



Health and social care strategy for older people

Evidence submitted to the Scottish Government 22 June 2022

This is a response to the consultation by the Scottish Government on a new [health and social care strategy for older people](#).

General comments

CIH Scotland is the professional body for housing and we work to support our members to deliver good quality homes and services to people across all housing tenures. We believe that access to adequate housing is a basic human right and that providing good quality homes and services contributes to all of Scotland's National Outcomes.

CIH Scotland welcomes this consultation on a new health and social care strategy for older people and the Scottish Government's commitment to supporting people to live independently at home, or in a homely setting, for as long as possible¹. Living at home not only allows people to retain their independence and remain part of a familiar community, it can also prevent the need for more costly interventions such as a hospital stay or a move to residential care.

However, we are disappointed that the role of housing does not feature more prominently throughout the consultation and feel that this presents a missed opportunity to recognise the valuable contribution that good quality housing can make in improving health and social care outcomes for older people.

The Scottish Government must also commit to increasing the supply of suitable housing for older people and ensure that there is more support, investment and information available for people to adapt or modify their homes, or move to a more suitable home as their needs change. It is particularly important to ensure that advice, information and support is available to people living across all housing tenures. Our work on housing and dementia has highlighted that people living in the private sector (owner occupiers and private renters) sometimes struggle to find the right advice or to navigate through complex systems.

We would therefore ask the Scottish Government to ensure that housing is fully reflected in all relevant local and national plans and strategies relating to older people going forward.

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-2040-2/pages/5/>



Consultation questions

1. Do you have examples of communities, voluntary/third sector and public sector organisations working together to improve older people's health and wellbeing and reduce any health inequalities which they experience?

1. Housing's contribution to health and wellbeing
 - 1.1 Scotland's population is ageing, with the proportion of those who are of pensionable age set to increase to 22.4 percent by mid-2045,² and many people will need some level of support to allow them to live independently, whether through illness, a disability, or simply due to their changing needs at they get older.
 - 1.2 For many older people, being able to live independently at home, or in a homely setting, for as long as possible can be hugely beneficial for both physical and mental health, and local connections to family, friends and community can help to reduce social isolation and loneliness. This can also reduce the need for more costly interventions such as a stay in hospital or a move to residential care.
 - 1.3 We know that the homes and places that people live in play an important role in their overall health and wellbeing and the provision of good quality, warm, affordable housing (at every stage of a person's life) is central to improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities. In its vision for [Housing to 2040](#), the Scottish Government's ambition is for everyone to have a safe, high-quality home that is affordable and meets their needs in the place they want to be.
 - 1.3 Many social housing providers also play an important role in providing a sense of community for older people, offering information and advice on things such as community events, social activities, and even assistance around digital inclusion, financial planning and access to benefits, all of which has a positive impact on health and wellbeing.
 - 1.4 As such, we were disappointed with the lack of reference to the role of housing beyond brief mention of aids, equipment and adaptations to support physical wellbeing. The consultation does not consider the wider role of the housing sector or the support provided to older people by frontline housing staff in the social housing sector.

² <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/population-projections/2020-based/pop-proj-2020-scot-nat-pub.pdf>

- 1.5 The new Health and Social Care Strategy for Older People must set the course for a more integrated approach to supporting people to live well as they age across all tenures embedding the role of the housing sector in the strategy.

2. The right housing and support at the right time
 - 2.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on the importance of home, with many people spending more time there than ever before; however, it has also served as a reminder that many people are living in homes that do not adequately meet their needs and that there is a severe shortage of suitable housing for our ageing population.

 - 2.2 In order to deliver good health and wellbeing outcomes, it is important that people have information, advice and access to the right types of housing and support at different stages in their lives and as their needs change. This could include accommodation on ground floor level, homes that have been adapted to suit a person's specific mobility or dementia-related needs, or housing that offers extra care and support such as retirement or sheltered housing for older people.

 - 2.3 It is essential that the Scottish Government works to increase the supply of housing appropriate for older people across all tenures, including working with private developers to ensure a greater mix of new homes which are accessible and adaptable for people as they age.

 - 2.4 We also need to see a more integrated approach to specialist housing development for older people, from planning to delivery. Developments such as Hanover Housing Association's Varis Court presents a clear example of housing, health and social care working together to provide a holistic and preventative model of strategic service planning and provision to older people.

Housing with Care - Varis Court

Varis Court in Forres was delivered by Hanover Housing Association in partnership with Health and Social Care (HSC) Moray and Moray Council comprising 33 individual flats with communal facilities.

Five of these flats were leased by HSC Moray on a short term basis to provide inpatient care focussed on reablement, allowing closure of the local community hospital. A new model of care was trialled - the Forres Neighbourhood Care Team (FNCT) provided 24 hour care to the residents

of the five flats with nurses also able to provide support to other residents in the wider development when required.

Analysis published in 2019 showed that the model was beginning to have a positive impact on hospital admissions for patients over 65, reducing length of stay and cost of admissions¹. Following a brief extension of the trial period, the decision was made to cancel the contract and the five flats are now supported by social care staff rather than nursing staff.

- 2.5 Despite strong evidence of improving outcomes, the model is rarely replicated due to the lack of capital investment or long-term certainty from H&SC partners meaning that the financial risk for developments such as these often sits solely with the social landlord and for this reason can be difficult to progress. This is both in terms of investing capital funding and the uncertainties around strategic commissioning in H&SC.
- 2.6 The consultation document focusses on very operational elements of service provision for older people. Strategically, a more equal partnership arrangement with capital funding from the NHS or through Integration Joint Boards (IJBs) and longer term commitments to the provision of care could help to deliver more housing with care and support the renovation of existing homes for older people which may no longer be fit for purpose.
- 2.7 We need joined up strategic planning at local authority level to ensure enough affordable social housing provision at a local level which clear mechanisms available to access capital funding where the risk does not solely lie with the housing association. This could be executed through a closer link with Strategic Housing Investment Plans (SHIPs) and H&SC Strategic Plans.
- 2.8 The consultation mentions that regular health checks or 'health MOTs' are provided for older people by some health professionals, presenting an opportunity to review medication and have a general discussion about health. We believe that this type of discussion could also be applied to housing, identifying whether the person's home is suitable for their needs or if a referral to the local authority housing team or Occupational Therapist would be required. For people living with dementia, an early conversation about their housing needs as part of their post-diagnostic support can help them to plan for the future and avoid a move in crisis.



- 2.9 It is important that conversations around housing and ageing are normalised so that people can think about their own futures and make informed decisions around the housing options which are right for them.
- 2.10 CIH Scotland has also called on the Scottish Government to provide [greater investment](#) to ensure that people across all housing tenures can access equipment and adaptations when needed to help prevent the need for more costly interventions such as a stay in hospital or a move to residential care. The process for accessing aids and adaptations can often be complex depending on tenure, so it is therefore important that advice and information is also available across all housing tenures.
- 2.11 We would also like to see greater reference made to the potential use of technology in the new strategy as a way to enable more older people to live independently at home. CIH Scotland, along with a range of partners including the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA), Scotland's Housing Network (SHN), the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (ALACHO), and the Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations (GWSF), is a supporter of the [TEC in Housing Charter](#) which was developed as part of the Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Ready Programme and funded by the Scottish Government's TEC Programme.
- 2.12 The Charter has been developed to support the use of TEC in creating and delivering housing solutions and includes a pledge for the housing sector to work more closely with health and social care partners to support earlier interventions such as working to prevent trips and falls or reducing risks associated with frailty. It also includes a number of good practice examples from a range of housing organisations which highlight some of the innovative ways that the sector is helping to improve health outcomes for older people and some of these examples could be included in the new strategy to highlight housing's significant contribution in this area.
3. [Housing's role in local and national strategies](#)
- 3.1 As outlined above, we believe that housing is central to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for older people and we welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to provide a more integrated and joined up approach between different services and agencies in the delivery of social care.
- 3.2 However, in many instances, housing is not prioritised strongly enough in relevant policies and strategies, and there is a lack of recognition throughout the consultation of the valuable contribution that good quality



housing makes in improving outcomes across all aspects of life. In its refreshed [Age, Home and Community strategy](#), the Scottish Government acknowledged that while progress has been made in relation to housing's role in social care integration, there is still room to improve.

- 3.3 While the [National Dementia Strategy](#) also lacked adequate reference to the role of housing in supporting people living with dementia, the pandemic led to the development of an interim [Dementia and Covid-19 action plan](#) which restated the Scottish Government's commitment to support people to live at home:

Commitment 6: *We will work with health and social care partnerships to enhance integrated and co-ordinated support for people with dementia to live well and safely in their own home, connected to their local community, for as long as possible and to minimise hospital admissions - and do more to support those with dementia who live alone. As part of this we will spread learning from the local whole-system dementia care approach being tested in Inverclyde.*

- 3.4 The [National Housing and Dementia Forum](#) was subsequently established in 2020 to support this work. The group, co-chaired by CIH Scotland and the University of Stirling's Dementia Services Development Centre, gathered evidence on how people can be better supported to live well with dementia.
- 3.5 While the report and recommendations are still to be published, interim findings have highlighted inequality in access to advice, information and support depending on housing tenure and the need for better partnership working between housing, H&SC to ensure housing needs are discussed at an early stage, possibly as part of post-diagnostic support.
- 3.6 The commitment to establish a new [National Care Service](#) also provides a timely opportunity to ensure that housing has a central role in helping to deliver the Scottish Government's ambition for social care which is person-centred and based on a human rights approach.
- 3.7 We would therefore ask the Scottish Government to ensure that housing is firmly on the agenda when it comes to all policies and strategies related to health and social care for older people, at both a local and national level, and to work with the sector to help raise awareness of housing's contribution with other partners and stakeholders. This would help to create

a more thorough and integrated approach to social care and will allow us to be better prepared to address the changing needs of our ageing population.



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About CIH

The 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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