



# Developing Housing Strategies for an Ageing Population: A Quick Checklist

## 1. Part of the Mainstream

- Does the Strategy plan for homes and neighbourhoods which meet national objectives of being inclusive, age-friendly places to live, with homes that enable and support independent living and offer a decent quality of life in older age?
- Will plans for new homes, housing improvements and housing related services ensure that older people can live independently and safely in mainstream housing for as long as possible?

*90% of older people live in mainstream housing (5% sheltered housing, 5% care home/ other) and over 70% are owner occupiers. This is where the majority of people will choose to live as they get older. Creating lifetime homes and neighbourhoods, building housing which is flexible across the lifespan, are key to achieving this aim and are set as specific objectives in the national government strategy.*

## 2. Data Analysis

- Is the Strategy based on robust, accurate, longer term analysis of housing supply and demand projections, current data on demographic trends and the an understanding of changes in older people's housing needs and aspirations?

*Already 30% of households are occupied by older people and in some localities this figure is higher. Older people are the most important national driver in the growing demand for homes and will make up 48% of all new household growth to 2024 – higher in many areas. For up to date regional population projections see:*

*[www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/householdestimates/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/householdestimates/)*

## 3. Stakeholder Engagement

- How are older people being involved in shaping a vision for housing and neighbourhoods that meet older people's housing needs and aspirations in the short, medium and longer terms?

*No matter what their age, people wish to have access to a decent home and some choice about where and how they live (see boxed section at end).*

*Older people, their action groups and forums can play a key role in planning better housing for an ageing society – housing which enables people to live independent and fulfilling lives as they get older. For information about running events to engage with older people about housing issues contact Wendy Cocks at Care & Repair England (details below).*

## 4. Good Specialist Housing Options

- Does the Strategy seek to ensure that there is a range of high quality, 'specialist' housing and housing support services for all older people?

*This could include a wide range, across both private and social housing sectors, from retirement properties, to supported housing options such as extra care, to innovations such as co-housing.*

*Better housing options are also needed for particular groups of older people, including those from black and minority ethnic communities, those who are homeless, have learning disabilities, mental health problems or have specific conditions such as dementia. Toolkit for planning accommodation with care: 'More Choice, Greater Voice' [www.icn.csip.org.uk/housing/](http://www.icn.csip.org.uk/housing/)*

## 6. Making the Connections

- Does the Strategy reflect the centrality of housing to health and well-being?

*Housing is central to the quality of life in older age. It is also a key contributor to older people's ability to stay healthy and live independently. Thus poor or unsuitable housing supply will impact on other planners and providers such as health, social care and Supporting People. The involvement of these sectors in developing the strategy is therefore important to future coherent provision.*

## 7. Meeting the Public Service Agreement PSA 17: *Tackle poverty and promote greater independence and well-being in later life*

- PSA 17 is a cross Government target. Housing impacts on three of the five indicators from the local performance framework;
  - *Healthy life-expectancy at age 65*
  - *Over 65s satisfied with home and neighbourhood*
  - *Over 65s supported to live independently*

*The strategy will need to reflect how it will contribute to achieving these.*

## 8. A Shopping List

- Has the Strategy addressed each of the following with regard to older people:
  - Lifetime Homes Standards in all new build homes in all sectors
  - Future proofing programmes of renovation and improvement in all sectors
  - Plans to deal with poor housing in the private sector
  - Flexible tenure options, including stair-casing out of owner occupation
  - Provision of adaptations to existing stock
  - Access to help with small repairs and minor adaptations
  - Provision of information and advice about housing options in older age and practical help to implement choice
  - Involvement of older people in the planning and design of homes, including supported housing provision and in programmes of improvement
  - Better supply of supported housing options based on population projections, particularly with regard to growing levels of disability, dementia etc
  - Single point of access to services of all types and comprehensive needs assessment which includes housing.

## **Summary of the Key Messages from Older People to the Housing Sector:**

### **What older people want**

- *Housing should be well designed with growing older in mind; it should meet the needs of all age groups. We should build **adaptable 'homes for life'**.*
- ***Space** is important: we often need room to accommodate visiting family or a carer, and need good storage space.*
- ***Housing design** should be user-friendly, low maintenance and safe - a downstairs WC and bathroom with shower and bath are especially important. Our homes should also be affordable to heat.*
- *We want access to green, private space, and a **safe neighbourhood**. We want housing that is **accessible** to good local transport, facilities and amenities.*
- *We want access to independent **information and advice** about our housing options.*
- *We want support to stay living in our own homes. We need reliable **repairs and adaptations services**, that bit of help around the home.*
- *But above all, **we want to be listened to**, to be involved in the design of everything that will affect us, from planning and lifetime homes standards, to the creation of safer environments, to testing new equipment and IT devices.*

*Extract from summary of consultation events organised by the HOPDEV- the national advisory committee on housing and older people. (<http://hopdev.housingcare.org/downloads/kbase/older-peoples-views-housing-strategies.pdf>)*

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**Main reference: 'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A Housing Strategy for an Ageing Society',** Communities and Local Government, Feb 2008: [www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingmanagementcare/housingolder/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingmanagementcare/housingolder/)

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*Care & Repair England is an Industrial and Provident Society with Charitable Status Reg. No. 25121R. It was established in 1986 to improve the housing and living conditions of older and disabled people. Its aim is to innovate, develop, promote and support housing policies and initiatives which enable older and disabled people to live independently in their homes for as long as they wish*

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