



# Leeds Older People's Forum

*Working towards a city for all ages*

## Older People's Housing Strategy 2017



Most older people wish to live independently in their own homes and continue as part of their neighbourhood and community. We believe that everyone should have access to a safe, warm, accessible home, whatever their age, including in later life. We know that 75% of older people in Leeds live in the private sector.

Good housing is fundamental to health and wellbeing. An adequate supply of decent quality, well-designed, accessible ordinary housing, as well as specialist and supported housing, and access to affordable housing maintenance in every community can enable many more older people to live healthier lives in their own homes for longer. NHS plans to deliver more health care at, or closer to home will be more difficult to achieve if older people's homes are unsuitable or housing support services to enable this are not available.

In 2014 Leeds Older People's Forum produced a document asking for a Leeds Housing Policy for Older People which addressed both the needs and aspirations of Leeds older people. This work began in 2011 at a Listening Event, where older people were asked for key points to be included in a housing strategy and has been continued as Leeds Older People's Forum have continued working with statutory agencies and others to ensure that the voices of older people are heard.

Most older people wish to remain living in their existing homes, within their existing communities. They value the support from family and friends, access to their familiar locality, good transport and proximity to local shops and amenities which enable them to remain independent for longer.

Our Housing Strategy has come out of our own experience and workshops with older people and our work with Leeds City Council including the latest workshop in 2016, 'Me and My Home'.



## Our housing strategy:

### Existing Housing

1. The provision of trustworthy, reliable and affordable practical services is essential to promote independent living and improve the health and wellbeing of the residents across tenures. Access to a range of services, including handyman, falls prevention, assistive technology, home security improvements, minor adaptations, essential repairs, improvements in insulation and heating systems will have the most impact on health and wellbeing and improve people's ability to remain independent and engaged in their community. Access to rapid home adaptations and repairs to avoid a crisis is essential.
2. We need housing support to be easily accessed in all neighbourhoods.

### Advice and Information

3. Access to free, independent housing options advice across tenure is essential for older people to be able to make informed decisions about their current and future housing needs. This must be more than digital advice, accessible to professionals and organisations working with older people. This should include face-to-face and other formats available in neighbourhoods.
4. Approximately 66% of people with dementia live in their own homes and most say that they would prefer to remain there for as long as possible. Packages of flexible services are needed to achieve this including those listed above plus reminiscence libraries, retro-decorating schemes, telecare interventions and home support services.



## New housing

5. Any new housing developments in Leeds should include the provision of bungalows and/or ground floor flats, with good links to local transport and social amenities to attract local older people to remain part of their community. This could form part of the Local Development Plan and should be included in any Neighbourhood Plans.



6. To achieve independent living for the longer term, all new homes should be built to Lifetime Homes Standards or its equivalent including adequate space standards. These are then suitable for anyone through the life course and are flexible and adaptable should the need arise.
7. An ageing society means we need more imaginative housing options for older people of all tenures, both mainstream and specialist housing to meet the range of diverse needs in later life.

## Specialist housing.

8. Specialist housing, including sheltered and extra care, should be planned in neighbourhoods, based on clear assessments of need. They should be designed to allow people to remain living in them for as long as possible, with links to local services and amenities. It is essential that the needs of older people with dementia and those who have physical or sensory impairment are considered in formulating specialist housing policies. Specialist housing needs to be within communities to enable older people to remain connected to their community, and for friends and family to support older people for as long as possible. The diversity of older people should be reflected in the housing offer.
9. Joint planning and commissioning is part of the integration agenda for health and social care but we would want more involvement from housing to deliver more person-centred services in the home where older people spend most of their time. Included in this is the need to promote multidisciplinary cooperation across health, social care and housing.



Rosemount Gardens, Bathgate: Garden Courtyard / Architects: Nicol Russell Studios / Photo: Nicol Russell Studios



## Engagement with Older People

10. A formal structure should be established to involve older people and organisations that represent them in the development and future monitoring of housing policy development in Leeds. This structure should include Leeds Older People's Forum, Age-UK Leeds, and Care & Repair Leeds to make best use of our skills and experience.

## In conclusion

Most people want to age well at home, remaining part of their community and involved with family and friends. A warm, safe, accessible home is fundamental to achieving this aspiration.

We believe that working with decision makers across planning, housing, health and care we can make this happen in Leeds. Leeds Older People's Forum is committed to working with you to ensure that all older people have access to a decent home in later life.

## Proposal for Next Steps

Leeds Older People's Forum would like to work with partners, utilizing the Memorandum of Understanding with the Centre for Ageing Better, to create an action plan to deliver this strategy in a timely manner.

**We invite you to work with us to achieve this in Leeds.**

**We request that you adopt this strategy as the 'Me and My Home' Older People's Housing Strategy.**

Leeds Older People's Forum



## Appendix:

### Our Evidence Base

Reflecting national trends, Leeds has an ageing population – over the next 20 years the number of residents aged 65-85 is projected to increase by a third and the number of residents aged over 85 is projected to double.

In the latest statistics available from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2011 anticipates that

Leeds will have a significantly greater proportion of older people by 2026 than in 2010;

- 16% increase in households aged over 65
- 30% increase in over 75s
- 70% increase in households aged over 85 years

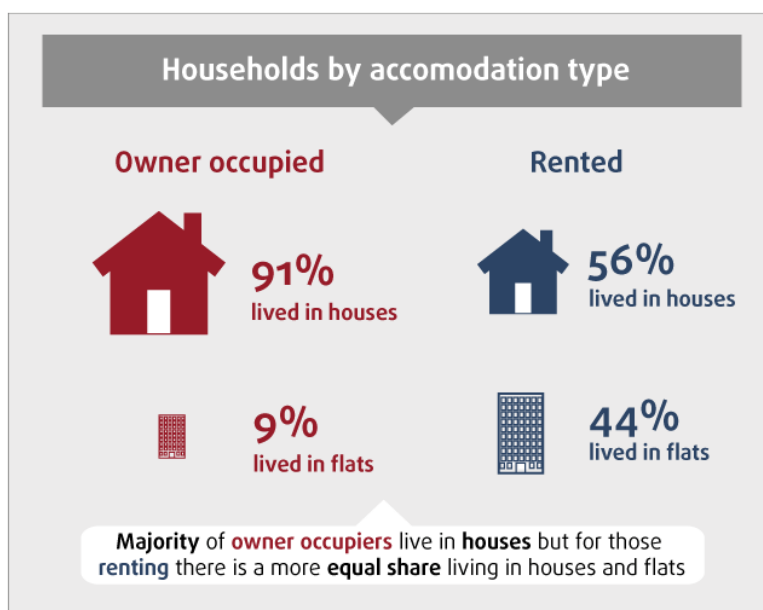
In absolute terms, the projection suggests that across Leeds there will be an additional 22,000 households with a head of household aged over 65.

Most households over 65 are likely to continue to live in standard housing which needs to be capable of adaptation and 75% of older people live in private sector housing.

ONS data for mid-2015 said the population of over 50s was 244,995 people. This is 31.6% of the total population and 4.1% of them are over 80 years old. The housing stock includes many older houses and back-to-back housing in the poorest areas.

As private sector housing stock condition surveys are no longer

required of local authorities, the age of the people living in them and the impact this may be having on older people, their health and wellbeing is unknown. Talking with older people, we know their concerns are about finding support to enable them to remain in their homes for as long as possible. A number of documents over the last five years have highlighted the impact of these factors on the health and wellbeing of older people and the impact these factors have on their ability to maintain their health and independence.



A study carried out by Care & Repair England in 2014, 'More than Bricks and Mortar', identified two key factors in defining what makes a "good home in later life":

- The location of the home: close to family, friends, public transport, health facilities, shops, social links, libraries.
- The design: warm, affordable heating, safe, secure, adapted with adequate space.

It also identified the most common housing problems as:

- Cold and damp home.
- Carrying out repairs and maintenance.
- Inadequate adaptations.

These issues were all identified in a survey of older people carried out by Care & Repair Leeds and Leeds Older People's Forum in 2011. In addition, this survey identified:

- a high demand for ground floor accommodation;
- the need for practical home services including handyman service;
- the provision of advice and support about housing options, and
- the importance of consulting older people about their views on housing need.

These issues were also in the findings from the listening event 'Me and My Home', carried out by Leeds City Council with Leeds Older People's Forum in July 2016.

### Older People in Leeds

Nationally, approximately 90% of older people live in general housing; 5% live in specialist housing provision and a further 5% in residential or nursing care. Nearly 75% of older people are homeowners. These factors are frequently ignored in discussions on housing and older people with the emphasis tending to be on specialist and supported social housing and ignoring the majority who are owner occupiers.

Most older people in Leeds live in owner occupied properties:

- 57% of lone pensioner households are owner-occupiers; 34% live in social rented
- 83% of pensioner couples are owner-occupiers; 13% live in social rented accommodation

Housing conditions have a direct link to health and wellbeing. Poor or unsuitable housing increases the risks of hospital admissions and readmissions and G.P. visits, and places additional pressures on



social care funding for residential care.

## Homes for older people



### Unhealthy homes increase the risk of

- respiratory illness
- cardiovascular problems
- excess winter deaths
- physical injuries, particularly from falls
- domestic fires



### Unsuitable homes increase the risk of

- physical injuries, particularly from falls
- general health deterioration following a fall
- social isolation



### Precarious housing and homelessness increases the risk of

- physical and mental health problems
- alcohol and drug misuse
- suicide
- tobacco harm
- tuberculosis

**Underlying health issues can in turn raise the risk of being homeless or living in precarious housing**

## Homes for older people

### Housing in Leeds

Affordability continues to be an issue for many households and this includes older households. The average house price was £175,680 in 2015, 7 times higher than the average single income in Leeds. This limits people's ability to move to what may be more suitable accommodation.

There has been a long term decline in the number of households renting from the local authority, reducing from 21% in 2001 to 17% in 2011 largely as a result of Right to Buy. However, the size of the Housing Associations sector has grown slowly over the last 10 years. As demand for social housing remains high with almost 24,000 applicants on the Leeds Homes Register in 2016.

**In the 2009 Leeds Housing Strategy**, the Leeds Private Sector Stock Condition Survey identified that 33% (81,800 properties) of private housing in the city fails to meet the decency standard, with this figure rising to over 70% for back-to-back housing. The stock condition survey also identified that 13.8% (34,300 properties) have one or more Category 1 hazard, with this figure rising to 45% for back-to-back housing. The most common hazards in Leeds are excess cold, limited fire escape routes and increased risk of falls.

**Quote from Leeds Housing Strategy 2016 – 2021**

‘A projected increase in older residents will have a significant pressure on resources available to meet housing need and promote independence.’

There was no evidence of a housing stock condition survey having been undertaken which would indicate how much disrepair is present in the private sector housing. While it is not a statutory requirement it also points to a lack of knowledge about the state of those homes lived in by older people which may be having a detrimental effect on their health and ability to remain independent.

2 million older (55+) households are living in non-decent homes

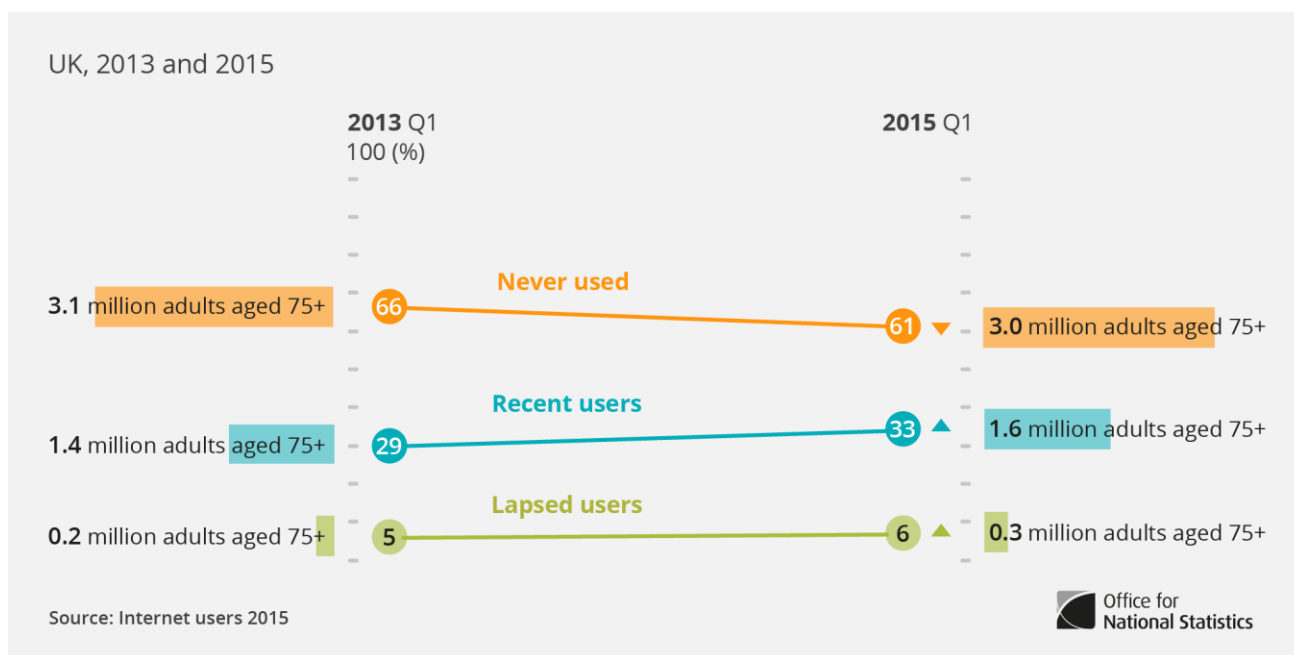


A decent home: meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing: is in a reasonable state of repair; has reasonably modern facilities and services; provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

Homes for older people

**Advice and Information**

Timely, integrated information and advice about later life housing, care and related finances from a trusted, impartial source enables older people to make well informed decisions. This in turn can result in benefits to the individuals, their community and the public purse as people make best use of their own, sometimes limited resources. As the older population is most likely to be digitally excluded with recent government figures putting the number of over 75s who do not use the internet in the region of 3 million people, this means that face to face advice alongside alternative formats is preferable.



<https://visual.ons.gov.uk/internet-use/>



## Adaptations

In England, 93% of homes lack basic accessibility features and would benefit from being adapted. Over three quarters of a million people aged 65 and over need specially adapted accommodation because of a medical condition or disability and 145,000 of them report living in homes that do not currently met their needs.

Leeds received £6,199,289 for Disabled Facilities Grants in 2017/18. This money is for major adaptations and does not include minor works which could enable an older person to remain well and living independently.

The speed of adaptations and simple access to services is the key to more older people remaining independent for as long as possible. We know that an 'unhealthy' home can lead to falls and hospital admissions and increased chance of an older person losing their independence.



### Overcrowded households (by religion) (ONS data)

- Based on rooms, 9.1% of households in the city are deemed to be overcrowded, but the HRP data it shows that there are significant differences between ethnic groups
- Based on rooms, overcrowding rates range from 5% in the Jewish group to 24.1% in the Muslim group
- Based on bedrooms, the rates range from 1.2% in the Jewish group to 14.2% in the Muslim group
- The Pakistani and Indian communities have the highest proportions of people living in owner-occupied homes



## New Housing

An ageing society means we need more imaginative housing options for older people of all tenures, both mainstream and specialist housing to meet the range of diverse needs in later life. We are not a homogenous group and the housing options available needs to reflect our diversity.

The 2017 Housing White Paper states:

Government plans to introduce a new statutory duty to produce guidance for local planning authorities on how their local development plans should meet the housing needs of older and disabled people.

Leeds can commit to building healthy, sustainable housing for the whole population and could task a knowledgeable committee to create a set of updated standards. Such a committee might also be tasked at the same time to develop a 'Good Housing for Ageing' Design Quality Mark (as suggested by APPG (Housing & Care) HAPPI reports) and drawing on examples of design excellence e.g. University of Sheffield's DWELL report and the Papworth Trust's accessible bungalow design.

Few local authorities include planning suitable housing for older people, including specialist and/or supported accommodation, in their local plans and all too often it is a separate issue rather than one associated with building a community of support for the whole life course. This is an aspiration that Leeds could work towards to indeed make it the best city in which to Age Well.



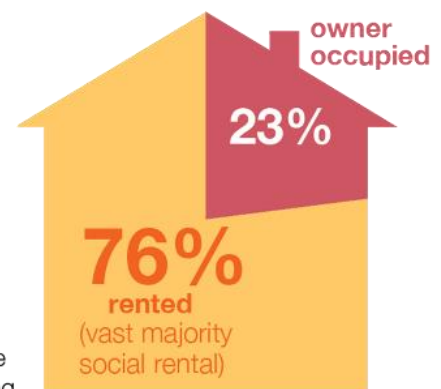
### Specialist Housing

Nationally we know that there are just 500,000 specialist units of accommodation for older households compared with 9.5million older households (head of household 55yrs+). We appreciate that extra-care housing is the new model of supported housing for older people but there is not enough of it and it is not available in every locality. It is not wanted or needed by everyone. People are anxious about being able to afford it if they are home owners.

The desire of older people, if asked, is to remain within their community so the provision of specialist housing is desired within neighbourhoods so that relationships can continue. This has considerable impact on their wellbeing.

There is a lot of change taking place in minority communities who don't always find appropriate or suitable accommodation to meet their needs in later life. We feel more engagement with their housing needs will help them maintain their independence for longer.

There are only 500,000 homes designed specifically for older people  
For example, sheltered, extra care or retirement housing



## References

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### LGA Housing and our ageing population

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### Older People's Housing Champions

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### Public Health England infographics

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### NICE

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### Generation Rent and Older People

<http://www.generationrent.org/life-in-the-rental-market-what-the-future-holds-for-older-renters>

### Homelessness amongst older people

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homeless-elderly-people-surges-100-seven-years-local-government-association-a7997086.html>

### Housing wealth among older people

[http://wealthgap.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/files/2013/02/WealthGap\\_No\\_03\\_Housing\\_wealth\\_inequalities.pdf](http://wealthgap.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/files/2013/02/WealthGap_No_03_Housing_wealth_inequalities.pdf)

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