

5 National Housing Strategy for an Ageing Society – Specialist housing: extra care and sheltered housing

The National Strategy on Housing for an Ageing Society, *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods*, is a cross-government strategy published jointly by Communities and Local Government, Department of Work and Pensions and Department of Health (DH).

Role of specialist provision

New specialist housing should meet the aspirations of older people and be in better locations. It is expected that a new generation of specialist housing should offer improved amenities and security, inclusive design, easy maintenance and an environment that allows more residents to age without having to move as their needs change. The focus is on independence and inclusion.

The strategy recognises that there has been little research into the quality of specialist housing stock, how it affects health and wellbeing and the cost-effectiveness of different models. Specialist housing can contribute to the delivery of local health and social care services and positive outcomes. CLG plans to work with DH and the Homes and Communities Agency (formerly the Housing Corporation) to develop a joint national research approach to develop and enhance the evidence base.

Key messages are:

- A new and positive vision for specialist housing as somewhere that older people aspire to because its quality leads the world
- The need for more good quality specialist housing to increase choice, built to a good design in a good location and with the right tenure
- A strategic approach to future provision
- Need to make better use of existing stock and to improve tenure options – most sheltered and

extra care is for rent, whilst most older people are home-owners

- Meeting the needs of people with physical and mental health issues such as dementia
- Develop an evidence base for specialist housing, and
- An Innovation panel reporting to Ministers on how to reform new build provision and make best use of existing stock.

Specialist housing has a broad range of definitions and the Housing LIN toolkit for local strategic planning of specialist housing, *More Choice, Greater Voice*, published in partnership with CLG, is designed to sit alongside the strategy.

More Choice, Greater Voice: <http://networks.csip.org.uk/IndependentLivingChoices/Housing/Topics/type/resource/?cid=2545>

Other key issues

Investing in specialist housing

While the strategy references specialist housing and the role it plays, there is no new capital funding – with the exception of an additional £80 million available through the Department of Health Extra Care Housing Fund and a reference to PFI credits.

There is no funding to address the future of sheltered housing, much of which needs to be assessed to determine if it has a long term future, including re-modelling or refurbishment. However, CLG, DH and the Homes and Communities Agency will undertake strategic work to consider the options for remodeling.

Knowing your market

There is strong support for improved strategic planning such as the practical toolkit available at www.poppi.org.uk. This can be used to estimate the numbers of older people living alone, living in care facilities, receiving unpaid care etc.

In addition, the Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC) holds a national database of specialist housing for older people www.housingcare.org.

Mixed tenure

The strategy does not really address issues about tenure and the need to shift from the provision of rented options to mixed tenure and shared ownership. The credit crunch may slow sales on shared ownership and leasehold provision as older people have difficulty selling existing homes in the current market.

What you can be thinking about now

- All **providers** should be undertaking a critical assessment of their existing specialist housing stock, including an options appraisal
- Much of the sheltered stock was developed in the 70s and 80s and the needs and aspirations of older people have changed, making the design and services dated in some localities
- Developing a strategy to improve lettings and manage maintenance costs and
- Evaluating the possibilities for refurbishment and/or de-commissioning, including investment for extra care
- **Commissioners** should have a strategic approach to using existing stock and the development of new models of provision such as extra care
- **Commissioners** and providers (public and private sector) should be developing new models of provision to replace sheltered housing which is not fit for purpose with access to a range of services including leisure, social activities and care and support, and
- **Local authority planners** should be delivering policies that encourage the provision of new specialist housing.

Other useful Housing LIN publications:

Design Principles in Extra Care Housing Factsheet 6 updated February 2008
<http://networks.csip.org.uk/IndependentLivingChoices/Housing/Topics/browse/HousingExtraCare/Commissioning/Design/?parent=1009&child=1629>

Contracting Arrangements for Extra Care Housing Factsheet 21 updated version March 2008
<http://networks.csip.org.uk/IndependentLivingChoices/Housing/Topics/browse/HousingExtraCare/Commissioning/Planning/?parent=1013&child=2059>

An introduction to Extra Care Housing and Intermediate Care Factsheet 11 updated August 2008

What is Extra Care Housing? Factsheet 1 updated February 2008
http://networks.csip.org.uk/_library/Resources/Housing/Housing_advice/Extra_Care_Housing_-_What_is_it.pdf.

The Extra Care Housing Toolkit August 2008
http://icn.csip.org.uk/_library/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Toolkit/ECH_Toolkit_Website_Version_Final.pdf.

Useful links to other relevant organisations:

Communities and Local Government:
www.communities.gov.uk

Joseph Rowntree Federation www.jrf.org.uk

Homes and Communities Agency
www.homesandcommunities.co.uk

Home Builders Federation Retirement Housing Group www.hbf.co.uk/retirementhousing

Other Sheets in this series:

Sheet 1: An overview of the National Strategy

Sheet 2: Lifetime Homes: housing design

Sheet 3: Lifetime Neighbourhoods

Sheet 4: Housing, Health and Care

Sheet 6: Disabled Facilities Grant

Sheet 7: Home Improvement Agencies

Sheet 8: Private Sector Involvement

Sheet 9: Advice and Information

