



# All our futures... Housing for ageing

## View from the Summit

In the Spring of 2015 leading figures from the housing and ageing sectors came together at a summit to map out the actions required to address the critical issue of housing for an ageing population.

### It was agreed that:

- ◆ Housing is fundamental to dignity and security in older age
- ◆ Housing underpins health and well being. It is the foundation of a sustainable NHS and social care system and needs to be an equal part of the integration agenda
- ◆ At a time of unprecedented demographic change, housing, planning, health and social care must all systematically address population ageing
- ◆ Housing plays a critical role in the UK economy. Older people live in a third of all homes and are the major driver of household growth. Housing and ageing is therefore of enormous economic importance.

This report summarise the key messages about housing and ageing for everyone who wants this country to be a good place in which to grow old.



The Housing and  
Ageing Alliance



## What does 'good' look like?

A good place to live in older age includes safe, suitable homes and neighbourhoods that are well designed or adapted for later life.

Citizen choice and control over where and how to live in older age is the shared vision across the housing and ageing sectors.

The outcome for all plans related to housing and ageing should be extended healthy, inclusive, independent living.

A 'good' strategy to achieve this outcome will be rooted in realistic analysis of the data and evidence with regard to:

- ◆ Profile of the current national housing stock
- ◆ Physical impact of the ageing process and the significant variations
- ◆ A 'triple lock' approach which addresses suitability for population ageing of
  - ◇ the current housing stock
  - ◇ all new and planned general housing
  - ◇ specialist housing
- ◆ Support for well informed decision making by individuals

**60% of the increase in households will be headed by someone aged 65 or over**

**Out of 22 million households in England, 9.7 million have a head of household of 55yrs or more, including 3 million over 75yrs**

**76% of older households are owner occupied**



## What action is needed?

Buildings last much longer than people or policies.

This is why taking a balanced long term view on housing and planning for demographic change is so critical.

Plans and decisions about home building tend to be made to address immediate pressing issues eg housing shortages for young, single people. This risks neglecting the longer term, well evidenced, enormous fiscal gains of making all homes and neighbourhoods healthy, inclusive places to live at all ages and stages of life for current and future generations.

An integrated approach is needed, working across national government, local government and the NHS, to make homes and communities good places in which to grow old.

**Critically, it needs to be recognised that a coherent approach to better housing for an ageing population stimulates economic activity and yet it does not require large scale government investment.**

Most of the suggested measures below require zero or minimal cost to national or local government whilst reaping significant savings eg through improved health and well-being reducing health and care costs.

## Act now

In the housing and ageing sectors there is a genuine desire to act to address demographic change and to work alongside national and local government in order to deliver genuine choice and lasting benefits.

The Act Now list below summarises key points put forward at the Summit.

Our overarching message is to:

- ◆ **Embed population ageing considerations into every decision about housing**
- ◆ **Embed housing considerations into every decision about older people, particularly health and care integration**

**90% of older people live in mainstream housing and 6% in purpose built housing for older people (in c. 500,000 specialist housing units)**

# Act now

## Summary of recommendations from the Summit

### Strategic

- ◆ Set a national objective of enabling older people to live independently and well, in a home of their choice.
- ◆ Create a Cabinet sub-committee to drive the shared integration agenda on Health, Social Care, Housing and Wellbeing

### Specific Issue Proposals

#### 1. Health, Social Care and Housing Integration

- ◆ The emerging integrated health and care structures and systems must include connections with housing and embed consideration of the home into all aspects of planning for integrated health and care.
- ◆ At an operational level, housing should be incorporated into all related health and care pathways. For example; dementia, long term conditions management, hospital discharge, falls prevention.
- ◆ Training for all health and care workers operating in the emerging integrated systems should include awareness raising about impacts of the home on health and wellbeing and embed general knowledge about housing options, referral pathways and prevention measures eg adaptations, energy efficiency etc.
- ◆ Set the aim of transforming the emerging integrated community health and care infrastructure to incorporate housing related provision. For example, if making GP surgeries the hub, with co-location of allied health professionals & Social Services, include home equipment/adaptations provision and delivery of advice & information about housing, care and related finance options. Drive forward widespread application of successful pioneer models.



## 2. Current Housing Stock

- ◆ Prevention of health and care needs is a key part of making the NHS affordable. With the vast majority of older people living in mainstream housing it is critical to embed preventative housing interventions (such as adaptations, equipment and removal of home hazards) into the emerging systems of integrated health and care.
- ◆ To achieve the aim of preventing/delaying needs, the current housing stock needs to be of a decent standard, suitably adapted and maintained. Every local authority should be required to have a strategy to address improving and maintaining the quality of the housing stock (across all tenures) in order to support healthy, independent ageing.
- ◆ Home adaptations for older people are proven to be pivotal to enabling healthy, safe, independent ageing. They should be embedded in all new health and social care integrated systems. This should include innovation in faster delivery systems, enabling greater self help (eg through Independent Living Centre or similar models) and setting adequate shared budgets based on local needs analysis (including deferred payments & recycled funding).
- ◆ Set Outcomes targets for Health and Wellbeing Boards (and any successor bodies) with delivery measures and incentives for addressing housing related causes of poor health eg. linked to dementia, falls prevention and cold related health problems.
- ◆ Drive retrofit of the current stock through a 'Homes for Health' programme, incentivising and prioritising use of prevention funding from health, housing and social care to improve the home in ways which deliver health and care outcomes and support improved health and wellbeing.

## 3. New Mainstream Housing Stock

- ◆ Improved space and accessibility standards have important economic and social benefits that need to be recognised not only by planners but also across the housing, health and care sectors. Poor access standards prevent the delivery of homes that promote the health and well being of older people and prevent needs. Therefore local authorities should ensure that mainstream homes are built to the new category 2 standard as a minimum.
- ◆ Housing should be designed for a range of age groups both to achieve balanced communities and also to accommodate changing needs across the life course. This needs to be reflected in planning guidance that also encourages age friendly infrastructure.
- ◆ Mainstream housing options need to reflect the range of needs and preferences of older people, including the availability of bungalows. Adopting best practice and implementing tried and tested design solutions which make these options realistic and viable should be set as an outcome for local housing authorities.
- ◆ Use public land to develop healthy mixed communities and places which meet the range of housing needs and aspirations of all ages. Garden cities and new town developments are an important opportunity to pursue this inclusive approach, as exemplified by the Olympic Village.
- ◆ Topical issues in the mainstream housing sector eg leasehold reform, security of tenure, are of particular relevance to older people, particularly those considering their longer term housing and care options.
- ◆ Recognise the wide spectrum of housing aspirations and needs of older people. Support and encourage the housing market to respond to this diverse market. For example, some people will prefer to live in centrally located and well designed mainstream apartments, others in specialist retirement housing. A variety of accommodation types need to be designed and built to offer flexible living options in later life.

## **4. New Specialist Housing Stock**

- ◆ Following the Care Act 2014 and NHS 5 Year Forward View, ensure that Health and Wellbeing Boards have the necessary information and tools to contribute to local housing plans. Those plans will need to include housing provision, not only current stock but also innovative specialist and supported housing, within their new and emerging models of care and support.
- ◆ Ensure that local authorities, planners and Health and Wellbeing Boards understand the market for, and social and economic benefits of, specialist housing better, and have access to robust data analysis and clear evidence about need, demand and benefits, to inform public and private sector investment in the provision of new specialist and supported housing stock.
- ◆ Define new categories of specialist housing for planning purposes so that local authorities are better prepared and can plan to meet the shortfall of specialist and supported accommodation developments across all tenures.
- ◆ Improve the design and build quality of new specialist housing to ensure longevity and flexibility.
- ◆ Raise awareness of the quality of life improvements, safeguards and lifestyle choices that older people may experience in specialist housing which meets their particular needs and aspirations.

## **5. Informed Decision Making about Later Life Housing and Care**

- ◆ Ensure that any information and advice services that central government invests in are joined-up, integrated and designed to address all of an older person's housing, health, care and related financial advice requirements.
- ◆ Monitor the implementation of the Care Act 2014, and its associated Guidance and Regulations, with regard to the Duty to provide information and advice, to ensure that local authorities commission impartial, integrated information and advice that straddles social care, housing options and financial considerations and which – delivered properly – can prevent, delay and reduce the need for care.
- ◆ Provide where necessary updated Regulations and Guidance to local authorities and clinical commissioning groups to ensure the commissioning of integrated information and advice services which enable informed decision making, self help and address all older people's housing, health, care and related financial issues.
- ◆ Set national Outcomes Frameworks for Adult Social Care, Public Health, the NHS and housing which support informed decision making and drive the provision of integrated information and advice services that address housing, health, care and related finance in later life.

# About us

The Housing & Ageing Summit was organised by the Housing and Ageing Alliance.

This Alliance is a not for profit, independent group involving a broad spectrum of sector leaders from local and national organisations working together with a single objective:

*To bring about improvements to the housing and living conditions of older people.*

The Alliance believes that homes, communities and housing related services should be planned and designed to enable choice, control, inclusion and independence in later life.



[Click here to find out more about the Alliance](#)

## **Members include:**

Age UK, Anchor, Care & Repair England, Chartered Institute of Housing, Elderly Accommodation Counsel, Foundations, Independent Age, ILCUK, Hanover, Housing Learning & Improvement Network, McCarthy & Stone Retirement Lifestyles Ltd, National Housing Federation & Older People's Groups

## **Contact:**

housingandageing@gmail.com

NOTE: The Housing & Ageing Alliance addresses issues in England only.

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