

8 National Housing Strategy for an Ageing Society – Private sector involvement

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 (CLG), Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Department of Health (DH).

Role of the private sector

The strategy recognises the important role the private sector has to play in order to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of older people, particularly older single households, and deals with some of the barriers outlined below.

Key messages are:

- A new positive vision for specialist housing (rented and for sale) for older people
- The development of more homes with greater choice in terms of tenure and design in order to meet increasing demand
- Innovation and higher standards of housing design, and
- Recognition of older people in local housing markets.

Specialist private sector provision to date has been leasehold retirement housing, although a number of housing and care providers are moving into housing plus care and support – with products such as extra care, assisted living and close care. Other private sector options are more akin to general needs; for example, bungalows, but these are low density requiring large parcels of land and resulting in low numbers of homes for the space used.

Some barriers to provision

Barriers to provision include:

- Finding suitable sites in sustainable communities with access to good facilities, including open space
- Long timescales leading up to development and sales

- The planning system – planning permission and dealing with local concerns
- Too few good local housing needs assessments and housing strategies for older people and little focus on the need for specialist housing for owner-occupiers
- Lack of recognition of the merits of private sector specialist housing, and
- Current difficult housing market.

New approaches identified

Better building design

A key focus of the strategy is on *Lifetime Homes* and getting house builders' buy-in and support for this approach. Housing built to *Lifetime Homes* standards is more easily adapted to meet changing needs. The strategy requires:

- All new public sector housing must be built to *Lifetime Homes* standards by 2011.
- The standards will be made a mandatory part of the *Code for Sustainable Homes* in order to encourage their adoption in new build projects. The aspiration of the government is that all new homes will be built to *Lifetime Homes* standards by 2013. Take up of the standards will be reviewed with a view to having regulation in place by 2013 if expectations have not matched implementation. Details of *Lifetime Homes* standards can be found at www.jrf.org.uk/housingandcare/lifetimehomes

First steps are to clarify the standards themselves through the establishment of a Building Regulation Advisory Committee in the period 2008 – 2010. In addition, the industry will be provided with information and advice.

Planning

The strategy brings together housing and planning for an ageing society as a cross-government priority. The strategy calls for better planning for local ageing populations – based on assessments of local housing need – in order to provide the kinds of housing older people need, in places where they want to live.

The Royal Town Planning Institute *Good Practice Note 8 – Extra Care Housing* published in October 2007 in partnership with the Housing LIN, explains how planners can respond to the growing demand for extra care housing in England. It complements *The Extra Care Housing Toolkit* published by the Housing LIN in October 2006.

In addition, CLG has published *The Strategic Housing Market Assessment Practice Guide* to help identify future numbers of households. All of this is in addition to Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) which requires regional and local authorities to assess and plan for the needs of their whole community, including older people.

The Government wants to see local spatial strategies offering a strategic steer as to how local authorities should plan for an ageing population in their local development frameworks, community strategies and Local Area Agreements.

Equity release

There is recognition of the large amounts of equity older people have in their homes (£932 billion). The Government will work with local authorities, home improvement agencies and other organisations to publicise existing loan schemes and expand the range of products available.

What you can be thinking about now

In the past the private sector has often sat outside local plans for the delivery of housing, health and social care and this is an opportunity to include them and for them to contribute to the delivery of local priorities and to factor in capital investment.

Commissioners of housing and social care should know what private sector provision they have in their localities.

Arranging to meet individual providers to understand their future plans and how this fits with the local housing, health and social care agenda.

Working with private sector providers to develop schemes that meet local needs.

Thinking about sites in public ownership that the

private sector could develop to deliver local priorities.

Discussions with planners about the role of private sector providers

Talking to older owner-occupiers, including residents in retirement housing schemes, to better understand their needs and aspirations and the quality of life offered in private specialist housing.

Other useful Housing LIN publications:

Rainy Days, Silver Lining
www.networks.csip.org.uk/rainydays

Extra care housing, development planning, control and management. RTPI Practice note 8
<http://networks.csip.org.uk/IndependentLivingChoices/Housing/Topics/browse/HousingOlderPeople/OlderPeopleStrategy/RegionalHousingStrategy/?parent=3670&child=3086>

Extra Care Housing Toolkit
<http://networks.csip.org.uk/IndependentLivingChoices/Housing/Topics/type/resource/?cid=1508>

Useful links to other relevant organisations:

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

Homes and Communities Agency:
<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/>

Royal Town Planning Institute:
<http://www.rtpi.org.uk>

Home Builders Federation: <http://www.hbf.co.uk/>

Joseph Rowntree Foundation: www.jrf.org.uk

Lifetime Homes: www.lifetimehomes.org.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 5: Specialist Housing: extra care and sheltered housing

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Sheet 7: Home Improvement Agencies

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