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Housing LIN

Connecting people, ideas and resources

Sector showcase: housing and independent living

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Introduction

This briefing, by CIH and Housing LIN, seeks to showcase schemes that have been developed by housing organisations working in partnership with social care, and often health partners. The aim is to support housing and social care partners to look at what can be achieved when considering the needs of older and disabled people in their localities, and to consider how doing things differently might provide both savings for stretched public services and better outcomes for people they support.


There is now an urgency to achieve a shift in how services are developed across housing and care. ADASS, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, have warned of a potential funding gap of £2.6bn for services for older and disabled people by the end of the decade, and increasingly directors of adult social services are reporting concerns over the sustainability of services for adults. For the first time last year, this pressure is growing from the numbers of working aged adults with long term conditions as well as from the rising number of older people.

The Care Act 2014 was underpinned by the need to do things differently in order to tackle the rising pressures for services from an increasingly ageing population, including greater collaboration to achieve health and wellbeing outcomes. For example, it emphasised the role of specialist housing within health and social care economies in providing support earlier on and in addressing the escalating dependency on care services. Housing models are also identified as having a role in enabling effective re-ablement to support and speed up transfers of care from hospital settings, or to help to avoid admission.

The national memorandum of understanding - *Improving health and care through the home* - brings together departments across government, national agencies and sector leading bodies in health, housing and social care, to further that ambition, and support more partnerships and joint working across the sectors, especially at the local level, by disseminating case study examples and evidence of the benefits.

In addition, the government's Transforming Care agenda is focused on providing more opportunities for people with learning disabilities and / or autism to live with greater independence and to enjoy better health and care outcomes, including building strategic relationships with housing providers under NHS England's Transforming Care Partnerships programme. Small-scale supported living models are identified as one of the options to support people with learning disabilities / autism to live as independently as possible. Health budgets can contribute to housing costs where this is identified as meeting a health need and as part of an individual's care and support plan; for example, whether to commission 'move on' accommodation, adapt an existing property to enable independent living or ensure the delivery of personal care. The need to provide security of tenure, to ensure that people can sustain their tenancies during periods of ill health and hospitalisation is identified as a priority, and housing models are emerging that deliver this choice and security.





How do we ensure that older and disabled people can live with greater independence for as long as possible; stay connected to their local communities and enjoying better levels of wellbeing and care?

The following case studies demonstrate some of the ways in which housing providers are using their property assets, and working in partnership with multiple agencies, to provide person-centred and responsive services that support independent living for older people and those with complex and long term conditions. In doing so, they are directly contributing to the government's agenda for greater choice and control for individuals, achieving better outcomes for the individuals supported, and frequently also delivering considerable savings for their local authority and health partners. This is particularly so in the case of some of the local housing solutions which are enabling people with learning disabilities / autism, previously living in secure NHS accommodation or other institutional settings, often far from their local area, to be re-settled nearer to home.

All the case studies profiled in this report have a key factor in common: they illustrate how difficult times and serious challenges can, if responded to with a creative and positive approach, serve as a catalyst for innovative solutions which deliver positive outcomes for people, as well as for the health, housing and social care system more broadly.

Challenges explored in the case studies include using valuable assets and resources to deliver maximum added value, through a focus on which individuals would most benefit from those resources.

At the Riverside Group's extra care schemes in Hull and at Bowthorpe Village in Norwich, led by NorseCare and Saffron Housing Trust, this has meant taking a broad view about how extra care housing can deliver improved independence and quality of life for a wide range of people with diverse needs and of differing ages.

In Wales, Rhondda Housing Association worked to transform a building which previously provided hard to let general needs accommodation into five new apartments for people with learning disabilities, of which the tenants - and the local community - are rightly proud.

In the North of England, Johnnie Johnson Housing is pursuing a programme of re-thinking the role of sheltered housing, and are responding to the changing aspirations and needs of all their residents, through a flexible, person centred approach, incorporating the opportunities created through digital innovation.

Finally, in Kent and in London, Places for People and Look Ahead (respectively) have worked closely with health and social care partners to create person-centred housing options to enable people with learning disabilities and / or autism to move out of secure settings (or avoid such settings in the first place), and to live in the community, in two truly collaborative responses to the Transforming Care Programme.

Key learning points

Although these case studies cover a diverse range of services, there are some overlapping themes which, although not easy to achieve, have contributed to the success of these schemes. These are set out below.

1. Multi-agency partnership approaches

Several of the case studies included here have been developed as a result of housing and / or care organisations establishing partnerships with local authority social care services and local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), utilising their specialist support and care skills (e.g. Look Ahead), or working creatively with their support providers where they are not a specialist provider of support themselves (as with Places for People). Many of the customers / tenants in these schemes have complex and long term conditions that will require ongoing input from health and care specialists, even though the services themselves help to mitigate and reduce reliance on these compared to alternative care settings. Often there are a number of funding streams to provide finance for the schemes (capital and revenue) or for individuals within them.

2. Taking and sharing risks

Many of these successful initiatives have required, from the outset, the acceptance of some level of shared risk; several organisations described taking a 'leap of faith' in order to enable new services to be developed, investing in housing, and community based services, rather than in more familiar and secure institutional settings. For all partners facing constrained financial resources, managing and sharing the risk of upfront and ongoing revenue costs is likely to remain a challenge, even with the recent positive announcements from government around the future funding of supported housing (for older people's and long term services, at least).

Managing and sharing risk is also relevant to the ongoing management of services for individuals, and is a particular challenge for clinical staff. Long term partnership working, developing trust and demonstrating the benefit and expertise of skilled housing support staff is critical in enabling this to develop and bringing most benefit to the customer / resident. Some of the most successful outcomes for the people supported by these services have come as a result of taking carefully considered risks, to enable them to live safely in the community.

3. Developing a person-centred approach and knowing your customers

All of the services have been developed / co-designed with customers, families and carers, as well as commissioners and clinicians to adapt the services to the needs of the customers. This includes the use of assistive technology. There has also been an iterative process of learning from what has worked / what has been less successful and why, with any conclusions taken forward in planning for new schemes / services.

4. Use of assets and business commitment to service development

All of the housing, and in some cases, care organisations involved have made a clear business decision to use their property assets and housing expertise to develop new services for older people and people with long term complex needs. This is in response to existing and projected housing needs - the increase in older people, including those with dementia - and / or building on existing skills and expertise - including working with people with learning disabilities, autism and Asperger's Syndrome. In all cases the providers have invested considerable resources in time, people and funding to make the schemes work.

5. Involvement of local communities

In several cases, the schemes have been successfully integrated into local communities. In development, many have provided employment opportunities, and kick-started wider regeneration or further housing development. Some have been developed to provide facilities for the wider community to engage with activities. All are focused on how they support people living there to engage with wider activities in the local area.

Living Longer, Living Better: delivering a vision; Johnnie Johnson Housing

Background to the project

Johnnie Johnson Housing (JJH) are passionate about making a positive impact on the lives of older people. In 2014 they embarked on a dramatic turnaround, going back to basics, undertaking an in-depth service review, working in collaboration with both their residents and staff, the results of which informed their new vision, 'Living Longer, Living Better'. This included a commitment to delivering outstanding homes and services and becoming 'Market Makers' in the provision of independent living services; returning to their 'roots', providing high quality, affordable independent living, offering choice and flexibility as and when their residents need it, whilst maximizing both the use of technology and face to face contact.



What was the approach?

JJH have the benefit of their own 24/7 alarm receiving centre, Astraline and they wanted to take full advantage of the opportunities that Astraline offers. They started to think about how technology could impact on the quality of the lives of their residents and ultimately achieve their vision.

Maximising the opportunities that technology has enabled JJH to free up the time of the independent living teams to target their face to face services to those in greatest need.

Residents now have access to two offers which

have both been developed in conjunction with residents. The 'core' offer is for every resident, whatever their age or where they live. The 'independent living offer' is for all independent living scheme residents and is delivered by their team of independent living coordinators, covering the following six areas:

- Safe and Secure
- Personal Contact

- New technology
- Value for money
- Investment
- Quality and Choice

Developing the right services, whilst addressing a wide range of residents needs both now and in the future is a challenge that JJH have relished. Their growing understanding of the needs and aspirations of their current and future residents allowed them to build a set of personas, not only to bring their customers to life for the whole organisation, but also to ensure the services they are developing are flexible and can meet changing needs.

That foundation has enabled them to pilot key projects to help them to achieve their vision.

What has been achieved?

Previously the independent living coordinators were carrying out over 1000 check calls every morning, often to residents who didn't really need it. Now with the installation of a new social alarm system which allows residents to press a button between set times agreed by the residents, they can confirm that they are up and well.

Residents say the new feature is better than a morning call and that it gives more freedom and control, whilst helping to plan their day better. It resulted in over nine hours per week saved so the team can deliver more face to face contact with residents who really need it. More importantly 95% of residents say it has a positive impact on their daily lives.

Increasing the use of GPS enabled technology for their less frail residents, they have also expanded the choice of products available to support residents outside of the home environment. This is increasing residents confidence when leaving their home, allowing them to be more independent.

Helping to increase digital engagement and confidence with residents is an important objective to JJH but not vital, as they recognise that not everyone wants to engage with them digitally. Having recently appointed a digital coordinator and actively building a digital champion network, they are confident that they are best placed to support residents who want to gain access to online services, with WIFI available in communal lounges and the possibility of extending this to individual flats. The launch of their new residents' online portal has proved popular with new services being added on a regular basis.

For residents who aren't so comfortable with the new devices, they have been testing a facility called Care Messenger. This uses a resident's TV to communicate, users can respond by using their remote control both mediums that are familiar and comfortable to all. They have found that it is ideal for families, especially grand children to get in touch, share photos, but also for staff to pass on information to residents who are house bound.

Knowing that residents value their new approach is vital. The organisation has stepped away from the more traditional methods of gauging resident satisfaction and simply asks their residents, "If you were to describe JJH as outstanding what would we be doing?" JJH now measure performance against the following:

- Getting it right first time
- Keeping our residents safe and secure
- Engaging our residents
- Offering them value for money
- Delivery of a quality service

JJH carry out a survey every month of 250 residents to ask questions in the five key areas. They also measure whether residents would recommend JJH to family or friends, a figure which currently stands at 75%.

What has been learnt?

Johnnie Johnson Housing (JJH) have been on a transformational journey over the past three years, and 2019 will see them turn 50.

They have built on their strong foundation of helping residents' age well, live independently and maintain their quality of life for as long as possible. They recognise that the involvement of staff and residents in developing their services is key to achieving their outcomes, e.g. residents were involved in testing new equipment available from Astraline, and many were keen to try out new digital technology to connect with JJH.

By involving residents practically in this way, JJH have built successful services, and residents know that their opinions are valued by their landlord.

Independent living for people with complex needs in Newham: Look Ahead Housing's Nimrod House

Background to project

Newham Council were keen to develop services within the borough that would address the needs of people with complex conditions and meet the priorities of the Transforming Care agenda, getting people out of institutional settings, often out of borough, into local community based accommodation.

Look Ahead has a track record of delivering good housing, care and support to people with a diverse range of needs including people who are homeless, care leavers, and customers with mental health conditions and learning disabilities. They already had experience of developing services bespoke to individuals with high and complex needs, and were looking to develop more of these services. They took a decision to use their property assets to develop more of these bespoke high support housing solutions. So Newham Council identified them as key partners to provide more services to help people living out of the borough to return home and live safely within the local community.

The aim of the service

Look Ahead made a business development decision to use their property assets to develop more, smaller housing schemes with high care and support services for people with complex needs. Nimrod House was an existing scheme that previously had provided supported housing for people with low / medium needs. The organisation invested significantly in the property to make it suitable for people with complex needs.

The renewed scheme provides self-contained accommodation that can be adapted to meet the specific needs of the individuals housed there, delivered flexibly to ensure support can change as and when these needs fluctuate. It enables people to move out of secure accommodation, and provides a high level of care and support to help them to live safely within the community and connect with family, friends and cultural / other social activities.

What was the approach?

Look Ahead re-developed the existing scheme to provide five self-contained flats. The sixth flat was adapted to provide office and communal space, that leads onto communal gardens with in-built features such as a trampoline to encourage exercise and activity.

The flats were tailored to meet individual customers' needs, including bespoke features and appropriate assistive technology. The service was designed to offer a unique combination of registered care and supported living services under one roof.

Nimrod House provides bespoke support for individuals with complex learning disabilities, high support needs and behaviour that is challenging. It is a specialist service that focuses on supporting individuals to live safely within the community, rather than in a secure setting.

This is a 24-hour support service where individuals are supported by a highly trained staff team, who provide a combination of flexible 1:1 or 2:1 support during waking hours, as required.

The service provides a core support model that includes a shared waking night and management response, with the addition of personalised individual 1:1 hours to meet a range of needs that may change over time.

Assistive technology is used, but it is light touch, focused around supporting privacy and dignity, particularly at night (with door sensors for example), which has also helped to reduce the level of night staff required.

Referrals are agreed with local authorities and bespoke support packages set up for individuals, dependent on their requirements. The model includes staged, transitional support designed to provide a more gradual move into the community and is delivered in close partnership with clinicians, commissioners, carers and families.

What has been achieved?

Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) is embedded within the model which is fundamentally rooted in person-centred values. The service supports individuals to integrate into the community and improve their personal life skills and competence, whilst respect for customers' dignity is at the heart of the entire approach.

With support, individuals with complex needs are building skills and relationships, achieving better outcomes and enjoying a better quality of life closer to their loved ones.

This type of service also has the potential to deliver valuable cost savings for commissioners, when compared to NHS inpatient or secure facilities.



Riz's story, customer at Nimrod House

Riz, 36, has lived at Nimrod House since April. His mother, Raheela, shares their story.

"Before coming to Nimrod House, Riz was in a secure hospital in Colchester. He had been there for almost five years. Living in a hospital is very different - he just had a room, and it was much more difficult for our family to see him. We might get to see him once a month. Now, we see him most days.

He is back in the area where he grew up, going to the places he knows and remembers. His grandparents live just five minutes away. He now goes with staff to the pool where he learnt to swim as a child. He is riding a bike again after many years. He is doing so much here; he is much more independent. We have all seen big improvements and he is a much happier person.

Riz is part of a big, very close family - he has six brothers and sisters and eight nieces and nephews. On Sundays he might come home for the day or we all come here and enjoy a meal together - in his home. Riz's move here has changed all our lives for the better."

What has been learnt?

Partnerships: building up the relationship with commissioners and clinicians takes time. Look Ahead has developed a very positive relationship with both the council and the Clinical Commissioning Group. However, it has taken time for clinicians to understand and trust the professional expertise of the organisation and support staff, and to see what can be achieved for the individuals in quality of life. Building in a positive approach to risk-taking within a clear framework has been an important part of the success of Nimrod House.

Taking time to get the allocations right: the flats are self-contained, so individuals can engage or not as they want, but having sensitive allocations to allow for compatibility is important in a scheme for people with autism. One flat was still unallocated 18 months after opening as part of the long phased start up, to ensure successful placements.

Staffing: it is crucial to get staff recruitment right and to train and retain highly skilled staff, and this is also a challenge to achieve and maintain.

Being creative: significant investment was made in re-developing the scheme to be adaptable for the individuals. Sometimes creative solutions are needed. One flat required additional safety measures (padding) on the walls, which was proving extremely costly if using clinical sources, so a local craftsman was sourced who was able to provide an alternative, safe, bespoke solution at lower cost.

NorseCare and Saffron Housing Trust: Integration at the heart of Bowthorpe Care Village

Background to project

The Bowthorpe Care Village project began in 2012, when NorseCare approached Norwich City and Norfolk County Councils with a proposal for an innovative approach to providing care to older people in Norwich. Local demographics showed a forecasted rise in the numbers of older people, including the numbers of people living with dementia, alongside more people of all ages living with long term conditions and complex health needs. So NorseCare proposed this innovative new development to help with these challenging projections. The result was a large scale project involving architects, building surveyors, construction companies, local authorities, health services, housing providers, the local residents, NorseCare staff and ultimately the residents and tenants who have moved into their new homes at the village.

The aims of the service

NorseCare provides high quality care in 35 locations in Norfolk in residential care homes and in housing with care schemes where tenants live in their own apartment under a tenancy with a housing provider. Many of these homes and schemes provide care and support to people living with dementia.

Faced with the forecasted rise in health and social care needs amongst the local population, NorseCare were looking to provide new and innovative approaches to respond to these challenges, while focusing on a commercial approach. The project provided an opportunity to create a purpose-built care village, providing state of the art facilities while addressing care needs and housing needs to a vulnerable group of all ages, including those living with dementia.

The Bowthorpe Care Village is part of the wider Three Score development site on the western outskirts of Norwich city centre. Embedding the care village into the local community was a major part of the development, providing employment opportunities as well as welcoming the local residents into the care village.



What was the approach?

To the west of Norwich city centre there was a 32 hectare plot of land near to an existing housing estate, which had been expanding for the past 20 years. Developers had left most of this plot undeveloped, and NorseCare convinced Norwich City Council, which owned the land, that by developing a care village, the development of the surrounding land could be kick-started for houses. With careful negotiation, NorseCare persuaded Norwich City Council to gift the plot of land for the care village for free, enabling them to secure delivery of affordable housing, and provide a boost to the growth of the housing development around it. Norfolk County Council, for their part, was keen for housing with care services to be developed, so they offered £3m towards the development. NorseCare then applied to the Homes and Community Agency (now Homes England), for a £4.3m grant from the Department of Health and Social Care's and Support Specialised Housing Fund, and this allowed them to invest significantly in the specification of the project.

With the land and initial funding in place and the parties all working together, the development could begin. Effectively, the partners started with a blank piece of paper and an empty field, and with the help of architects Hamson, Barron and Smith, part of the NPS Group, the design for the care village evolved, drawing on the experience of previous care home developments and using the principles of the University of Stirling's Dementia Design Centre to ensure evidence about best practice in design was followed.

NorseCare approached Saffron Housing Trust and offered them the opportunity to purchase the leasehold of the Housing with Care Scheme. They rapidly agreed to this and to work in partnership with NorseCare. Saffron Housing Trust contributed a further £4.2m to the development and now manage the 92 apartments. There is a care element for the housing with care apartments, which is commissioned to NorseCare by Norfolk County Council. Construction of the new £18.9m care village in Bowthorpe began in September 2013 and was completed in April 2015, with residents and tenants moving into their new homes in the following weeks.

What has been achieved?

This enormous project is a true partnership between Saffron Housing Trust, NorseCare, the Homes and Communities Agency, Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council.

The Care Village consists of three main buildings: NorseCare's Mayflower Court: an 80-bed specialist care home for people living with dementia; and The Meadows, Saffron Housing Trust's 92 apartment housing with care scheme. At the heart of the village is a central 'hub' with facilities including a restaurant, café, hairdressers, bar, activities room and community shop. Outside, there are extensive, landscaped gardens and fantastic views over the River Yare Valley. Residents are of a range of ages, including older residents, alongside some younger residents with complex health and care needs, and people with learning disabilities.


Within Mayflower Court, most of the rooms are commissioned by Norfolk County Council and a number are available for private sale. NorseCare supports the care needs of the tenants in the apartments of The Meadows.

When Bowthorpe Care Village opened in 2016, Norwich Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) considered the clinical risks associated with 170 people with health and care needs moving to the new care village. It concluded that this risk, coupled with the primary care needs of those in the local area, required the CCG and NorseCare to work together to resolve a gap in primary care health provision.

An innovative on-site Primary Care service, offering a five day week service to the residents and tenants, was established. The service, provided by Norwich Practices Ltd, offers support to the residents and tenants of Bowthorpe Care Village, with a medical support team supporting the care team with an advanced nurse practitioner and an on-site health care assistant. They are able to undertake blood tests, dressings and basic observations. A twice weekly GP session for referral and telephone advice, and a clinical pharmacist who is able to review patients and liaise with NorseCare staff and medical staff over prescribing issues, is also available.

What has been learnt?

The partnership working with Saffron Housing Trust has been extremely effective, with both organisations having the will to make things happen, making decisions in a timely way and overcoming obstacles to meeting any deadlines. The evaluation of the on-site primary care services has evidenced reduced hospital admissions and falls. A closer approach between care settings and primary care services is now being modelled across the county as a result.



Transforming care partnership project in Kent: Creating places for people

Background to project:

Places for People (one of the largest housing associations) are working with Kent County Council (KCC), the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and key support providers. One of these, Turning Point, is working with Places for People to enable an individual with learning disabilities and complex needs to move into his own home, as part of the Transforming Care Partnership (TCP) programme. The man, who is in his 50s and is currently living in a hospital setting has a particularly complex and challenging history - both in terms of his behaviour being challenging to services, and in the sense of having had an extremely poor personal experience of services, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s.

The opportunity to move into an adapted home of his own is essential for the person concerned, as the current hospital setting is not the right environment for him and is not meeting his needs. When he moves into his new home, the man is expected to require the support of a minimum of four members of staff at any one time.

The aim of the service

The key aim of the project is to help the individual himself move out of a hospital setting, which is not suitable for him and in which he is not happy, and to move into a community setting designed for his own needs. More broadly, there is a pressing need to deliver the TCP agenda, and to deliver significant savings for KCC and the CCG.

Places for People's wider objective is to take this model to other commissioning bodies, as part of a strategic and constructive contribution towards the TCP agenda, which aims to improve health and care services for people with learning disabilities and / or autism, and help people to live in the community (and not in a hospital setting). This partnership agenda is a national priority and is being taken forward to scale up in every local authority and CCG area in England.

What was the approach?

Places for People have purchased a house for their future tenant, which requires major adaptations in order to be suitable for his needs. In making this significant investment, Places for People acknowledge that they are taking a 'leap of faith', but they are doing so in partnership with a support provider (Turning Point) with whom they have a close working relationship.

Indeed, the partnership to deliver this project includes Places for People, Turning Point, the local housing benefit team, CCG and KCC commissioners, and NHS England, who are all motivated by a shared commitment to creating what will be a sustainable environment for this man. With relatively good physical health, there is every possibility that he will live a long time in his home, if it is successful in meeting his needs.

What has been achieved?

Kent County Council is motivated to achieve a positive, sustainable solution for this individual, and for the other people who require support through the TCP programme, of whom there are a relatively high number in Kent. There are also wider benefits in terms of partnership; for example, there is a second property in Kent, which Places for People have also purchased and are refurbishing to meet the needs of other people with learning disabilities through the TCP programme. This will be a much more straightforward project, but the key partners all acknowledge that the positive existing relationships established via the original project have proved instrumental, and will help to reduce lead in times for future work.

What has been learnt?

In terms of lessons learned, one important experience - for all parties - is that such a complex arrangement takes a long time to negotiate. In addition, extensive adaptations have been needed, which have taken time to complete. The original expectation was that it would be possible to turn the project around more quickly, but more time has been needed to achieve the right outcome for all partners, as well as for the individual himself.

One key strength in the project was that Places for People committed to investing in the project (and indeed in other similar projects across the country) despite the ongoing uncertainties, at that time, surrounding the future funding of supported housing.

Alongside this, KCC's approach has also been - and continues to be - a particularly positive one. KCC have recognised that Places for People have specific skills and expertise in relation to housing. Where most local authorities have looked to their most experienced support providers, in the first instance, to develop plans for the people with the most complex needs, and relied on them to liaise with a suitable housing provider, KCC have chosen to embark on discussions with the support provider and the housing provider at the same time, recognising the strengths of each party and engaging with them as equal partners.

Essential areas of expertise which Places for People can offer include advice on the interplay with welfare benefits; levels of protection and subsidy which can be built into the arrangement; and access to their own repairs and maintenance business, with the ability to forecast likely repairs costs over a longer period of time (a particular issue in the case of a tenant who is to be expected to cause more damage to a property than would normally be anticipated).

Another example of strong partnership has been in relation to the rental agreement, with KCC prepared to negotiate lengths of agreements to achieve sustainable rents. Ordinarily, when a housing provider invests in property on the open market, they require a return - most likely via 5-10 year agreements. However, if the cost of the property and required adaptations means that the rent is likely to be very high, there is the option to commit to much longer rental agreements, which may be more costly over the whole period but cheaper on a weekly / monthly basis, and preferable to commissioners. The key innovation here is the shared willingness to engage in ongoing conversation and negotiation between parties in order to reach a positive outcome.

New choices: Repurposing existing stock to meet the needs of people with a learning disability by Rhondda Housing Association

Background to project

The Old Vicarage is a development of six flats, which opened in April 2017, accommodating five single men with a range of learning disabilities, and one permanent member of staff. The support provider is Cartrefi Cymru, who provides 24/7 on-site support. This is provided by a team of support workers who have a thorough knowledge of each of the tenants' needs, and have developed excellent relationships with them.

The Old Vicarage regeneration project was implemented to solve multiple issues in the community by making the most of available resources and regenerating communities. Landlord, Rhondda Housing Association (RHA), has faced recent challenges in ensuring sustainable long-term lettings in some of their traditional stock, in areas of significant deprivation in the Rhondda Valley. The Old Vicarage is an example of one of these hard to let properties. Tenancy turnover was very high, and due to this and the concentration of a particular tenant profile, the property became stigmatised in the local area, with a reputation for anti-social behaviour and other negative perceptions.

The property was becoming increasingly costly for RHA to manage, with the regular void work and high levels of maintenance expenditure. Owing to these multiple issues and the low levels of demand, the premises had been considered for potential disposal on the open market as part of a stock rationalisation programme. Subsequently, RHA identified, from discussions with local authority partners, that there was a lack of suitable long-term accommodation for their clients with specific specialist needs.

The aim of the service

The aims of this partnership project were to make better use of low demand properties, while also creating sustainable, high quality housing for vulnerable people, thus assisting the local authority's strategic aims. The aim of the service itself is to enable the tenants to lead independent and fulfilled lives in the safety and security of their supported home environment. The tenants are encouraged to do as much as they can for themselves within the scope of their capabilities so as to avoid dependency.



What was the approach?

In 2016, RHA submitted an application to the Welsh Government to access the Intermediate Care Fund to refurbish the Old Vicarage and create six flats. The successful bid generated £140,000, which enabled the refurbishment of the flats to a high standard. RHA worked with a local contractor to facilitate the refurbishment and, as a result, created local employment and offered work experience opportunities. A three-year agreement with the local authority was agreed for this unit to be utilised for vulnerable clients with specific learning needs, and to create long term empowerment through specific support.

In total, the project took 18 months from start to completion. In terms of the key steps, the project began with a strategic meeting between RHA as a local housing association, and local councillors from Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. Logistics on options were discussed with further meetings set up to discuss proposals which would meet the strategic priorities of both parties, including the need to find a twin solution for the site with its poor reputation and high levels of voids, and the local authority's need for an independent living scheme for some of their clients. It was agreed to submit a joint bid to the Welsh Government's Intermediate Care Fund within the 2016 deadlines.

Happily, the bid was successful, enabling the development of a procurement and project plan, the confirmation of a specification, and the agreement of key areas of detail including identification of the support provider, and the management model. The support provider worked with the local authority to identify suitable new tenants for the scheme, considering each person's age, physical and emotional requirements. Finally, once the rental agreement, services and contracts had been signed, there was a successful handover - on time - in April 2017, using Supporting People money as a key revenue stream.



What has been achieved?

The building itself has some historical importance within the local community, as the original Old Vicarage, and would have been a grand building when it was first built at the beginning of the 20th century. This project allowed RHA to refurbish the flats to a high specification, providing five quality, modern homes for people with learning disabilities. This has given the old building a new lease of life, which has been well received by local residents, some of whom have met the new tenants and are very positive about the opportunities that this scheme offers them.

In terms of benefits for the new residents, the young male tenants all have a 'local connection', and for some of them it is the first time that they have lived independently, away from family. The majority are either working or are volunteering on a full time basis. Living in a shared living environment (whilst having their own home) enables the tenants to have company when they want it, and to offer / provide peer support. This works very well and they often socialise together.

What has been learnt?

This project demonstrates a creative approach, through partnership working. One illustration of this has been the proactive way through which RHA have identified housing issues and worked with the local authority to access non-traditional funding (from a housing perspective), in order to significantly enhance this property and transform stigmatised premises into an asset for the local community. The project has enabled vulnerable people to have high quality long term accommodation, acknowledging their needs and providing a stable base from which to develop and grow new skills. It has also enabled the premises to remain in the ownership of RHA for the benefit of the local community.

RHA and their partners believe this project achieves a real impact in many areas and could be reproduced by others. In addition to the provision of good quality accommodation, alongside regeneration and community benefits, there has also been a local employment gain. RHA are looking to replicate this and find other options to recreate this in other empty properties, where social care packages are required.

Riverside Housing: Hull PFI extra care schemes in the city of culture

Background to project

Through a strategic review of housing needs, Hull City Council identified that the existing extra care provision in the city was insufficient, and that demand for this kind of accommodation was increasing. In fact Hull's ageing population means the number of people over 65 is expected to reach 46,500 (16% of the total population) by 2025. Other key issues included the need to reduce the increasing burden on adult social care in the city while securing better life outcomes for local people who were isolated or inappropriately housed.

The aim of the service

Hull's vision was to provide high quality housing with care - as centres of excellence - for people with long term care needs, particularly growing numbers with dementia, and to support people in the community through creative use of communal spaces and activities.

Hull was successful in the last PFI bid round for funding from the Department of Health (2011). This was the start of a process to develop three extra care schemes: Harrison Park (Hall Road), Cecil Gardens (Hawthorn Avenue) and Redwood Glades (Leads Road). The bidding process to partner Hull in the development was a long, staged one and required a high degree of commitment from Riverside as well as the council, including 12 months of competitive dialogue during which agreements on design were formed. But the aim, successfully delivered, was to develop a strong working partnership that not only included the council and housing provider, but also catering and care providers, to develop vibrant communities that work for the residents.



What was the approach?

Completed in 2017, 316 extra care apartments have been developed on strategic sites across the city, open to residents from the age of 18 upwards, with different levels of needs including frail older people, people with learning disabilities and those with mental health conditions. In developing balanced and mixed communities, there is an agreed allocations protocol that sets out a framework of allocations according to the level (hours of support required) and nature of the support needed.

Each site boasts a range of communal facilities for people including: restaurants, community lounges and a health and wellbeing suite and, as a true 'community hub', these resources are available for use by local people. A ground floor 'Changing Places' community bathroom in each scheme features hoists that enable local people with mobility and health issues to benefit from state-of-the-art facilities.

The schemes are dementia-friendly throughout and have been designed and built to meet the 'Stirling University Gold Standard' and include:

- Colour-coded corridors
- Safer walking loops
- Other elements include: signage, sensory gardens, memory items, memory corners and activities that stimulate interest, reduce isolation, increase wellbeing and address the feeling of being lonely





What has been achieved?

Successful allocation to residents across a range of ages and needs, which has produced mixed communities that are working well. Residents are naturally forming their own support networks and friendships across the schemes.

Riverside delivers the housing management and support, whilst the care and catering providers were chosen by Hull City Council, with the involvement of Riverside staff.

Recruitment for staff across all services was undertaken together and staff were recruited and trained together and in place before the residents began to move in. This has enabled the staff to get to know the scheme and to develop co-working teams, which means that they operate a seamless service, focused on a person / customer centred approach.

What has been learnt?

Getting a vibrant, balanced scheme: the ambition to provide schemes that work for a diverse customer group, across age range and support needs, required a careful approach to allocations developed by the partners and set out in an agreed protocol (based on hours of support, numbers of residents with dementia, learning disabilities, other support needs).

Supporting health and wellbeing: to support the diverse range of customers' needs, Riverside was able to draw on their existing experience across other retirement schemes nationally and in Hull. They also used their experience of working with external agencies to provide additional expertise and support e.g. Age UK and CVS. On these schemes this has required sensitive management and use, given the spread of age range amongst residents (many charities being focused on particular age or needs groups).

The importance of design: incorporating the Stirling Gold Standard for dementia, but also the careful provision of many communal spaces placed throughout the scheme to facilitate natural places for people to meet and facilitate the development of networks of friendship and support.

Resources

For more information:

on the Care Act:

Care and Repair England, Briefing: Care Act guidance

CIH, Briefing on the Care Act

Housing LIN, Housing and the Care Act

on the Transforming Care Programme :

NHS England/ ADASS/ LGA, Building the right home

Housing LIN, Transforming Care

on demographics:

Age UK: Briefing: the health and care of older people in England 2017

The Kings Fund, Time to think differently - demography: future trends

on partnership working:

Joint action on improving health through the home: memorandum of understanding

local memorandum:

Hounslow: a local perspective

Nottingham: a local perspective

About CIH

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is the independent voice for housing and the home of professional standards.

Our goal is simple - to provide housing professionals with the advice, support and knowledge they need to be the best they can be. CIH is a registered charity and not-for-profit organisation. This means that the money we make is put back into the organisation and funds the activities we carry out to support the housing industry. We have a diverse membership of people who work in both the public and private sectors, in 20 countries on five continents across the world.

For more information about CIH, see: www.cih.org

About the Housing LIN

The Housing LIN is a sophisticated network bringing together over 40,000 housing, health and social care professionals in England and Wales to exemplify innovative housing solutions for an ageing population. Recognised by government and industry as a leading 'knowledge hub' on specialist housing, our online and regional networked activities include:

- connect people, ideas and resources to inform and improve the range of housing choices that enable older and disabled people to live independently
- provide intelligence on latest funding, research, policy and practice developments, and
- raise the profile of specialist housing with developers, commissioners and providers to plan, design and deliver aspirational housing for an ageing population.

For more information about the Housing LIN, visit: www.housinglin.org.uk

