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# **APPG Housing and Care for Older People Inquiry**

## **The regeneration of outdated 'sheltered' housing**

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Abbeyfield**

# The 'problem'



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- The scale of re-investment required in sheltered housing is very significant.
- Innovative approaches are being taken, but do not yet match the scale of the problem.
- In some instance, uneconomic schemes are being disposed of.
- There is some new development of specialist housing for older people in the social housing sector, but this is mainly extra-care housing.
- **What more could be done to incentivise re-investment in redundant sheltered housing and reprovision/new provision?**

# Why this issue matters!



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- Demographic change; some estimates suggest we may need up to 50,000 new 'specialist' homes per annum for later living (Mayhew Review)
- Private and social housing providers are only building 7,000 new homes per annum for later living
- If we also lose existing stock, or it becomes hard to let: fewer older people will 'right-size', fewer families will move to vacated homes, costs for NHS and care services will escalate
- Meanwhile the Social Housing Regulator and the Housing Ombudsman are putting pressure on providers to eradicate poor quality.

# Inquiry session themes



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1. Upgrading the **service model**: technology, housing management, customer experience.
2. **Demolition, replacement, and repurposing** of outdated sheltered housing
3. **Upgrading, modernising, and extending** outdated sheltered housing

# Upgrading the service model



- Profile, needs and aspirations of residents is changing
- Interest in moving to 'sheltered' if the offer is right
- Rebrand of 'sheltered' terminology
- No fixed definition of sheltered housing – impact on support
- Service model varies, a core service offer should include:
  - Non-resident scheme staff
  - Digital technology to support independence (WiFi)
- Resident involvement and coproduction
- 'Cultural rightsizing' and 'cultural competence'

# Demolition, replacement, and repurposing



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There is appetite amongst housing providers to rebuild...



MTVH



Anchor

# Demolition, replacement, and repurposing



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- Rebuild driven by ability of scheme to meet certain 'criteria' e.g. space, accessibility, let-ability, condition, energy efficiency etc
- Rebuilds largely funded by housing provider resources, not viable across whole stock
- The HAPPI principles are as relevant to sheltered as they are to ECH – 'care-readiness'
- Benefits:
  - HAPPI/energy compliant from outset
  - Potential for additionality to be created
- Challenges:
  - 'Decanting' residents
  - Cost of new build
  - Limited funding streams
- Repurposing can be an option but need to consider loss of sheltered stock

# Upgrading, modernising, and extending



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Refurbishing schemes can have impressive results...



Wrexham Borough Council – 4 sites



# Upgrading, modernising, and extending



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Refurbishing schemes can have impressive results...



Greenhill Housing Association



# Upgrading, modernising, and extending



- Decisions driven by much of the same as new build
- Largely funded by housing provider resources
- Benefits:
  - ‘Decanting’ easier?
  - More affordable?
- Challenges:
  - Access to capital funding from Homes England
  - The extent to which HAPPI/accessibility standards or net zero targets can be met
  - Increasing cost of refurbishment works
  - Success can be dependent on availability of surrounding land
  - Significant improvements can be limited by cost
  - Potential for reduction in homes

# Recommendations



For the service model in 'sheltered' housing:

- In order to provide a service that is valued by residents, good practice in the older person's sector indicates that a service model in 'sheltered' housing should typically include:
  - Non-resident onsite staff presence to provide:
    - housing management,
    - support,
    - wellbeing and
    - social activity facilitation
- Use of technology as a core part of the service offer in 'sheltered' housing to complement staff support:
  - Wi-Fi in all homes and communal spaces
  - Use of technology enabled care as appropriate
  - Consistent with TAPPI principles e.g. technology that adapts to people's needs and is cost effective
  - Commitment to support the digital skills needs of residents

# Recommendations



For the design of refurbished and new build 'sheltered' housing:

- Consistent with HAPPI design principles (for refurbishment, as far as practically possible)
- Use 'care ready' design and models
- Have a mix of housing typologies (flats; houses; bungalows)
- Be in a range of locations
- Link to age-friendly neighbourhoods (right-placing)
- To use attractive regenerated 'sheltered' housing as a mechanism to encourage down/rightsizing in the social housing sector to free up general needs social rented housing occupied by older people.

# Recommendations



For government...

- A dedicated and ringfenced specialist and supported housing capital fund as part of Affordable Homes Programme that can be used to develop new build 'sheltered' housing and for updating and refurbishing existing 'sheltered' housing.
- Need for a dedicated Homes England team for older persons' housing with a dedicated and accountable officer and a reinstated equivalent of the Vulnerable and Older Person Advisory Group. E.g. 'Sheltered' Housing Advisory Group.
- New approach to treatment of 'historic' grant funding for existing schemes and a new approach to 'additionality' capital funding rules
- DLUHC to use planning policy guidance to require/encourage LAs to identify need for and to develop new 'sheltered' housing.
- Streamline existing standards for 'sheltered' housing, creating a universal framework that can accommodate the relevant standards.
- Need to develop and promote a new term for 'sheltered' housing.

# Recommendations



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For local government...

- To develop local Older Persons Housing Needs Assessments to determine need and demand for a range of housing for older people, including 'sheltered' housing.
- Using the needs assessment to develop a local plan/strategy (as part of required supported housing plans) to promote and enable new build 'sheltered' housing.
- Work with Government in relation to potential flexibility in the HRA to encourage investment in and retention of older persons' housing
- To engage with 'sheltered' housing providers regarding the need for and provision of 'sheltered' housing in their local areas.

# Recommendations



For social and private housing providers...

- All social and private landlords with 'sheltered' housing stock should conduct a strategic review of their 'sheltered' housing portfolio's current and future suitability to meet the needs and aspirations of older people. To identify options for:
  - Refurbishment/upgrades
  - Repurposing
  - Disposal/sale
  - Replacement
- Adhere to a Charter for Disposal of Supported Housing and Accommodation for Older People
- Existing 'sheltered' housing to be refurbished/regenerated where this is viable to make the product attractive to a diverse range of older people.
- Consideration of professional and other support for smaller, charitable providers



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## Discussion