



Care & Repair England,
The Renewal Trust Business Centre,
3, Hawksworth Street,
Nottingham,
NG3 2EG
Tel/Fax: 0115 950 6500
e-mail: info@careandrepair-england.org.uk
www.careandrepair-england.org.uk

NEWS RELEASE

Date: 10th March 2008

Older people living on the edge of crisis, claims housing charity, Care & Repair England

National housing charity, Care & Repair England, is calling for a radical change in the way that older people are dealt with if their homes degenerate into chaos.

In a hard hitting report, '*Living on the Edge*', the charity shows just how little help is available to older people who struggle with day to day living because of a moderate learning disability.

"All too often nothing happens until there is a crisis, often resulting in Environmental Health being called in to clear a property that is in a desperate state of disrepair and infestation," said Sue Adams, Director of Care & Repair England. *"Just a little bit of regular help can make all the difference to an older person being able to live independently in their own home and to stop things quite often literally falling apart "*

'Living on the Edge' points out that the number of older people with a learning disability is set to double by 2021, with growing numbers living in the owner occupied sector, often inheriting a property from their parents. It calls for more practical, preventative help that can enable older people in such a situation to look after their home, such as help with maintenance, keeping on top of rubbish accumulation and dealing with bills and finance.

"Through the crisis support service we are not only dealing with the immediate housing problem but also, by staying in touch with people on a regular basis, are preventing the home from degenerating again", said Kathie Martin, who manages the innovative Coventry Crisis Support Service. *"After clearing out and renovating a property we stay in touch with the person, building up their skills to manage their life and home and being there to offer practical help when it is needed".*

ENDS

Notes ctd overleaf.....

Editor's notes

1. Care & Repair England is a national charity set up in 1986 by Shelter and the Housing Associations' Charitable Trust (hact) to improve the housing and living conditions of older and disabled people, particularly for those occupying poor quality private sector housing, thereby enabling them to 'stay put' in their own homes in greater comfort and security.
2. It has published 'Living on the Edge: Enabling older owner occupiers with moderate learning disabilities to live independently' Direct link to full report: <http://www.careandrepair-england.org.uk/pdf/livingontheedge.pdf>
3. The report includes detailed case studies, an analysis of the issue with facts and figures, and recommendations for change.

Miss Lane, who is in her 70s, lives alone in her own bungalow. She enjoys going alone to the local theatre, but does not socialise with people. She has no family or friends. She is often victimised by local children because she is 'different'. Whilst she has never been formally diagnosed, it is believed she has some mental health issues, and a learning disability.

Miss Lane does not throw anything away. This includes food rubbish; her kitchen floor and other surfaces are covered in food debris. There have been numerous infestations of mice and she has been served with enforcement orders several times by Environmental Health because she starts to hoard again as soon as the bungalow has been cleared.

Miss Lane has come to trust the local Care & Repair staff who over the years have organised home repairs, raised funds to replace furniture, a fridge and curtains, made successful benefit applications, arranged for a telephone to be installed, fitted smoke alarms and secured the gas supply through setting up a budget plan. However, Mrs Lane is very reluctant to let anyone else into her home.

Coventry Care & Repair now have a Crisis Support Worker who visits Miss Lane regularly, encouraging her to keep her hoarding to acceptable levels. As a consequence there has been no deterioration of the property and hence no further enforcement notices, which were so upsetting for Miss Lane.

Further information available from:

Sue Adams, Director of Care & Repair England, (01363 82704 or 07947 889416)
sueadams@freenetname.co.uk

Head office – Catriona Saxton, 0115 950 6500 info@careandrepair-england.org.uk

Kathie Martin, manager of Coventry Orbit Care & Repair – 024 76438304
Mobile 0776 8031709

Care & Repair England, The Renewal Trust Business Centre, 3, Hawksworth Street,
Nottingham, NG3 2EG Tel/Fax: 0115 950 6500 e-mail: info@careandrepair-england.org.uk
website: www.careandrepair-england.org.uk