Linking social sustainability to health impacts within community-led housing

Phase 1 Findings

OURI

SOCIAL LIFE

Project Background

Project overview

After two years of project development, in February 2026, Social Life and Ouri Labs launched a collaborative project funded by Impact on Urban Health, to address the question **'What health and social value can be created through developing high-quality, community-led housing on NHS surplus land?'**

We understand the housing and health crises to be deeply interconnected. Poor housing and affordability are critical social determinants of health, meaning they can ultimately create negative health impacts and outcomes for communities. There is evidence to show that this continues to disproportionately affect underrepresented communities, where poor quality housing perpetuates health inequalities and is currently costing the NHS £1.4 billion annually.[1]

Our hypothesis is that community-led housing has the potential to lead to transformative outcomes in housing provision. Community-led housing in all its different forms - from Community Land Trusts, through co-housing and housing co-ops, creates affordable housing in perpetuity. This provides critical social infrastructure alongside health and wellbeing benefits, boosting neighbourliness and tackling social isolation, enabling people to age healthily in their homes and reducing mental, physical and psychological health burdens.

The opportunity of NHS surplus land

The objective of our project is to enable NHS organisations to utilise their surplus land for community-led housing.

NHS surplus land, as defined by NHS England, is land owned by an NHS organisation that 'is considered surplus or has been declared surplus' and which 'the landowner is actively seeking to dispose of' (though the process through which land is designated as surplus varies by NHS trust). Surplus NHS land includes entirely vacant sites and land with existing, unused buildings on.

It is mandatory for NHS organisations to declare their surplus land on a quarterly basis to NHS England. As of March 2026, there were 150 NHS surplus land plots spanning 135.63 hectares across England.[2]

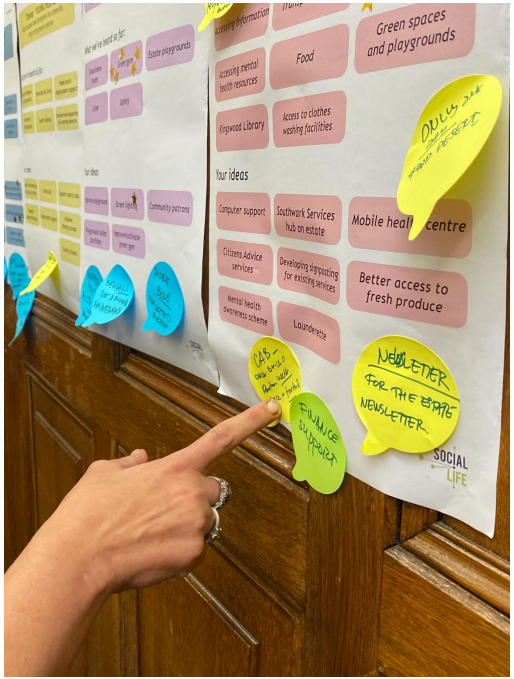
We see this presenting a major opportunity to repurpose public assets for community-led housing.

NHS Non-Sensitive Surplus Sites
Oct-Mar 2025/26 (69 out of 150 plots)

Project objective

We will be working with NHS Estates teams, Property Services, and leaders in community-led housing to design and test a replicable appraisal model that helps NHS organisations understand the comparative benefit of developing community-led housing on their surplus land.

This evidence base and decision-making tool will help NHS organisations outline how they might make the most value from their land; highlighting how community-led housing could produce health and social benefits that, in turn, generate savings for the NHS.



Research phases

Phase 1

- Desk-based research to review and gather data, including impact reports and post-occupancy evaluation reports, to understand the health impacts and outcomes of London-based community-led housing projects.

Phase 2

- Semi-structured interviews with NHS stakeholders and land/estates decision-makers to understand the barriers and opportunities to unlocking NHS land for community-led housing.

Phase 3

- Co-design of a social appraisal model that enables NHS organisations to compare the value of community-led housing against alternative uses of surplus land, whilst understanding what value must be captured for land to be released. This stage will aim to identify various use cases.

Phase 4

- Practical feasibility testing of the social appraisal model with key stakeholders. This will help us to understand how to put our proposition into practice, with particular attention to addressing health inequalities in target communities across Lambeth and Southwark.

Literature and policy background

Evidence: A key focus of Phase 1 of our project was to capture the evidence that community-led housing can lead to a range of transformative health outcomes.

This is supported by a wealth of literature that has long established housing as a social determinant of health. The 2010 Marmot Review, commissioned by the Department of Health, was particularly influential in its argument that integrated policy reform across multiple sectors - including housing, transport, and environment - was required to address health inequalities in the UK.[3] The second iteration of this report in 2020 linked unaffordability of housing, poor living conditions and insecurity of tenure as key factors in the ever widening health gaps across socio-economic groups.[4]

Policy & legislation: The NHS 10 Year Health Plan is underpinned by a focus on the social determinants of health, whilst the NHS Property Services' Healthy Places programme and the NHS Homes Alliance white paper recognise the positive impacts that making better use of surplus NHS sites could have for communities and the NHS.[5] Recent legislation has also begun to reflect the growing recognition of housing as a key factor in public health, including the Renters' Rights Act of 2025, and the implementation of Awaab's Law - introduced through the Social Housing (Regulation) Act of 2023 - which requires all social landlords to comply with the government's statutory timeframes for addressing hazardous conditions in their properties. Government policy on place-based health provision, including the new neighbourhood health framework, consolidates this overall direction.

Both the evidence and policy context inform the aim our project, which seeks to situate the facilitation of community-led housing on surplus land as a scalable public health strategy across NHS organisations, placing emphasis on the prevention of poor health and the promotion of health equity.

Key research questions

Our guiding research question has been: **When the NHS has surplus land to dispose of in South London, how should community-led housing be appraised against conventional market disposal?**

This is underpinned by several sub-questions:

What evidence is needed to support the **social value of community led housing** versus conventional market disposal?

What evidence exists for the **differential health impacts of community-led housing?**

What evidence would enable **NHS decision-makers to be more inclined to release land** for community-led housing?

Phase 1 Findings

What we did in Phase 1

Explored the evidence base

- We've synthesised literature on the health and wellbeing impacts of community-led housing in London.

Mapped causal pathways

- We've illustrated how different CLH models produce a range of health outcomes, based on post-occupancy reporting.

Refined the framework

- We've translated Social Life's social sustainability framework to focus on evidence about the value of community-led housing.

Policy analysis

- We've identified and analysed policy and strategy guidance relevant to the disposal of NHS surplus land.

Outreach

- We are currently in the process of setting up Phase 2 interviews with NHS stakeholders.

Case studies

As the target communities for our final social appraisal model are in Lambeth and Southwark, we selected four London-based case studies, each of which were documented by an independent post-occupancy evaluation:

1. New Ground (Older Women's Co-Housing)
2. Walterton and Elgin Community Homes
3. Coin Street Community Builders
4. Citizens House (London CLT)

Wider searches and additional literature reviews also led to the identification of two comparative reports that cross-examine the health outcomes of a range of CLH models.[6]

We have also adapted the Building Research Establishment causal pathways model to help illustrate the evidence presented within the post-occupancy reporting for each case study.[7]

New Ground, Chipping Barnet

Origin & Scope:

- Completed in 2016
- 25-home project in Barnet, North West London, created by Older Women's Co-Housing (OWCH)
- Designed for, and managed by, women over 50
- 17 leasehold and 8 social rent units, managed by the housing association Housing for Women, an early advocate of the group

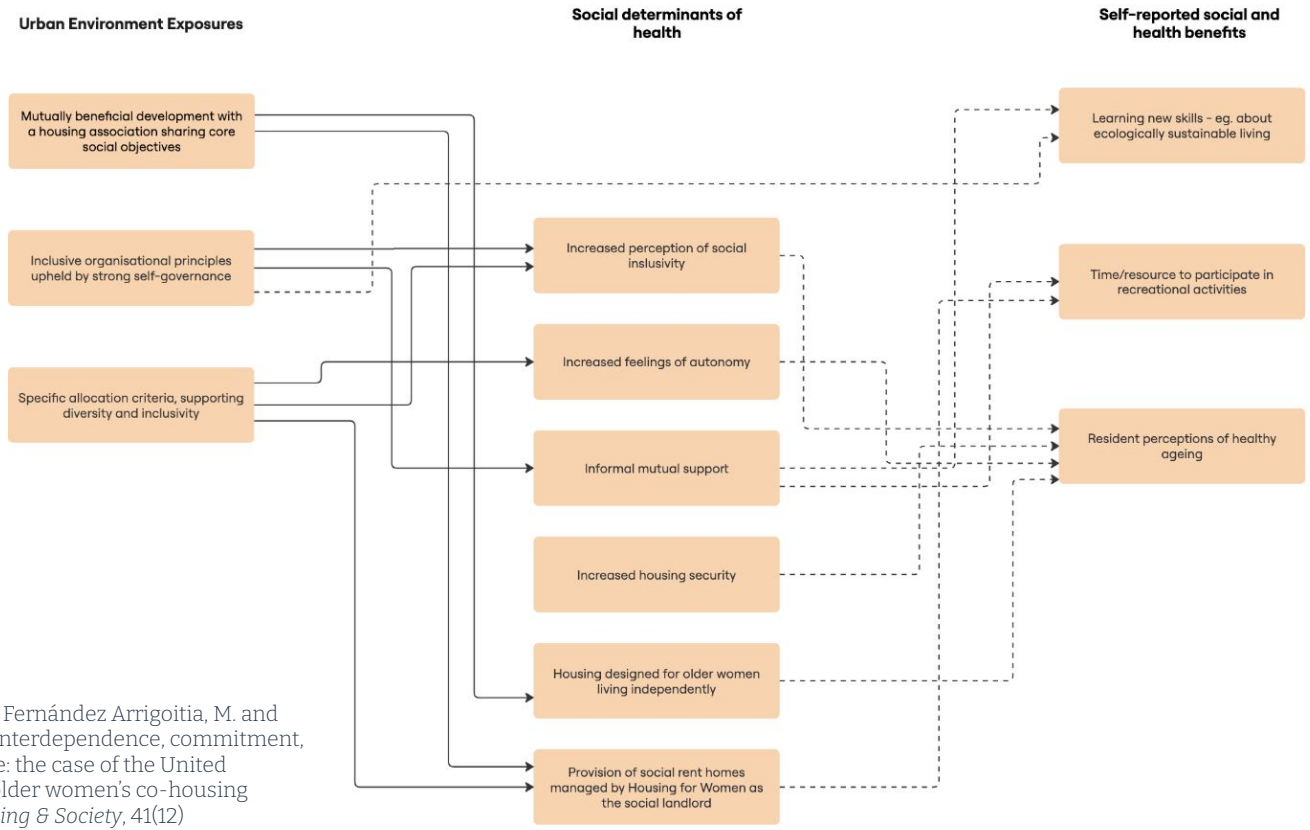
Financing:

- Land leveraged by Hanover Housing Association, acting as the developer, who absorbed financial risk
- OWCH worked as a partner throughout the development process, with an agreement that enabled prospective residents to purchase the units from Hanover directly upon practical completion

Governance:

- Housing management led by a resident group, with other work streams are led by resident sub-groups (eg. finance, membership)

New Ground (Older Women's Co-Housing)



Developed from: Fernández Arrigoitia, M. and West, K. (2020) 'Interdependence, commitment, learning and love: the case of the United Kingdom's first older women's co-housing community', *Ageing & Society*, 41(12)

Walterton & Elgin Community Homes, Paddington

Origin & Scope:

- Established 1992 by Westminster Council tenants who used short-lived 'Tenants' Choice' legislation to transfer 921 homes into a resident-controlled housing association, which then became a community land trust

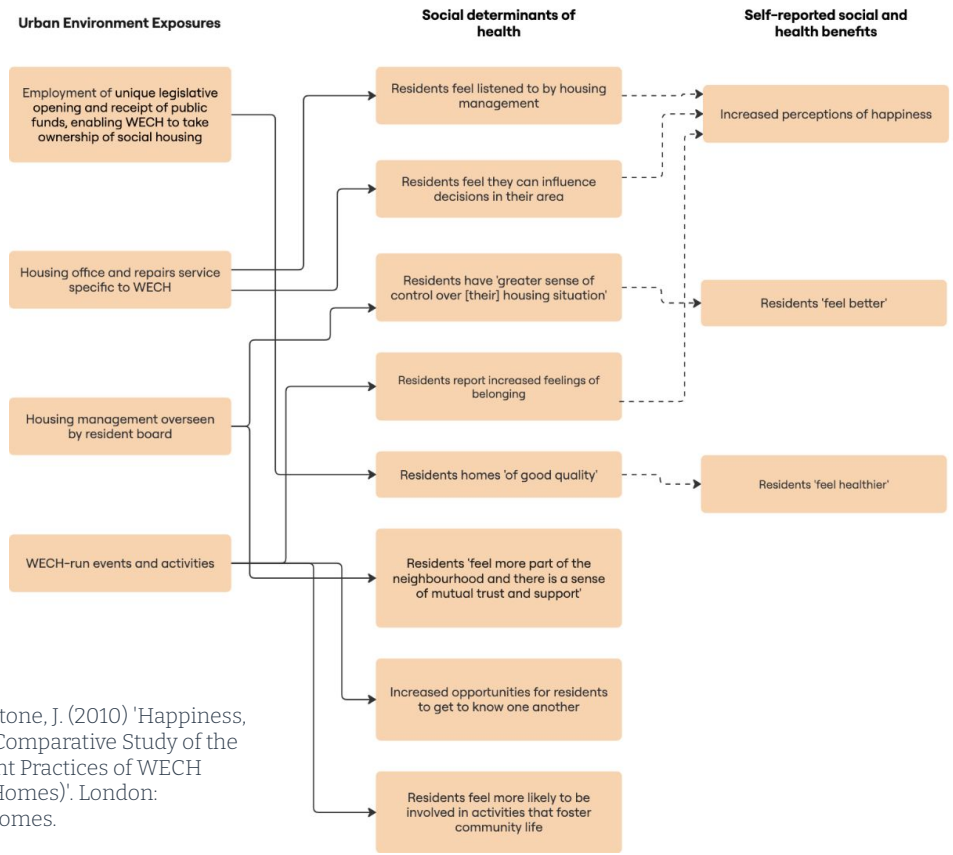
Financing:

- Rather than Walterton & Elgin Community Homes (WECH) having to raise funds to pay for the transfer, Westminster Council were required to incrementally pay WECH £22 million pounds between 1993 and 1997 in order to conduct repairs across the estate

Governance:

- Managed by a resident-controlled board that oversees housing and maintenance services, keeping operations on the ground and highly responsive to resident needs

Walterton and Elgin Community Homes (WECH)



Developed from: Ambrose, P. and Stone, J. (2010) 'Happiness, Heaven and Hell in Paddington: A Comparative Study of the Empowering, Housing Management Practices of WECH (Walterton and Elgin Community Homes)'. London: Walterton and Elgin Community Homes.

Coin Street, South Bank

Origin:

- The Coin Street Action group was founded in 1977, emerging from community campaign against a large-scale commercial venture in the area

Financing & Scope:

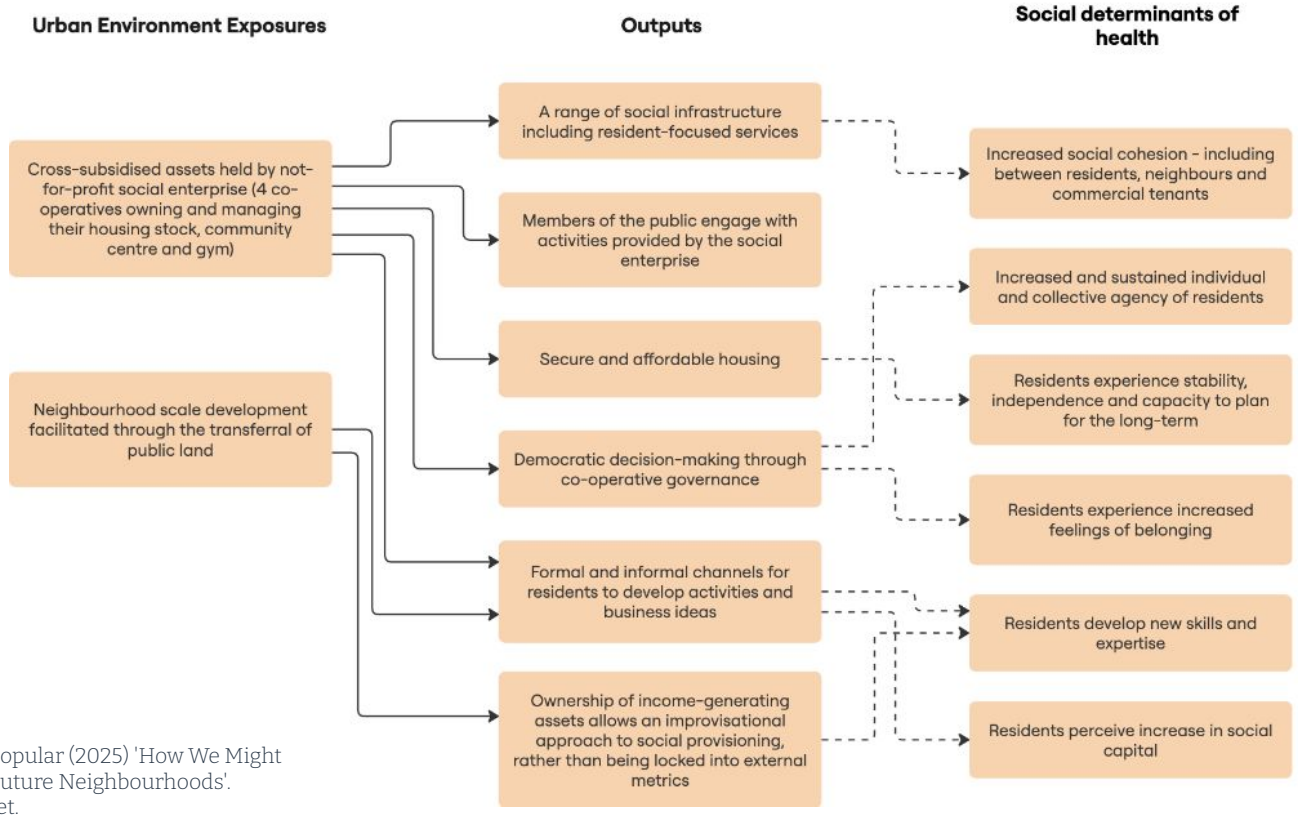
- Through a not-for-profit development trust model, Coin Street Community Builders leveraged the high-profile campaign to purchase a 5.3 hectare site from the GLC for £1 million in 1984, during the brief period before its dissolution

- Operating at neighbourhood scale, the scheme has developed as an ecosystem within its footprint, comprising a public park, community centre, gym and four housing co-operatives of social rent homes, funded through steady commercial income (including the restored OXO Tower)

Governance:

- Managed by a board of directors, who must be local, and are guided by covenants as well as member accountability

Coin Street



Developed from: Popular (2025) 'How We Might Live: A Model for Future Neighbourhoods'. London: Coin Street.

Citizens House (London CLT), Sydenham

Origins & Financing:

- Completed in 2023, 11 fixed-equity homes on a former Lewisham council garage site, funded via £1.1m GLA grant, a Big Issue Invest loan, and community shares to achieve financial self-sustainability

Affordability in perpetuity:

- Site is secured by a legal freehold asset lock, permanently indexing home values to local median incomes rather than market rates

Governance & community engagement:

- Tripartite governance (residents/neighbours/public interest representatives)
- Financial model has allowed for London CLT to employ a staff team, fundamentally acting as a developer, enhancing their opportunities for scaling up
- Engagement of neighbours and prospective residents around Citizens House, facilitated by Lewisham Citizens, informed the design and community cohesion in the post-completion phase

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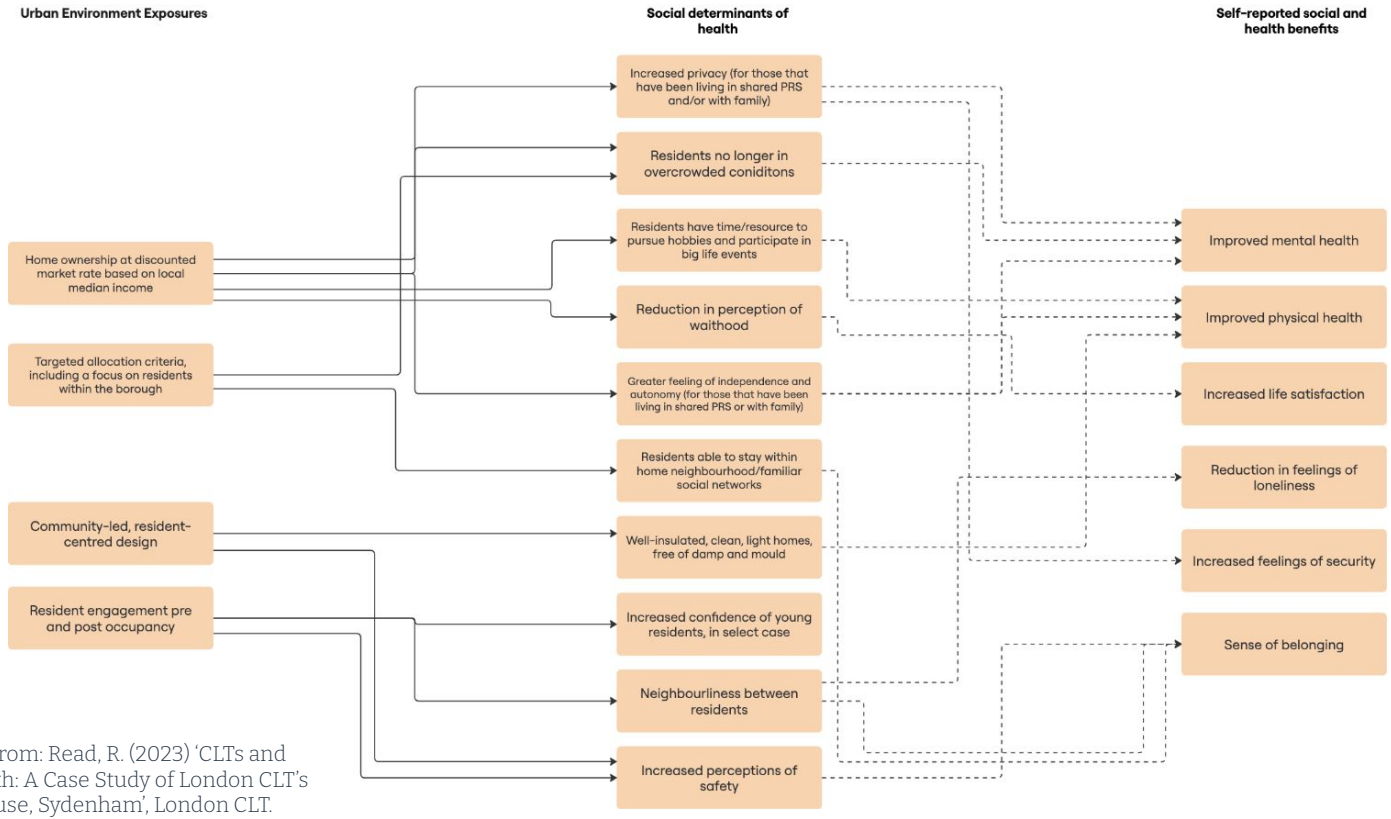
Citizens House (London CLT)



Developed from: Read, R. (2023) 'CLTs and Urban Health: A Case Study of London CLT's Citizens House, Sydenham', London CLT.

Creating a framework for the evidence

Social Life's social sustainability framework has been used for over 10 years to understand the social dimensions of housing change.[8]

It has four dimensions which can adapt for different contexts, and can be used for planning, evaluation and ideation.

Emerging framework

This framework consolidates evidence for social determinants of health attributed to CLH across our case studies.

Evidence strength is based on the What Works Centre for Wellbeing (WWCW) GRADE Standards of Evidence.[9]

Data weaknesses

The WWCW Standards of Evidence allows us to understand the quality of specific data points related to health and wellbeing outcomes from our cited literature.[10] We used the WWCW GRADE approach to designate data as 'Very Low', 'Low', 'Moderate' or 'High', based on the likelihood that further research is needed to impact our confidence in its conclusions (see our Appendix for more detail).

We found most evidence to be 'Low' or 'Moderate', meaning more research was needed to understand the relationship between reported health outcomes and the specific components of community-led housing that led to those outcomes.

Inconsistent post-occupancy evaluation means that many themes are measured in different ways and often under-examined, for example the impacts of mixed tenure and home size within schemes, and the value that community co-design of housing plays in health creation.

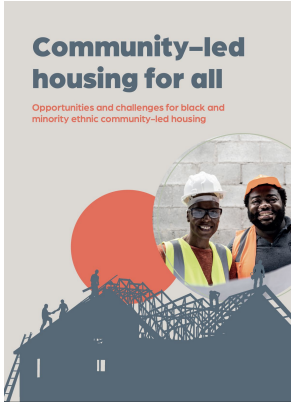
Data gaps

There are gaps in the wider evidence on the additionality of CLH, such as the physical and mental health outcomes associated with particular governance structures and their relation to modes of community-building,[11] though we note the difficulty of evaluating isolated components.

The case studies and wider literature do not yet provide evidence that community-led housing leads to the following social determinants of health:

- increased trust of residents towards agencies (eg. local authorities, public health organisations)
- stronger relationships between people from different ethnic backgrounds

The lack of evidence on the capacity of CLH to increase cohesion and representation across different socio-economic and ethnic groups could be understood as the result of a lack of data on diversity within CLH projects.[12] One recent study argues that a lack of consideration regarding diversity and inclusion 'could have the undesirable effect of leading to increased health inequalities'.[13]



Next steps

Planning for Phase 2

In Phase 2, we will be conducting interviews with NHS representatives, across a range of trusts and services, to understand the barriers and opportunities around community-led housing development options on surplus land. We will also facilitate a focus group to learn from practitioners whose projects have actively addressed specific health inequities.

We will also continue to:

- develop a plan for the economic modelling component of our work
- explore how our appraisal model can effectively align with national policy and guidance on NHS surplus land disposal or reuse
- plan towards a practical pilot that enable us to test our appraisal model

Addressing health inequities

It is critical that our social appraisal model captures the ways that community-led housing can actively address health inequities. At the London-wide scale, Black, Asian and other minoritised communities are disproportionately more likely to be experiencing social determinants of poor health, such as overcrowding.[14] People of Asian heritage are more likely to live in homes that fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard, while Black Londoners disproportionately face damp and mould challenges in their housing.[15]

Our case studies re-affirm a key finding of Hendrickson, Baptiste, Moore & Arbell,[16] that many groups set up to address particular health inequities are resource-constrained and face challenges regarding the capturing of post-occupancy data.

Several projects could offer insights into evidence gaps, however they are currently missing in our evidence framework as this relied on formal research evidence. As we enter in Phase 2 of our research, we will be organising more in-depth discussions with these groups. For example, Nubia Way, a black-led self-build project of 13 homes completed in Lewisham in 1997, has been recorded through an online archive of resident testimonials, facilitated in partnership with Goldsmith University.[17] This resource highlights that a key outcome of the project was resident education - both the knowledge gained in organising a team of self-builders, and the up-skilling involved in constructing their own homes.

The US offers examples of projects such as Rondo Community Land Trust in Minnesota that demonstrate how particular resources and strategy must be in place to most effectively engage groups impacted by legacies of displacement.[18]

Planning a practical pilot

We would like to test the framework and its relevance on one or more sites in south London.

Discussions about this have not yet started, however, we would like to validate and understand the feasibility of the appraisal approach/method once we have developed it further.

This test and learn approach would help trusts gain better practical insights into how and why they might release their surplus land for the purposes of community-led development/housing.

Footnotes

Footnotes (1/3)

1. H. Garrett et al., *The Cost of Poor Housing in England* (Building Research Establishment, 2021); H. Garrett, M. Mackay, S. Margoles, and S. Nicol, *The Cost of Ignoring Poor Housing* (Building Research Establishment, 2023).

2. NHS England Digital, *NHS Surplus Land, Oct–Mar 2025/26* (NHS England Digital, 2026).

3. M. Marmot et al., *Fair Society, Healthy Lives: The Marmot Review (Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England Post-2010)* (UCL Institute of Health Equity, 2010).

4. M. Marmot et al., *Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On* (Institute of Health Equity / BMJ, 2020).

5. Department of Health and Social Care, *Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England* (UK Central Government, 2025); NHS Property Services, *Healthy Places: 2023-2024* (NHS Property Services, 2024); NHS Homes Alliance, *NHS Homes Alliance White Paper* (NHS Homes Alliance, 2023).

6. Additional literature reviews: R. McClatchey, K. McClymont, E. Griffin, and L. Carmichael, "Community Led Housing, Health and Wellbeing: A Comprehensive Literature Review," *International Journal of Housing Policy* 25, 1 (2025): 18–55; H. Catalán Busquets, "Towards the Regionalisation of Community Land Trusts (CLTs)" (Global Centre on Healthcare and Urbanisation, 2024). Comparative reports: K. Scanlon, M. Ferreri, M. Fernandez Arrigoitia, and C. Whitehead, *Those Little Connections: Community-Led Housing and Loneliness* (LSE / Nationwide Foundation, 2021); Clever Elephant, *Assessing the Potential Benefits of Living in Co-operative and/or Community-Led Housing* (Housing Learning and Improvement Network, 2019).

Footnotes (2/3)

7. H. Pineo et al., "Promoting a Healthy Cities Agenda Through Indicators: Development of a Global Urban Environment and Health Index," *Cities & Health,* 2, 1, (2018): 1–19.

8. Social Life, *Design for Social Sustainability: A Framework for Creating Thriving New Communities* (Social Life, 2012); Social Life, *Designing for Social Sustainability: A Tried & Tested Framework* (Social Life, 2024).

9. D. Snape et al., *A Guide to Our Evidence Review Methods* (What Works Centre for Wellbeing, 2019).

10. Snape et al., *Guide to Our Evidence Review Methods. (See Note 9).*

11. McClatchey et al., "Community Led Housing, Health and Wellbeing," 18–55. *(See Note 6).*

12. C. Hendrickson, A. Baptiste, T. Moore, and Y. Arbell, *Community-Led Housing for All* (Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive, 2024); Young Foundation, *Diversity and Inclusion in Community Land Trusts* (The Young Foundation, 2022).

Footnotes (3/3)

13. McClatchey et al., "Community Led Housing, Health and Wellbeing," 46. *(See Note 6)*

14. Greater London Authority (GLA), *Snapshot of Health Inequalities in London 2024* (Greater London Authority, 2024), 43.

15. GLA, *Snapshot of Health Inequalities*, 43. *(See Note 14)*

16. Hendrickson et al., *Community-Led Housing for All*. *(See Note 12)*.

17. Goldsmiths, University of London, "In Living Memory: Black-Led Community Self-Build," n.d.

18. O. R. Williams, "Community Control as a Relationship Between a Place-Based Population and Institution: The Case of a Community Land Trust," *Local Economy* 33, 5 (2018): 459–76.

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Appendix

Theme	Dimension	CLH evidence (case study + literature)	Evidence strength
Sense of autonomy & control in daily life	Voice & Influence	OWCH's principles, and the ways in which they are upheld through group activities - such as communal meals and crafts sessions - have led to residents feeling a greater a 'sense of self' [Fernández Arrigoitia & West (2020), pp. 1687-1686]. Ambrose and Stone (2010, p. 65) find that WECH residents feel 'empowered' by being 'able to vote for Board members'. Several Citizens House residents living in single-person households note the dissipation of a feeling of waithood, having in those cases been living with family before moving in (Read et al., 2024, pp. 12-13). Resident autonomy is a minor theme that can also be identified within Clever Elephant's (2019) reporting.	Moderate
Ability to act to shape the local environment	Voice & Influence	At Coin Street, residents have a range of options for shaping local decisions - from participating in the management of their housing co-operatives (one for each block), to joining the boards and committees of the enterprise's various community services (Popular, 2025, p. 15). Popular (2025, p. 6) also argue that the flexibility of budgets based on a robust cross-subsidisation enables 'young people setting up their own projects, or staff feeling the freedom to take risks with new ideas.' For Citizens House, community members including prospective residents had the opportunity to participate in the design of the project (Read et al, 2024), though there is evidence suggesting residents' willingness to shape their immediate environment is mixed (Read, 2023; Read et al, 2024).	Low
Trust in neighbours	Voice & Influence	Scanlon et al (2021, pp. 22-30) find that the CLH residents surveyed trust neighbours within their CLH community more than their control group, which was drawn from respondents to the Community Life Survey at random. They note that this happens over time (p. 69), and is due to a combination of factors - including building relationships through pre-occupancy activities and the routine use of shared space (p. 70).	Moderate
Responsiveness to local issues	Voice & Influence	A significant proportion of WECH residents strongly endorse their housing and repairs offices (which are overseen by a resident board) for their promptness, efficiency and approachability, compared to their previous landlord - which was in most cases Westminster Council [Ambrose and Stone (2010), p. 52]. Scanlon et al. (2021, pp 72-73) note that further investigation is needed regarding the responsiveness of CLH communities to their neighbourhoods, noting signs from their work that it's not a 'simple matter of a one-way benefit'.	Low
Sense of influence over wider area	Voice & Influence	In comparison to their previous accommodation, Citizens House residents are more inclined to agree that they 'personally [have] been able to affect decisions involving [their] local area' - there is an indication that this is supported by the stability offered through secure, affordable tenure [Read (2024), p. 35]. 62% of WECH residents 'compared to a national 42% felt that they could influence decisions in their local area' - Ambrose and Stone (2010, p. 66) argue that this 'provide[s] further evidence of the solidarity and sense of community in the WECH area', though they do not claim that this is specifically due to the community-led nature of the organisation.	Moderate

Theme	Dimension	CLH evidence (case study + literature)	Evidence strength
Ability to shape neighbourhood in the future	Adaptability & Resilience	A core aspect of many CLH schemes is affordability in perpetuity, often enabled through an asset lock approach (Clever Elephant, 2019, p. 17), and adaptable governance structures that enable resident-led and inclusive housing management, either in co-operatives, tenant management organisations and/or community land trust models (Clever Elephant, 2019, pp. 16-17). Ownership of income-generating assets allows Coin Street Community Builders an 'improvisational approach to social provisioning'; combined with diverse engagement channels and an 'inch-wide, mile-deep' approach, this enables residents a range of opportunities to shape their neighbourhood in future [Popular (2025), pp. 20, 25].	Low
Area adaptability to future needs & aspirations	Adaptability & Resilience	Through a combination of scale, effective utilisation of location and the permeability of their site, Coin Street has demonstrated capacity to evolve services as community needs change (Popular, 2025). Through a community-led co-design process delivered by an effective design and build contract, Citizens House includes community space designed for evolving use by residents and neighbours (Read et al., 2023, p. 24).	Low
Scheme adaptability to economic, social & ecological crisis	Adaptability & Resilience	Scanlon et al. (2021, p. 60) note that the existing social infrastructure within the CLH communities engaged in their research enabled those groups to self-organise more effectively during the Covid-19 lockdowns, including sourcing food for those isolating; 'virtually all survey respondents and interviewees agreed that involvement with CLH improved residents' ability to cope with the Covid-19 situation' (p. 61).	Moderate
Mutual aid and social networks	Adaptability & Resilience	Informal mutual care, though always in negotiation between medicalised and holistic, is a key feature of New Ground, and has developed through the principle-driven culture of OWCH to which residents formally subscribe, though replicability of this culture is uncertain [Fernández Arrigoitia & West (2020), p. 1686]. Scanlon et al. (2021) highlight that CLH residents report stronger mutual aid networks often associated with self-building and finishing practices (p. 71) as well as informal care networks (p. 56).	Moderate
Skills to support economic, social & ecological resilience	Adaptability & Resilience	New Ground's residents report learning about how to live more sustainably, due to collective decision-making around one of the organisation's core principles ('caring for the environment') [Fernández Arrigoitia & West (2020), pp. 1682-1683]. Research on Coin Street argues that through cross-subsidised services and entrepreneurship schemes, participants (not all residents) have developed personal skills [Popular (2025), pp. 6, 17-18]. Clever Elephant highlight that a significant proportion of their CLH interviewees report 'increased skills/confidence/ knowledge/employability' (2019, p. 4).	Moderate

Theme	Dimension	CLH evidence (case study + literature)	Evidence strength
Spaces enabling residents to meet	Amenities & Social Infrastructure	Ambrose and Stone (2010, p. 51) found that WECH residents valued both the formal and informal events that the organisation ran, as they enabled 'making more friends and acquaintances'. Read et al. (2023, p. 39) notes that London CLT facilitated Citizens House as a co-designed scheme where spaces were designed 'specifically to encourage connectivity'. Scanlon et al. (2021, p. 71) argue that the CLH emphasis on designing shared spaces for social interaction has a positive result amongst residents.	Moderate
Outdoor, public and green spaces	Amenities & Social Infrastructure	The provision of these aspects is not inherent to CLH, however, through a common emphasis on community co-design and continual social provisioning, CLH schemes typically integrate green/play space that are also aimed at providing outdoor resources for the wider neighbourhood (such as the Citizens House courtyard (Read et al., 2023, p. 24), and Coin Street's Bernie Spain Gardens (Popular, 2025, p. 11)).	Low
Spaces for residents & local groups	Amenities & Social Infrastructure	Coin Street: extensive community-use space (Popular, 2025). This is also the case across the projects Scanlon et al. analyse (2021, p. 66).	Low
Provision for different ages & for families	Amenities & Social Infrastructure	Scanlon et al. (2021, pp. 69-70) note that numerous schemes they observed were able to foster relationships 'across age groups', through neighbourly 'supportive structure[s]' built over time. In our case studies, co-design involving prospective residents as well as broader community members also enabled specific targeted provision from different age groups - (OWCH: explicitly designed for older women [Fernández Arrigoitia & West 2020, p. 1681]; Citizens House: child-friendly play space [Read et al., 2023, p. 24]). The capacity and emphasis on resident-centred social provisioning at Coin Street enables activities for all ages [Popular, 2025, p. 24].	Moderate
Permanently affordable housing	Amenities & Social Infrastructure	CLT models specifically lock in below-market prices in perpetuity. WECH: sub-market social rents retained. Citizens House - sub-market sales based on local median income. Coin Street and OWCH both include social rent.	High
Quality of indoor environment	Amenities & Social Infrastructure	Many WECH residents report that they 'feel healthier because the home is of good quality' at WECH compared to their previous housing (Ambrose and Stone, 2010, p. 60), though it is unclear how residents interpret the term 'quality'. 'Control over maintenance and repairs' was a key benefit of CLH that arose through the survey conducted by Clever Elephant (2019, p. 36), which interviewees associate with the quality of their homes.	Low

Shortened theme	Dimension	CLH evidence (case study + literature)	Evidence strength
Local social networks & neighbourliness	Social & Cultural Life	Pre-occupancy resident engagement opportunities, combined with the ethos of London CLT and the community co-designed development, increased Citizens House residents' feelings of neighbourliness after moving in [Read (2024), pp. 35-39]. The allocation criteria also enables residents to remain within their communities. Scanlon et al. (2021, p. 55) report that the CLH residents they engaged were able to counter 'emotional loneliness' as they were reassured that neighbours were around to help should they need it - 'both in terms of physical proximity and reciprocal commitment'. In Ambrose and Stone's (2010, pp. 48-49) study, WECH residents report strong differences in neighbourliness between WECH and their previous home, with strong perceptions that WECH is 'important' for 'fostering community and voluntary activities'.	High
Social cohesion	Social & Cultural Life	Scanlon et al (2021, p. 66) argue that their case studies 'demonstrate that CLH projects can provide spaces and infrastructures for social connectivity and activities for their immediate neighbours and wider communities, including individuals and groups at higher risk of loneliness like young parents and older or retired people.' Though they also note the potential for conflict within CLH schemes (p. 55), they qualify this by saying that for all forms of housing this is a possibility and that the residents of CLH they engaged in their study highlight there are also resources their housing models provide to help alleviate these conflicts.	Low
Belonging, local identity & sense of place	Social & Cultural Life	Popular (2025, p. 6) argue that Coin Street residents' sense of belonging is a result of their capacity to participate in housing management, residents having experienced secure and affordable tenancies over many years, and non-obligatory, rewarding volunteer opportunities. Ambrose and Stone (2010, pp. 66-67) infer that the 'WECH management style' has informed residents 'strong sense of belonging'. Though they don't compare residents' perceptions of belonging to their previous housing situations, they refer to these perceptions of belonging being significantly higher than national averages. WECH residents 'feel more part of the neighbourhood and there is a sense of mutual trust and support' at WECH than in their previous home (Ambrose and Stone, 2010, p. 60). Clever Elephant (2019, pp. 63, 67) also document individual accounts of CLH residents reporting that training and ownership both provide a sense of belonging in their schemes.	Moderate

Shortened theme	Dimension	CLH evidence (case study + literature)	Evidence strength
Safety	Social & Cultural Life	WECH residents report feeling safer in their home than their previous address (often another Westminster council property) and feeling healthier as a result of these feelings of safety (Ambrose and Stone, 2010, p. 60). Citizens House residents report similar (Read et al., 2023, pp. 18-19).	Moderate
Wellbeing & quality of life	Social & Cultural Life	On an individual basis, Citizens House residents report reduction in asthma attacks and migraines, and the alleviation of pre-existing health conditions, which they describe as a result of the quality of the housing, and stability of tenure offered by the scheme [Read (2024)]. Scanlon et al. (2021, pp. 48-51) find across their analysis of CLH schemes that self-management increases resident wellbeing, as projects often include informal social prescribing and/or collective working through sub-groups, which the authors associated with wellbeing tied to an increased sense of control and reduced social loneliness. Clever Elephant (2019, p. 4) also report 'improved mental wellbeing' amongst the largest benefits of CLH reported by their survey respondents.	High
Perceptions of housing	Social & Cultural Life	WECH residents report feeling 'better' due to having a 'greater sense of control over [their] housing situation' than in their previous living situation [Ambrose and Stone (2010), p. 60]. Read (2020, p. 15) finds that residents of Citizens House are significantly more satisfied with their accommodation than previously, with interviewees attributing this to privacy, stability of ownership, as well as the quality of housing. Though Clever Elephant (2019, p. 4) do not break down their themes into sub-categories - they highlight that 'better quality of house/life' was a key theme amongst their survey respondents describing benefits of CLH.	High
Perceptions of security	Social & Cultural Life	Perceptions of 'medium to long-term security' are significant for Citizen House residents compared to their previous accommodation, which Read et al. (2023, pp. 24-25) highlight is related to interviewees feeling that they have a permanent home, and a sense of a private space. It's worth noting that some residents report feeling less secure as, with growing families, their residence is more temporary. This is an example of where, due to the often small-scale nature of CLH schemes, move-on options within a scheme are often very limited.	Low