



**Housing LIN**

*Connecting people, ideas and resources*

## Home is where the health is

*In this blog, Jeremy Porteus, Founder and Director, Housing Learning Improvement Network, takes a look at how a new guide could help housing and health work better together.*

Appropriate, decent housing can keep people well and provides an alternative to the hospital bed when they are unwell or recovering from illness.

NHS England is keen that the wider health and social care system – both commissioners and providers across acute, primary and community health settings – embrace this by working in partnership with housing organisations. Housing LIN has worked with them on a good practice guide, they are publishing today (31 October).

The [‘Health and Housing’ quick guide](#), is packed full of examples of the many ways that joint working with housing is good for the NHS, social care – and the vulnerable people in our communities.

Seasoned Housing LIN members will be aware that evidence of the positive health and wellbeing outcomes of housing interventions and supported housing has been building for years. We have been at the forefront of presenting that evidence for more than a decade. To see evidence of this, you only have to look at the evaluations of the Department of Health’s funded extra care housing schemes and the reduced demand for health and social care services. More recently, we and our partners have produced resources such as the [Hospital 2 Home Resource Pack](#).

This particular resource is among those featured in the discharge section of the guide published today. It also includes sections on how housing can prevent hospital admissions and the sector’s invaluable role in supporting to remain independent in the community.

With increasing pressures on the NHS as we enter the winter months, the guide sticks to the practical. It highlights approaches already tested out by local housing providers and commissioners – often in partnership with their health and social care counterparts.

These include:

- Sunderland GPs ‘prescribing’ double glazing, boilers and insulation – reducing GP appointments and A&E attendance involving recipients by 60% and 30% respectively

- Sheffield's Stay Put and Handyperson Service that aims to see people discharged home within 48 hours
- Step down services in temporary accommodation – including for homeless people – for people able to be discharged but without appropriate housing and support at home
- Information and advice services and telecare/telehealth schemes helping people remain independent.

And with unprecedented demand on health and social services, the prevention angle is important in today's public spending context. Prevention was a pillar of NHS England's all-important '[Five Year Forward View](#)' when it was published nearly three years ago.

Some elements of prevention, such as public health, while absolutely vital and worthwhile in themselves, can take years or decades to deliver a return on investment. Hard pressed finance directors will want to find out how many of the innovative initiatives outlined in this new guide can benefit older and other vulnerable people (and NHS and social care budgets) within weeks or months – often with relatively low investment.

The message from all this? Housing professionals can not only support personalised care in a person's own home – they can be a valuable partner to the NHS.

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