About CIH
Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is the independent voice for housing and the home of professional standards. Our goal is simple – to provide housing professionals and their organisations with the advice, support and knowledge they need to be brilliant. CIH is a registered charity and not-for-profit organisation. This means that the money we make is put back into the organisation and funds the activities we carry out to support the housing sector. We have a diverse membership of people who work in both the public and private sectors, in 20 countries on five continents across the world.

Further information is available at: www.cih.org

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CIH responded to the consultation document through the online portal, addressing the following questions

What could the government do to help people live more healthily: in homes and neighbourhoods, when going somewhere, in workplaces, in communities?

Poor housing conditions have been identified as having a negative impact on both physical and mental ill health, across a range of conditions. Research has estimated that poor housing costs the NHS £1.4 billion, a year with the largest costs arising from the effects of cold and damp homes and falls.

National government has a role to establish a positive framework that supports and incentivises authorities, NHS organisations and partners to tackle health inequalities and support people at the local level to live healthy lives.

That includes housing policies that support health such as:

- Requiring new homes to be built to Building Regulations Part M 4 category 2 as a default, reflecting our increasingly ageing population, and more people of working age living with long term conditions. Only 7 per cent of existing homes meet basic accessibility standards, so all new homes need to be more accessible and easier/cheaper to adapt further as the needs of households change.
CIH Response to consultation, *Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s*, from Department of Health and Social Care and the Cabinet Office

- Promoting basic standards in new build homes that support health, such as the ten design principles of the TCPA’s Healthy Homes Bill

- Setting standards for energy efficiency to make homes cheaper to heat and to address the challenges of climate change; as highlighted in the recent report from the committee on climate change.

In relation to existing homes, government should ensure ongoing and increasing investment in disabled facilities grants through the Better Care Fund, to help people adapt their homes to make them safe to continue with activities of daily living.

Mental health is affected by many factors; how can we support the things that are good for mental health/ prevent the things that are bad for mental health in addition to action in the green paper?

A safe and secure home contributes significantly to mental wellbeing. Recent research indicates problems with housing can increase levels of stress that impact on long term health. However, with our housing crisis, many people are not able to access or retain a decent and safe home that they can afford, which can be seen most starkly in the rising numbers of homeless people. CIH was commissioned by the Health Foundation to look at the experience of young people living in the private rented sector, as part of its inquiry into young people’s health, and emerging evidence highlights the negative impact that can have on their mental health (report to be launched mid-October).

In addition to measures to improve the standards of homes as above, government should:

- Invest in developing more of the most affordable housing, to ensure people can access a home they can afford – 90,000 a year of the 245,000 new homes we need should be at social rent.

- Address welfare policies that undermine people’s ability to secure a decent home (tackling the five week wait in universal credit, restoring the local housing allowance to enable people to afford the cheapest 30 per cent homes in the private rented sector; abolishing the shared room rate for single people under 35).

What policies other than health and social care have biggest impact on mental and physical wellbeing.
Healthy homes and neighbourhoods are the starting point to help people to live healthy lives throughout their life course. Decent homes in well-connected neighbourhoods not only have a direct impact on health but also support people to be active, access education and employment, and be involved in society.

Planning and housing policies are pivotal in developing such places, and therefore fundamental to supporting wellbeing. Local housing strategies should inform and be informed by health and wellbeing strategies, and reflected in the Local Plan, and in strategies to improve or regenerate existing homes and neighbourhoods.

Our research has also highlighted the impact of welfare policies on people's ability to access decent housing. At the national level, we need a more joined up approach to and appreciation of the interaction between housing, welfare and health policies, and the impacts for health and wellbeing.

What more can be done to help local authorities and NHS work well together?

Structures exist locally that can support authorities and NHS to work together. The Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPS) and emerging Integrated Care Systems are ways forward. These structures, bringing together health and local authorities (social care and public health), could ensure closer connections are built with key local partners such as housing (through the strategic housing and planning authorities) and facilitate a clear way to engage and involve housing partners at the appropriate local partnership level – e.g. through health and wellbeing boards.

With those partners, STPS could develop a greater understanding of wider social determinants underpinning local health inequalities, and use partners’ data to understand the issues for population health and local impacts – so that action on housing and the other wider determinants are tackled collectively at the local level.

Developing strong local partnerships requires time and resources; national government can support this by investing in local areas, and setting a national framework which supports and incentivises local areas to develop appropriate local ways to work together, identify and tackle shared priorities to improve wellbeing. There is now a body of evidence on the benefits of this emerging from devolution deals as in Greater Manchester.