



All older people should have choices about where they live

(Published by The Guardian Society online in 2013 to coincide with the launch of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's 'A better life' programme)

True freedom is having control over your own life and future, having the ability to make choices and the economic power to enforce them. In recent times, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation have questioned the affordability of housing and ability of older people to make choices to have ['a better life'](#).

However, any argument about choice and rights in a 'market' approach to care delivery tends to stumble at the same hurdle: those with the financial and personal resources to exercise choice tend to be the people who can loudly assert their rights.

With the option of large capital investment open to some in housing with care, it is this sector where the choice vs entitlement debate can be seen at its most stark.

Of course, it is also the sector where private provision dominates - and indeed where a few large players dominate the retirement housing 'market'.

It is understandable that those with the means seek to live in well-designed housing that meets their aspirations and suits their lifestyles, with self-funded care delivered as and how they need it.

The 2012 [Housing our Ageing Population: Plan for Implementation \(HAPPI\) report](#) reaffirmed the design standards that older people are increasingly aspiring to. Evidence suggests that well-designed housing that meets HAPPI standards will also help reduce older people's demand for NHS and social care services. In a study of on integrating housing, community and care, staff at [Roden Court, Haringey](#), have seen residents change and blossom - living more independently. Some now cooking their own meals in their own flats with support from staff, another who had been wheelchair bound is now beginning to walk for part of the day.

Indeed, we are seeing the emergence of a range of 'care ready' HAPPI options, including so-called micro-models – truly revolutionising the provision of housing with care with the resident, tenant or service-user really in charge. Often this means the individual retaining firm links in the community and genuinely asserting their individuality.

However, achieving this brave new world of personalised, micro-services and specialist housing cannot be at the expense of those unable to easily exercise choice. That's why we need more dedicated information and advice services to enable older people make informed choices about where and how they live a better

life in later life. Organisations like [FirstStop](#) and their partners are on hand to help lead the way.

As the philosopher Jeremy Bentham once stated: “It is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong”. But who, in housing with care, will ensure that we are not careless of the voiceless and the cashless?

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