



Aligning housing and social care – an intergenerational opportunity

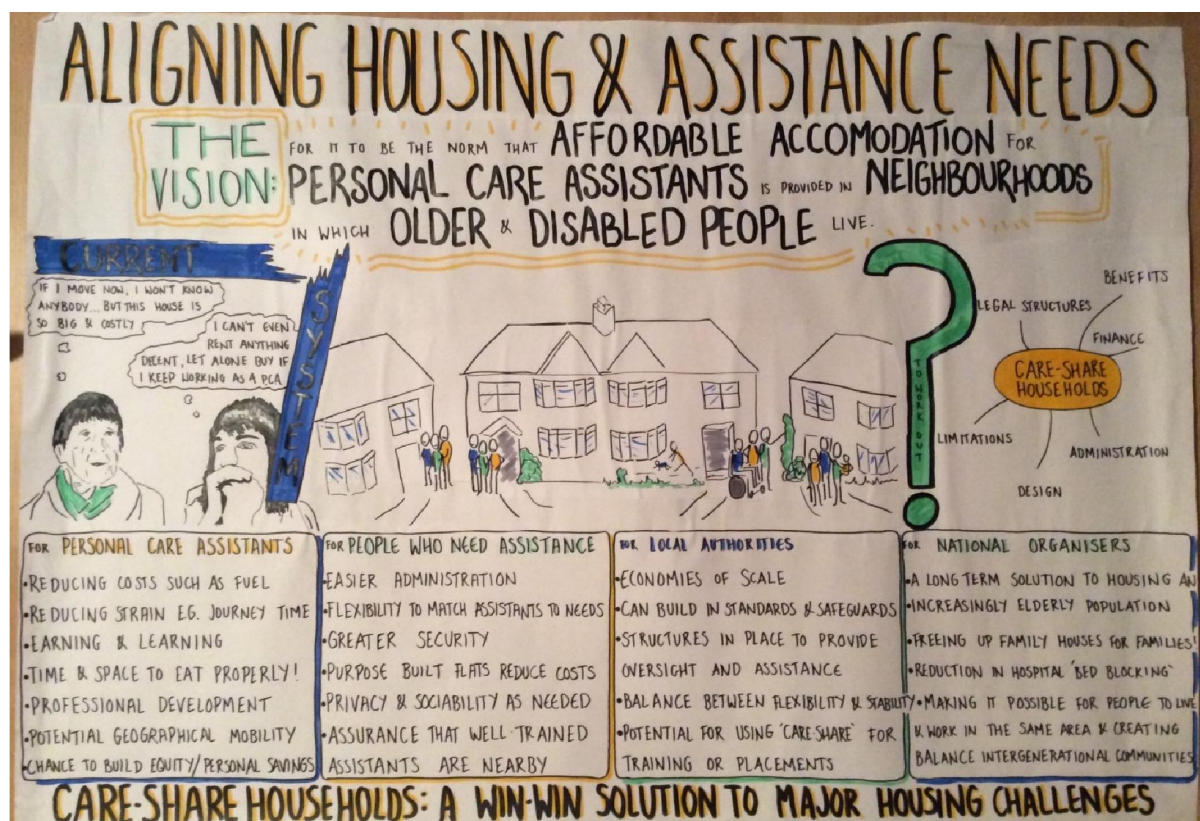
Written by Michele Coele, a retired social researcher living in Oxford

There are two major challenges facing the UK:

Many older people are reluctant to leave known neighbourhoods; struggling to keep family houses and at the same time worrying about meeting care needs with dwindling savings.

At the same time, a great many younger people are unable to afford decent places to live, especially if they are working in low paid work such as personal care assistance.

In the poster below, I have outlined a number of potential benefits to both young and old from making permanently affordable rented housing available to potential care assistants in existing and new neighbourhoods (including intentional communities such as cohousing).



Apart from obvious economies of scale; reducing costs and strain on both individuals and systems, a successful scheme would incorporate opportunities for supervised

professional training. This would come to be seen as the best possible training; learning and earning in a desirable community location.

Best of all would be if some national body were prepared to take this on as a national project, providing a nationwide network which would enable personal care assistants not only to build up credits in one place but also to move with them to another part of the country or to another stage of life.

Residents in such communities would have the security of knowing that standards and safeguards were assured, whilst at the same time they could continue to live in familiar neighbourhoods in which they have created valuable social credit over the years.

Lastly, I see these developments as a natural and necessary extension of projects such as cohousing and Homeshare. At the same time it is essential that mainstream planners and developers are incentivised to provide the housing that people really need. Increasingly large numbers of older people want to downsize to dwellings that are smaller, more easily maintained and cheaper to run. Alongside this, each and every neighbourhood should include rental accommodation that is set aside and affordable for people working as paid care assistants.

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