

Update on Housing and Social Care

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report summarises current policy and improvement work to address the housing and social care priorities in the Community Wellbeing Board's 2020/21 work programme. Much of this work is steered jointly with the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board and in close collaboration with the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) Housing Policy Network. As we look ahead to the 2021 Spending Review and the Government's proposals for social care reform, this discussion is also an opportunity for Members to identify potential issues to reflect in our ongoing work.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the update offer any further steer on the Board's current work programme, particularly the actions outlined in paragraphs 12, 21, 26, 32 and 37.

Action

Officers to continue to progress the work outlined in the report and to take forward any further Member steer.

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Background

1. Councils have always wanted their residents to live in safe, affordable, good quality homes. COVID-19 has further shown the centrality of housing as a key component of health and care and the foundation upon which people can achieve a positive quality of life. The impact of poor housing on health is like that of smoking or alcohol and [costs the NHS](#) at least £1.4 billion a year, as well as increasing demand for social care.
2. Affordable, suitably designed and accessible homes in the right places, with supporting infrastructure, can extend independent and safe living for older people and working age people with a disability and/or other long-term health needs.
3. It can also help to reduce demand on social care and health services by supporting greater levels of independence in the community, preventing admissions to residential care and hospital and aiding discharges. For people in vulnerable circumstances, a safe home with personalised support to address practical and care needs, can help people to regain their independence.
4. Nationally, there is much greater recognition about the role of housing in health and care as part of a wider focus on prevention and tackling inequalities. The LGA and ADASS are among 25 national signatories to a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU) that sets out a shared commitment to joint action across government, health, social care and housing. Health and wellbeing boards are increasingly integrating housing into their work, often using the MoU as a framework. How this is achieved varies between places, not least to reflect district councils' responsibility for housing in two-tier areas, and the extent to which health partners are fully engaged.
5. Our housing and care work is integrated throughout the Board's policy and improvement work. For example, the LGA Chairman recently attended a roundtable on the role of housing in adult social care reform. The Health and Social Care Bill will introduce reforms that will impact upon how health, care and housing partners work together to plan and commission services. The role of health and wellbeing boards in relation to housing features in our political leadership offer. There are also links to our work on loneliness, mental health and the Armed Forces.

Priority Issue 1: Supported Housing

6. Supported housing brings together good quality build in the right locations with support for the needs of the individual, so that they can live a fulfilling life with positive outcomes. Supported housing is mainly provided by housing associations, councils, voluntary sector or charitable providers i.e. not-for-profit organisations; many of these are registered

providers of social housing. Some private sector 'for profit' organisations also provide supported housing, either as landlords and/or as support providers.

7. There are different types of supported housing offering different levels of assistance across all tenures. This includes sheltered and extra care housing mainly for older people, specialised supported housing mainly for working age adults with learning disabilities, long-term mental health and/or other complex needs, hostels supporting homeless people (EEHT Board lead) and refuges for people who have experienced domestic abuse who may need short-term support (Community Safety Board lead).
8. The supported housing sector has multiple finance arrangements and governance models, depending upon the provider. This can present challenges around quality of the accommodation and housing related support, and value for money. Difficulties defining housing and eligible support costs within the Housing Benefit system have prompted several government supported housing reviews. In August 2018 [the government announced](#) that Housing Benefit would be kept in place for all types of supported housing, which brought some much needed stability to the market.
9. The government also pledged to develop a more robust oversight regime to improve quality and achieve better value for money. MHCLG and DWP have taken this forward through the [Supported Housing National Statement of Expectations](#) which includes [five council pilots](#) that are testing different ways of improving the standard and quality of non-commissioned short-term supported housing.
10. There are particular challenges with supported exempt accommodation. Councils want greater flexibilities and powers to act against the minority of landlords who take advantage of the higher rents that can be charged for this type of housing and in a way that will not adversely impact on good quality providers. In the case of non-registered providers, councils do not receive the full Housing Benefit subsidy and incur the additional costs to meet those rents. These are long-standing issues which councils and the LGA have consistently raised with DWP, MHCLG and DHSC.
11. We are working with Housing LIN to host a roundtable on 22 July that will bring officers together to develop pragmatic proposals that would give councils more levers to control unreasonable exempt accommodation rents, ensure that the housing is good quality with good support provided and that would lay the foundation for longer term change.
12. Members are invited to give any further steer on current actions:
 - 12.1. **Continue to make the case for a sustainable supported housing funding model to ensure that councils can reduce homelessness and help older and other people in vulnerable circumstances to live well.** Housing costs (revenue and capital) and care costs must both be adequately funded. This links to wider

concerns about the sufficiency of Housing Benefit, welfare reform (led by the Resources Board) and social care funding reform.

12.2. Continue to position councils to have the lead role in overseeing and ensuring supported housing is good quality, value for money and fits in with the wider local services offered in places. This should be appropriately resourced and not overly prescriptive for councils or providers.

12.3. Linked to the above, develop specific pragmatic proposals for Ministers to implement that would give councils greater flexibilities and powers to act against the minority of exempt accommodation landlords who charge excessive rents and do not provide adequate support to their residents.

13. There is close alignment to the EEHT Board's work supporting councils to develop new approaches to working with developers and securing investment in housing supply.

Priority Issue 2: Older People's Housing

14. More people are enjoying longer and healthier lives. In less than 20 years, one in four people in the UK will be over 65.¹ There is an urgent need to provide a better range of housing and lifestyle options to meet the variety of circumstances, aspirations and needs of people as they age. Supporting people to have a range of housing options as they get older is key.

15. There is innovation underway across the country. Within the diverse mix of different approaches – from building new age-friendly homes, to shaping and enabling the market, integrating housing with health and care, and developing new models for adapting and creating smart homes – local leadership and collaboration between partners to meet the aspirations and needs of older people is critical.

16. Addressing older people's housing is also a vital part of the adult social care reform agenda. Keeping people healthy, active and independent in their own homes for longer, with easy access to local amenities, will help to reduce demand on social care and health services. Inappropriate housing for the over-55s is projected to cost nearly £20bn by 2041.² COVID-19 has accelerated the pre-pandemic trend of moving away from traditional models of older people's residential care and towards supporting independent living.

17. The LGA Chairman has expressed an interest in bringing together work on planning reform, social care reform, town centre renewal and COVID-19 recovery to improve outcomes for older people and drive growth through age friendly housing. The work has 2 related strands:

Improving outcomes and driving growth through age friendly homes suitable for later living

¹ https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Reports/HLIN_Keepmoat_Report_FINAL.pdf

² http://www.bre.co.uk/filelibrary/Briefing%20papers/86749-BRE_briefing-paper-PHE-England-A4-v3.pdf

18. Breathing new life into our high streets will be critical to the future economic prospects and the social fabric of towns right across England. Combined with longer-term trends, the pandemic and associated lockdowns have had a significant impact on high streets and town centres. In November 2020, the local data company predicted that there could be 15,000 additional empty shops in Britain.³
19. Building more age-friendly town centre housing and re-purposing existing buildings for later life could be an attractive option for older people who want to rightsize to a centrally located and more manageable property, helping to prolong independence. This includes suitably designed general housing that can meet changing needs as people age and would appeal to a wider and younger audience (for example, larger apartments, lift access, accessible ground floor areas), in addition to more specialist housing with access to care and support (considered below). Such development would need to be accompanied by appropriate neighbourhood infrastructure, and links to the EEHT Board's work on planning reform.
20. In the UK there are an estimated 11.4 million potential last time buyers (homeowners over 55). Their characteristics support town centre developments. With strong income and wealth levels, the older people consumer market is set to grow rapidly over the next 30 years, and 68% of older people prefer smaller shops close to home.⁴ People living in a typical 45 apartment retirement development generate £550,000 of spending per year - with £347,000 going to local shops on the high street, supporting retail jobs and keeping amenities open.⁵
21. Members are invited to give any further steer on current actions:
- 21.1. Bring together work on planning reform, social care reform, town centre renewal and COVID-19 recovery to drive growth through age friendly housing in a shared conversation across MHCLG, DHSC and BEIS** – as part of the Urban Renewal Taskforce's consideration of downsizing accommodation.
- 21.2. Identify the barriers to an expansion of age friendly general housing and jointly develop evidence based policy solutions** that will change how we plan, develop and build homes that are suitable for later life across all tenures to give older people more choice.

More investment in extra care housing for older people

22. Good housing and preventative services can make a fundamental difference to health and wellbeing. Extra care housing is an important part of an older people's housing offer, giving older people the choice of growing older in a safe, secure and attractive environment. Their care and support needs are met and independence and community

³ <https://www.local.gov.uk/dealing-empty-shops-guide>

⁴ https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Report_SilverSavioursHighStreet.pdf

⁵ https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Report_SilverSavioursHighStreet.pdf

connections are maintained with extra care housing an important part of neighbourhoods.

23. There is a shortage of extra care housing. In the UK, we build around 8,000 retirement properties a year. A fivefold increase in the delivery rate of housing with care over the next decade is needed to keep pace with the ageing population⁶. Demand for extra care exceeds supply and new schemes are usually oversubscribed.
24. Evidence from councils shows that in addition to delivering much better outcomes for people who want to live in this type of housing, the financial business case for investment in building more older people's extra care housing is also compelling for councils, the NHS and the wider public purse. For example, every additional extra care apartment on average saves social care £2,400 per year as well as saving money for the NHS and improving lives.⁷
25. Residents living in housing-with-care experience higher quality of life and lower levels of loneliness and social isolation. According to a 2019 survey of people living in extra care settings, people experienced:⁸
- 14.8% reduction in depressive symptoms in 18 months and 23% decrease in anxiety symptoms
 - Significant improvements in the level of exercise done by residents (75%)
 - Increase in walking speed and a reduction of falls over the first two years
 - The increase of frailty is delayed or reversed in residents
 - 24% increase in autobiographical and 17% increase in memory recall tests
 - 86.5% of residents were 'never or hardly ever' lonely
26. Members are invited to give any further steer on current action:
- 26.1. **Work with Ministers to unlock the potential of a significant expansion in extra care housing.** Combined with social care reform and more focus on older people's housing in NHS prevention and integration, an integrated strategy of right sizing and independent living in connected neighbourhoods could deliver significant health, wellbeing and economic benefits (for older people who wish to live in extra care housing).
27. Lead Members have emphasised the importance of this work being underpinned by a thorough understanding of the evidence about older people's housing needs and aspirations, including the impact of the pandemic on people's willingness to move.

⁶ <https://bpf.org.uk/media/3305/bpf-housing-and-care-for-older-people-report.pdf>

⁷ https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Reports/HLIN_Keepmoat_Report_FINAL.pdf

⁸ <https://www.extracare.org.uk/media/1169231/full-report-final.pdf>

Priority Issue 3: Adapting existing housing stock

28. Of course, the housing options considered above will not suit all older people. Although more people are willing to move to more suitable properties as they get older, many people choose to stay in their current home. The next pillar of our housing and care work is adapting existing housing stock and improving the accessibility of new builds, which benefits people of all ages.
29. Timely home adaptations support older people and disabled people, their families and carers to manage wellbeing in the home, extending safe and independent living. Improving the accessibility of existing housing is a priority because over 80 per cent of the homes we will be living in by 2050 are already built⁹. 72 per cent of existing homes could be adapted to meet the four features of ‘visitable’ accessibility for people with a disability or accessibility needs.¹⁰ Public Health England estimate a social return on investment in adaptations of £7.23 for every £1 spent¹¹.
30. Growth in the Private Rental Sector (PRS) means that more people are living in homes with less secure tenure and it can be difficult to secure the landlord’s agreement to adaptations. One-third of disabled people in rented accommodation are living in unsuitable properties.¹² It is estimated that the number of households in the private rental sector (PRS) headed by someone aged over 64 will more than treble over next 25 – 30 years (from around 450,000 now to over 1.5 million in 2046.¹³)
31. The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funds adapting existing stock in the private and rental sectors. It is allocated via the Better Care Fund Policy Framework and requires close working between housing authorities and social care authorities in two-tier areas. Government funding for the DFG has more than doubled, from £220 million in 2013/14 to over £500 million in 2020/21. In December 2018, a government commissioned independent review recommended simplifying the DFG process.¹⁴ We expect the government to publish its response to the review in due course.
32. Members are invited to give any further steer on current actions:

⁹ Boardman, B et al (2005) ‘40% House’, Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford, UK

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2014-to-2015-adaptations-and-accessibility-of-homes-report>

¹¹ Public Health England (2018) Falls prevention: cost effective commissioning
<https://gov.uk/government/publications/falls-prevention-cost-effective-commissioning>

¹² <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/housing-and-disabled-people-britains-hidden-crisis>

¹³

[https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/Support materials/Other reports and guidance/HAPPI-5-Rental-Housing.pdf](https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/Support%20materials/Other%20reports%20and%20guidance/HAPPI-5-Rental-Housing.pdf)

¹⁴ <https://wwwFOUNDATIONS.uk.com/dfg-adaptations/dfg-review/>

- 32.1. Making the case for a significant scaling-up of funding for home adaptations** so that councils can upgrade existing housing and give people timely advice and access to funding where needed to adapt and repair their homes.
- 32.2. With Age UK and Care and Repair England continue to share local approaches to home adaptations and support a more strategic use of DFG** aligned to local integration outcomes.
- 32.3. Influencing the future of the DFG so that it meets increased demand and is easier to access for people in the PRS.** We continue to press government to adopt the DFG review's recommendations about simplifying the DFG process.
- 32.4. Sharing examples about how councils are putting in place personalised interventions that enable older and disabled people to live in their homes for longer,** often in partnership with the voluntary and community sector. We will continue to do this working closely with Care and Repair England and Age UK.

Priority Issue 4: Improving accessibility of new build homes

33. Adapting existing housing stock sits alongside a council's wider housing and planning role. New homes should be accessible or easily adaptable for people of all ages and needs. It is vital that national rules incentivise the building of accessible homes.
34. There is an increasing need for accessible homes. Our ageing population means that older people are making up a growing part of our housing market and over 90 per cent live in ordinary, mainstream homes.¹⁵ 400,000 wheelchair users are living in homes that are neither adapted not accessible.¹⁶
35. The LGA supported proposals in the [Government's 2020 consultation](#) to raise new build accessibility standards by making changes to the building regulations. Accessible homes can transform the lives of older and disabled people, extending safe, independent living at home and saving health and care costs.¹⁷ Barrier-free living also helps people with children, makes homes suitable for visiting and gives people the peace of mind that their home can meet changing needs.
36. Building more homes that are future proofed so that people can age well in communities over the life course also improves sustainability and helps to reduce the environmental impact of new development. Homes built today will last for hundreds of years so it is vital they meet a range of needs for their many residents and are fit for current and future generations.

¹⁵https://local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/5.74%20Accessible%20housing_v05_1%20-%20BM%20amends.pdf

¹⁶ <https://www.habinteg.org.uk/latest-news/new-government-data-reveals-accessible-homes-crisis-for-disabled-people-1557/>

¹⁷https://local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/5.74%20Accessible%20housing_v05_1%20-%20BM%20amends.pdf

37. Members are invited to give any further steer on current actions:

37.1. **Supporting the Housing Made for Everyone coalition.** Organisations including Age UK, Centre for Ageing Better, Disability Rights UK and RIBA are calling for action to build homes fit for an ageing population and people with disabilities.

37.2. **Continue to urge the Government to publish its response to the raising accessibility standards for new homes consultation.**

LGA / ADASS Care and Health Improvement Programme (CHIP)

38. In addition to providing direct advice and insight to councils on housing and social care, which in turn helps to shape the Board's policy work, housing is embedding across CHIP programmes, including:

38.1. Developing a supported housing self-assessment framework that will help councils to better understand local needs and market to strengthen commissioning.

38.2. The High Impact Change [Model](#) includes a new change on the role of housing and related services supporting timely hospital discharge, preventing admission and quality outcomes. There are plans to commission a new Housing Impact Model.

38.3. Enabling councils to access additional expertise to develop and share innovative approaches to [supported housing](#).

38.4. Developing 'top tips' for Directors of Social Services and Heads of Planning in relation to mutually beneficial ways of working to see sufficient appropriate housing development.

38.5. The support provided to councils and NHS partners around implementing the Better Care Fund includes discharge of the Disabled Facilities Grant.

38.6. As part of the COVID-19 response, the BCF support programme mobilised expert peers to advise on the use of housing and related services, as well as social care and community services, to support more people to be discharged from hospital safely and quickly and so free capacity in the acute sector to respond to the virus.

38.7. Since 2017-18 the LGA and NHS Digital have funded [programmes](#) looking at how digital and technology solutions can be used to increase independence for residents at home.

38.8. The [Building the Right Support programme](#) supports people with a learning disability and/or autistic people, including those with a mental health condition, to live safe and fulfilling lives in the community, including housing and support.

Implications for Wales

39. Housing and social care are devolved policy matters.

Financial Implications

40. The LGA activities highlighted in this report can be delivered within existing resources.

Next steps

41. Members' steer will inform the continued work of the Community Wellbeing and EEHT Boards on shared housing and care policy and improvement priorities.