

For further information see “Assessing health risks and health inequalities in housing”, a toolkit to enable practitioners to measure the impact of housing conditions and circumstances on individual’s health and well-being. This toolkit can be found at: <http://www.changeagentteam.org.uk/housing> under ‘Housing & Health’ in the A–Z index.

Disability and mobility issues: adapting housing

There are a proportion of people with illness and disability that restricts daily activity, and this increases with age. In the South West, the rates of limiting long term illness vary from between 40% and 50% in people over 65. Levels of serious disability also increase with age. In England, 10% of people aged 65–70 report serious disability, and 25% of those aged 80 (HSE, 2000).

Many older people do not require major adaptation work to enable them to remain in their own homes. The latest SEU report (2006) contains a useful summary of the types of low level support required to maximise independence of those suffering from illness and disability. These include access to new technologies such as Telecare, and home safety devices and services such as Handypersons and home improvement agencies. For full document: <http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/downloaddoc.asp?id=797>

Community safety issues

There are many wider issues about how safe and secure older people feel in their own communities which are addressed through different government policy areas which need to be incorporated into any work on older people’s housing. The Home Office Respect Agenda, for example, builds on the drive to tackle anti-social behaviour and reclaim communities for everyone. See the Respect Action Plan at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/respect-action-plan>

Key Challenges

What is required?

In order to address the key issues in the region the following is required:

The provision of more appropriate housing and support for elderly people, tailored to their needs and designed with regional and local issues taken into account.

1. The majority of older people live in their own homes and wish to remain there. The majority of housing issues for older people are therefore about improving and adapting general housing stock, rather than the provision of specific supported housing, though obviously the latter needs to be provided for the small numbers of people who require this provision.
2. A particular issue is the growing number of older people who are owner-occupiers and the problem of identifying older people living in poor conditions within this group. An important approach here is to work in partnership with other agencies, including health and social services, who often have access to older people at home to identify people at risk.
3. Another vulnerable group are older people living in the private rented sector. This group reports high levels of limiting long- term illness. There is a need to engage private landlords and ensure that housing provision is alleviating illness and not causing it.
4. Despite growing prosperity in large groups of older people, there are, and will continue to be, poor, vulnerable older people and people excluded from the mainstream. To address these issues the three “building blocks” of older people services of housing, health and social care need to work more effectively together. Particularly key groups include:
 - those who lack social contacts and/or live in inaccessible and isolating environments;
 - the old and disabled living in both rural and urban areas;
 - older people with mental health problems;
 - older people with learning difficulties who have outlived their parents;
 - older people from Black and minority communities.

All these groups have the same right to improved health and increased quality of life as their more prosperous and healthy peers.
5. Consideration also needs to be given to the changes in supply of residential and nursing care provision and its impact on the development of a range of housing with care choices for more dependent older people. For example, people with dementia and other cognitive, physical and/or sensory impairments.
6. A key challenge is to ensure that future policy and planning acknowledges the changing expectations and aspirations of the older home owners in the South West.



What needs to change in the South West?

1. A focus on prevention
2. Integration of services: including housing with other services
3. Examining private investment opportunities
4. Remodelling sheltered housing
5. A focus on attracting more investment.
6. The development of better consultation mechanisms
7. A recognition of changing aspirations and expectations.

Housing, social care and health support services have a key role in helping to reduce health inequalities and there are many challenges across the region, in meeting the needs of a dispersed, and often isolated, income deprived older people. Better partnership working across the sector is encouraged by current government policy, (e.g. Local Area Agreements), and housing services and Supporting People Teams, in particular, need to become more involved in this work.

Several Government initiatives have been introduced to respond to the changing needs of older people and to focus on prevention. For example there are programmes to encourage the expansion of Telecare, Extra Care Housing, and Intermediate Care. There has also been funding for the DH Partnership for Older People Pilots (POPPS) and the introduction of individual budgets. This plethora of initiatives requires a more co-ordinated approach to the management of services for older people than in the past. In the south west there is a need for local services to develop an effective infrastructure to ensure that the region attracts the level of funding to match its needs.

The needs of the older population in the next 20 years will be different than the needs of the elderly now. Not only will there be significantly more older people in the south west, they will also come to old age with a very different life experience. In particular there will be significantly more people living to extreme old age (85+), people are more likely to be living alone, there will be more childless people, more women, more people from BME communities, more owner-occupiers and more people who have spent their life in good quality, spacious housing. Consequently, their expectations of what they want from housing and support services will be different and diverse.

Bridging health, housing and care: CASE STUDY 2

In Tewkesbury, a new mixed tenure extra care housing scheme of 75 flats and bungalows is being developed with a number of partners including Gloucestershire County Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council and the local Primary Care Trust. This scheme to be opened in 2007, will provide rented and shared ownership accommodation and is funded by the Department of Health. Tewkesbury PCT will provide a rehabilitation unit at the scheme, including a falls clinic, as part of a local centre of excellence.

For further details contact: ***southwest.housingservices@hanover.org.uk***

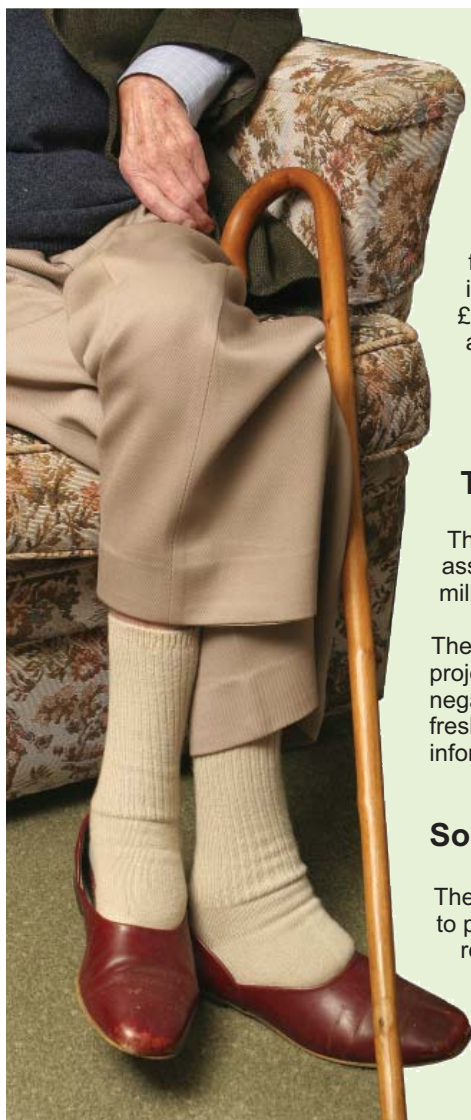
For this reason, it is essential that the position of specialised accommodation provision for older people be examined to ensure that it is fit for the future. Although relatively few older people live in specialised housing, it does play a vital role in the current spectrum of choices. This review needs to include sheltered housing, very sheltered housing and extra care housing. There are many areas in the South West where there is continuing demand for good quality sheltered housing, but there are some pockets of over-supply and under-demand. The challenge is to re-model specialised accommodation where this can work and funds allow, as well as plan new state of the art housing with care communities, fit for purpose to meet the changing aspirations of older people in the future. For any given area, such a response has to be planned strategically for the long- term.

A key element of any policy for older people now is that the older people themselves need to be involved in the how services and housing are designed and managed. Services must be designed for ease of access for older people rather than older people receiving services that providers have decided to arrange for them. The principle of One Stop Service arrangements needs to be considered, especially because of the rural nature of significant parts of

the South West, where the availability of transport can be a particular difficulty. Currently, direct and meaningful involvement by older people in housing and service design is under-developed in the South West. The setting up of consultation groups has been hindered by the size, diversity and dispersal of the older population in the region.

Therefore, the overall challenge is to harness the successes achieved to date, building from the base of being the region with the highest proportion of older people, to becoming the region with the broadest range of good quality housing and service options, through creating partnerships between older people, providers, commissioners, planners, funders and others.

To assist in the development of a strategic approach, the Housing and Older People Development Group (HOPDEV), an independent body, supported and sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the Department of Health (DH), has recently published a document entitled *Delivering housing for an ageing population*. This can help to inform housing strategies and planning policies which gives a useful summary of the issues which need to be addressed. See this document at: <http://hopdev.housingcare.org/downloads/kbase/2719.pdf>



Useful links

Housing Learning and Improvement Network

The Housing LIN is the national network for promoting new ideas and supporting change in the delivery of housing, care and support services for older and vulnerable people. It has the lead for supporting the implementation and sharing the learning from the Department of Health's £147m Extra Care Housing Grant arrangements and related housing, care and support capital and revenue programmes. Visit their website for access to a wide range of information and resources: <http://www.changeagentteam.org.uk/housing>

The National Housing Federation

The National Housing Federation have been representing housing associations in England for over 70 years. Their members provide over 2 million affordable homes for 5 million people.

The National Housing Federation and its members have launched a long-term project to improve the performance of housing associations and challenge negative perceptions of the sector and its customers. Members have made fresh commitments to neighbourhoods, customers and excellence. For further information see www.inbiz.org

South West Regional Public Health Group

The Regional Public Health Group is committed to reducing health inequalities to provide the best quality of life and health for everyone in the region regardless of their location or life circumstances. We work in partnership with a wide range of agencies from regional and local areas and from the public, private and non-governmental sectors. Whatever the issue, we try to combine efforts and focus on helping the whole of the South West population enjoy better health. For further information, see <http://www.gosw.gov.uk/gosw/publichealth/?a=42496>