

**Written Evidence: A submission by the Housing Learning and Improvement Network (LIN) to the APPG on Social Integration inquiry into intergenerational connection**

**13<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

*"It's not just about the 'hardscaping' of the physical environment - our homes and streets - it's equally about the 'softscaping' of our neighbourhoods to create the social environment that enable community connectedness across the generations." - Jeremy Porteus, CEO, Housing LIN*

**1. What are they key ingredients that have enabled intergenerational housing projects to succeed?**

The Housing LIN outlines four key ingredients that enable intergenerational housing projects to succeed. We define these as the '4Ps' to intergenerational success:

People

- A successful intergenerational housing project puts people at the heart of the development and relies on a strengths-based approach.
- Living in an intergenerational development cannot be forced on residents, people need to choose to live in this type of community.
- Recognising and catering to personal financial needs. For example, by offering a younger person low-cost accommodation in return for supporting an older person/people or offering affordable housing for those who need it. As outlined in our previous response, successful examples of the former include homesharing and Humanitas in Deventer, Netherlands<sup>1</sup>. An example of the later is the H.O.M.E. project in Chicago<sup>2</sup>, where the primary attraction was the offer of affordable housing.

Placemaking

- Successful intergenerational housing projects require a multifaceted approach to planning, design and management of public spaces that capitalises on local community assets and has the intention of creating public spaces that promote health and wellbeing.
- A valuable intergenerational housing project can work as a hub for the local area.
- Key to the success of a project is a tailored response to the needs and demography of the local population; an area with a high student population could encourage students to cohabit with older people. Eg. Linkage Cambridge or Barcelona City Council.<sup>3</sup>
- Providing co-located services for all ages creates organic interactions. In particular, a mixed approach to the design of ground floor commercial/non commercial space can

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.humanitasdeventer.nl/english/73-english/194-the-living-students-of-humanitas>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.homeseniors.org/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.housinglin.org.uk/\\_assets/Resources/Housing/Support\\_materials/Other\\_reports\\_and\\_guidance/Housing-LIN-submission-to-APPG-on-Social-Integration.pdf](https://www.housinglin.org.uk/_assets/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Other_reports_and_guidance/Housing-LIN-submission-to-APPG-on-Social-Integration.pdf)

encourage social interaction and community use as well as providing opportunities for employment.

### Participation

- A successful development will ensure that residents mutually benefit from participating in the scheme.
- In her report Emma Garland states that, '*although it is not a pre-requisite of a successful intergenerational community, often residents need professional help to create opportunities for interaction and to facilitate community building*'. External support is often especially important to encourage the engagement of older residents.<sup>4</sup>
- There is also a need to build more resilient communities, tapping in to existing social resources to enable more widespread participation. The Housing LIN has called this 'CollaborAGE'<sup>5</sup>. For example, consideration should be given to intergenerational 'enablers' who can facilitate natural connections and link residents of all ages, and organisations, to support collaboration on ideas on intergenerational living.

### Planning

- An ideal project would involve the residents at the planning stage to co-design and provide the opportunity for continual engagement in future decision making.
- Meeting the needs of the different age groups will maximise appeal. For example, embedding HAPPI<sup>6</sup> principles in the design of the building(s) helps to meet the needs of residents of all age groups.
- Offering a mix of housing types, tenures and sizes can maximise appeal as it provides a wider range of choice. For example, this year's RIBA Stirling Prize winner in Norwich (see below under qu.4)
- Ensuring the development is the right size, a scheme that is too big or too small can prohibit social interactions from forming.
- Residents should have their own private living space but there should also be shared communal space where residents can interact.
- Housing needs to be part of neighbourhood planning, located close to shops, amenities and public transport.
- Environmental sustainability is an attractive and affordable part of this style of living.

## **2. What are the main challenges that you have experienced when developing intergenerational housing projects, and how can these be overcome?**

The Housing LIN is not directly involved with the development of intergenerational housing projects but plays a role in enabling knowledge exchange and information sharing between

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/type/Learning-from-Intergenerational-Housing-Projects-in-the-USA/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/blogs/Baby-boomers-can-lead-us-from-new-age-to-CollaborAGE/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design-building/HAPPI/>

partners and network members. Evidence and experience indicate some key challenges which can arise:

- Potential mismatches in terms of resident expectations of the housing model and of one another. To avoid these, it is important to ensure from the outset that all residents understand, embrace and are fully committed to the intergenerational housing model and to the lifestyle, through careful recruitment and matching of potential residents.
- Lack of interaction between residents, and / or disagreements about behaviour. To promote cohesion within the community, it can also help to have external support, for example, to promote resident engagement and help resolve any conflict or misunderstandings within the community.
- A perception on the part of developers and providers that this is a complex housing model, which might be harder (and more costly) to 'sell' to potential residents, as well as more costly to develop (with the need to include communal areas and other spaces which will not attract sale or revenue funds). The potential ongoing need for external professional input to support the community is also an ongoing additional cost. Therefore, it is likely that this will always be a model which will be concentrated in the social and community sector, or one which will need to be led by residents themselves (aligned to a cohousing model).

### **3. What role do the different tiers of government have in helping intergenerational housing projects to flourish, e.g. local, regional and national government?**

Ten years since *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods*<sup>7</sup>, and at a national government level, policy creation needs to be more ambitious. Where policy is initiated, this needs to be reflected in planning guidance and social care policy in order to retain momentum. The recent government guidance for local authorities on planning housing for older and disabled is welcome but intergenerational housing needs be made more explicit.

However, more generally, the government has recognised the Grand Challenge on Ageing design and through its competition, The Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission<sup>8</sup> it is looking to promote and increase the use of high-quality design for new build homes and neighbourhoods. At the time of writing, we are waiting for the publication of its design guide and whether there will be any reference to intergenerational housing.

As highlighted above, recent guidance to local authorities on planning housing for older and disabled people is welcome. There is also mention of wider age-friendly approaches to planning and the benefits of inclusive design. However, there is little evidence to suggest that local authorities have adopted the guidance wholesale and we are not aware of a specific mention to intergenerational housing.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.cpa.org.uk/cpa/lifetimehomes.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/building-better-building-beautiful-commission>

#### **4. How can we elevate intergenerational housing up the policy agenda, both at national and local levels? Are there other policy agendas that intergenerational housing can align with, to make it a more appealing focus for government, e.g. wellbeing and creating age-friendly towns and cities?**

There is scope to push intergenerational housing further up the policy agenda should it continue to align with the Healthy New Town Programme<sup>9</sup> launched by NHS England and Public Health England in Sept 2015. This initiative plans to develop new and more effective ways of shaping new towns, neighbourhoods and strong communities that promote health and wellbeing, prevention and independence. Intergenerational housing often achieves these aims and therefore provides the perfect opportunity to develop these sites. The Housing LIN has been working with the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation on understanding the demand for accommodation, linked to a new Health and Wellbeing Hub that incorporates intergenerational housing within the same block.

At the time of writing, NHS England have just published their guidance, *Putting Health into Place*<sup>10</sup>. It draws attention to a couple of the 10 Healthy New Towns and their specific approach to intergenerational living. For example, the Barton Community Association linking in with an existing intergenerational lunch club and setting up a breakfast club for children and parents, using surplus food from local shops and restaurants.

Furthermore, aligning with the age-friendly city initiatives can make intergenerational housing a more appealing focus for governments but at a local government level we need to also focus on encouraging the development age-friendly communities. PRP, a leading architect's practice, recognise this and have made intergenerational living as part of an age-friendly approach a central theme of a forthcoming paper.

As referenced above, examples of where this is happening already include the RIBA award-winning Goldsmith Street, Norwich, and National Housing Design Awards Marmalade Lane Cohousing, Cambridge (forthcoming HLIN casestudy). At a macro level, the former is an innovative placeshaping project from Norwich City Council that will provide over 100 new homes through the Norwich Regeneration Company established in 2015. The latter is a good example of a micro enterprise, smaller in scale intergenerational cohousing community, involving two local authorities Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council and the K1 resident group. The design works for all ages, with a shared common house, garden and facilities that are designed to foster community spirit and sustainable living.

#### **5. How can we encourage local authorities, architects and private developers to work together to bring forward more intergenerational housing?**

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/innovation/healthy-new-towns/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/putting-health-into-place/>

We believe planning is a key area for consideration (see our reply on national and local government, as explained in question 3 above.

**6. What funding and regulatory framework would best enable intergenerational housing projects to develop, and which bodies, e.g. Homes England, have a role to play in creating this framework? Related to this, how can we ensure funding for intergenerational housing projects not only supports the building of such schemes, but means they can be sustainable?**

The Housing LIN believes that there is scope within Homes England's Affordable Housing Programme to encourage housing associations (registered providers) and developers in their 'placeshaping' roles to build for intergenerational living. This could be adopted by including intergenerational housing design principles as a condition of both future mainstream capital programmes and/or specialist housing grant. For example, on the latter, the community-led housing grants and/or the Care and Support Specialised Housing fund could be useful grant making vehicles for enabling more widespread development.

In RIBA's recent publication, *Age Friendly Housing*<sup>11</sup>, there is a section on inter – and multigenerational housing, and the importance for designing for mixed communities (pp38-30). And in *Just Living*<sup>12</sup> by Callado Collins Architects, the authors talk about "age integrated" housing and how Singapore has developed inclusive design standards and promoting an intergenerational strategy (p170).

**7. Aside from those centred on funding, are there non-government or non-departmental bodies that you think have a particularly important role to play in supporting intergenerational housing projects, e.g. The National Housing Federation, and how can they do this?**

The Housing LIN is recognised by government and the housing with care sector as a leading 'knowledge hub' on specialist housing. We facilitate dialogue and promote knowledge exchange across the housing sector, a strength that could be harnessed to support intergenerational housing projects.

Both our online activities/resources and 'living lab' style events can:

- connect people, ideas and resources to inform and support the development of intergenerational housing projects.
- share market insight and intelligence on latest funding, research, policy and innovative developments to spread practice faster, and

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ribabookshops.com/item/age-friendly-housing-future-design-for-older-people/91915/>

<sup>12</sup>

[https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/ColladoCollins\\_JustLiving\\_2019.pdf](https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/ColladoCollins_JustLiving_2019.pdf)

- engage with industry to raise the profile of intergenerational housing with developers, commissioners and providers to plan, design and deliver aspirational housing for all.

The Housing LIN curates a [dedicated webpage](#) that shares just a selection of poignant examples of intergenerational housing from abroad and in the UK. Our last [South West event](#), a partnership with Bristol City Council explored the opportunities for and challenges of intergenerational living. This partnership enabled BCC to further consider intergenerational housing as part of their Bristol's Better Lives at Home project.

### **8. How can different organisations that are developing intergenerational housing projects collaborate? For instance, should the Intergenerational Housing Network be expanded to include an online platform?**

The Housing LIN has been working alongside United All Ages, alongside several other organisations with an interest in this area, to explore the potential interest in and opportunity for developing the nascent Intergenerational Housing Network in this way. Indeed, with some modest funding (around £12k per annum), the Housing LIN would be prepared to build on its existing programme to provide an online platform for such a Network, and to offer other resources to enable enhanced collaboration. This could include at least one or two round table events or knowledge sharing workshops per year, and virtual learning resources such as podcasts and webinars, alongside an online platform for the free publication of case studies, research and evidence, blogs and viewpoints. This proposal has been made to the members of the Intergenerational Housing Network, and although no funding offers have yet been made available, the offer from the Housing LIN remains open.

### **10. How can we bridge the urban-rural divide between younger and older people, through which younger people increasingly tend to cluster in cities and large towns, and older people in smaller towns and villages?**

The HAPPI 4<sup>13</sup> report explores the current housing needs and care problems facing older people in rural areas and makes recommendations to central and local government and other partners for solutions. The report recognises that intergenerational housing could be one of these solutions.

The evidence presented by the Barnwood Trust in Gloucestershire and by Community Voice on Planning (CoVoP) Cheryl Tyler, CoVoP's chair, stated: *"Life can be difficult for old people and they should not be deliberately cut off from the rest of the community. One option is to provide inter-generational buildings, which would include apartments for independent older people and a number of units reserved for younger people who would provide services to the*

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/type/Rural-Housing-for-an-Ageing-Population-Preserving-Independence-HAPPI-4/>

*community. This could solve several problems at once by providing homes and jobs for younger people, company for the older residents as well as a breakdown of the generational divide.”*

Indeed, this is an aim of the redevelopment of Barnwood Trust’s Manor Gardens. It will provide 46 new accessible homes set in landscaped gardens, with shared space for socialising and the opportunity for a supportive community to grow. Manor Gardens is being designed as a neighbourhood where people with different needs can enjoy living alongside one another – not a traditional supported housing or retirement village but a multi-generational site, available to anyone who wants to be a part of it.

Similarly, as outlined in HAPPI4, the Bolesworth Estate in Cheshire, in partnership with Inspired Villages Group, also highlights the positive employment aspects of retirement and extra care schemes in rural communities on the care economy. In addition to the extra care village on the estate, the Bolesworth Estate are committed to providing affordable (social) housing to families and single households as they recognise their importance in relation to the local care and wider economy.

*This submission was written on behalf of the Housing LIN by Lois Beech, Research and Stakeholder Engagement Officer at the Housing LIN, with additional input from the Housing LIN’s CEO, Jeremy Porteus, and Strategic Lead for Influencing and Networks, Clare Skidmore.*