



Housing LIN

*Connecting people, ideas and resources*

## **Executive Summary**

# Older People from Ethnic Minorities in Kirklees: Housing Needs and Preferences Study

**For Kirklees Council**



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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Like many other areas in the UK, Kirklees has an ageing population. The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase by nearly 40% by 2031 and the rate of change for the 75+ and 85+ age groups is higher in Kirklees than the regional and national averages.

However, compared to comparator local areas, Kirklees has a significant ethnic minority population that is ageing. Data from 2016 identified that over 25% of all ethnic minority households were in some form of housing need (compared with 11% of all households in the district).

The *Older People from Ethnic Minorities (OPEM) in Kirklees: Housing Needs and Preferences Study* was commissioned to enable Kirklees Council to better understand how preferences in the ageing ethnic minority population affects housing (and housing related support) needs across the district. The findings will help inform decision making and the delivery of mainstream and specialist housing and support services suited to older people from ethnic minorities now and over the next 5 to 15 years.

Conducted by the Housing Learning and Improvement Network between May and August 2021, the research used quantitative and qualitative methods to gather the views of c.500 people aged 45+ from ethnic minorities, particularly from the South Asian and African / African Caribbean communities.

## What Did We Find Out?

- A **cultural shift in family structure** – more older people from ethnic minorities are now living alone, and this will be more prevalent in the next 10-15 years. This could be through choice, where an older relative wants to live independently from their family, but also in some cases it is a necessity, for example where the family are working/live far away and are not able to look after an older relative.
- The majority want to **stay where they are** but there was **a significant proportion of older people from ethnic minorities that were seeking to move** to alternative accommodation.
- Many older people from ethnic minorities are living in **properties that will not be suitable for later life** because the homes are not accessible or easily adaptable and lead to some people being socially isolated or lonely.
- Older people are seeking a **range of housing options** and **homes that will be suitable throughout their life course**. This is about being able to adapt existing properties as well as designing new builds that are ‘future proof’.
- Both **‘downsizing’** and **‘rightsizing’** are **important**. Whilst some older people from ethnic minorities want to move to smaller, more manageable properties as they get older, others prefer a larger home where they can live with family or have family to stay for later life.

- There are several **barriers that prevent older people from ethnic minorities moving to 'housing for older people'**. For example, existing stock is not culturally and/or religiously situated, there is stigma within some communities, it is associated with a care home, or there is a lack of information and advice.
- Older people from ethnic minorities are seeking **'housing for older people' and services that are culturally and/or religiously competent**.
- Whether living at home or in specialist housing, more **high quality, culturally and/or religiously competent support/care is needed**.
- **More cultural/religious competent service providers** to better meet the needs of ethnic minorities.
- **Access to cultural and/or religious amenities is crucial** to combat social isolation and loneliness.
- Whilst **homeownership is seen as aspirational**, a number of older people from ethnic minorities are also experiencing **financial insecurity** in later life so a **range of tenure types** are needed.
- There is a significant **lack of awareness of housing and support options** and a strong view, that local community organisations/the third sector are best placed to deliver this.
- People are seeking better opportunities for **collaboration and to be involved in decision making** around future housing which will help to build trust between the council and community.

## Recommendations

Using the evidence from this research, a series of recommendations have been developed in collaboration with the Council.

The recommendations have been categorised into three key themes, Place, People and Services. The recommendations can also be seen in full in Chapter 4, page 24 in this report.

### 1. Place

- *Staying Put and the role of Adaptations* – Extend the information, advice, and range of adaptations available.
- *Existing Specialised Housing Services for Older People* – Ensure existing specialised housing, including language and terminology used is culturally and/or religiously competent and reflects the housing and services offer.
- *New Build, General Needs and Specialised Housing Developments* – Consider the need for new build general needs and specialist developments that, offer a range of tenures to reflect diverse financial needs, offer features of 'care ready' housing and intergenerational communities to appeal to older people from ethnic minorities who don't want to move to age-designated housing and, increase the provision of housing with care options, that are culturally and/or religiously competent.

- *Location Factors* – Ensure OPEM have access to cultural and religious amenities and are able to remain living close to their existing community/family members.

## **2. People**

- *Social Isolation and Loneliness* – Ensure OPEM can access cultural and religious amenities and that housing, care and support services provided are culturally and/or religiously competent.
- *Engagement and Involvement of OPEM in Developing and the Management of Housing* – Engage with OPEM to ensure new housing developments are culturally and/or religiously competent and have participative elements of community-led housing models e.g., Housing Co-operatives.
- *Training / Awareness among Staff* - consider implementing a programme of training/awareness amongst staff and external partners in relation to the cultural and/or religious competency levels needed to develop and deliver inclusive services.

## **3. Services**

- *Housing Information and Advice* – Develop a comprehensive information and advice service that is culturally and/or religiously competent, including, building relationships with community and third sector that can best deliver this service as trusted organisations and work with them to agree terminology of language used to describe housing suited to OPEM
- *Provision of Care/Support including Technology* – Ensure paid for care and support services are culturally and/or religiously competent, promote role of assistive technology in specialised and mainstream housing.
- *Characteristics of Housing and Associated Services* – Incorporate the following characteristics in order to be culturally and/or religiously competent and therefore attractive and responsive to OPEM:
  - A staffing team that, as much as possible, reflects the ethnic diversity of the local population.
  - A staff team that includes people who have experience of, or specific cultural and/or religious backgrounds themselves, that is similar to the OPEM who are residents/potential residents.
  - Connect OPEM with cultural and/or religious amenities.
  - In specialised housing services, consider a meals service that reflects cultural and/or religious diets of OPEM

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- Kaushar Tai, Associate

# About the Housing LIN

The Housing LIN is a sophisticated network bringing together over 20,000 housing, health and social care professionals in England, Wales and Scotland to exemplify innovative housing solutions for an ageing population. Recognised by government and industry as a leading 'ideas lab' on specialist/supported housing, our online and regional networked activities, and consultancy services:

- connect people, ideas and resources to inform and improve the range of housing that enables older and disabled people to live independently in a home of their choice
- provide insight and intelligence on latest funding, research, policy and practice to support
- sector learning and improvement showcase what's best in specialist/supported housing and feature innovative projects and services that demonstrate how lives of people have been transformed, and
- support commissioners and providers to review their existing provision and develop, test out and deliver solutions so that they are best placed to respond to their customers' changing needs and aspirations

To access a selection of related resources on the housing services needed to reflect the diversity of local populations, check out the Housing LIN's curated 'Diversity Matters' pages at:

<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/HousingOlderPeople/DiversityMatters/>

And for more information about how the Housing LIN can advise and support your organisation go to: <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/consultancy/consultancy-services/>

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