



# Ageing Well: A Housing Manifesto

This Manifesto has been produced by the Older People's Housing Champions, a national network of older activists who support action by older people's groups to improve housing and related services for an ageing population across England.

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Older People's Housing  
**Champions**

# Home is the Hub

Where people live – their homes and neighbourhoods – is pivotal to their wellbeing, health and quality of life. Homes that are in good repair – that are safe, warm, comfortable and accessible – help people to live independently and well for longer actively involved with family, friends and the rest of society.

A home is not just about the bricks and mortar, although this is important, but also about being part of neighbourhoods and communities.

“Home” is the hub of life. And living independently in a home of their choice is the simple aspiration of most older people.

*We believe that everyone should have access to a decent home<sup>1</sup>, whatever their age, including in later life.*



**Older people (55+) live in 43% of all homes (9.5m older households)**

## Our Manifesto

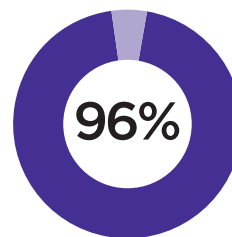
Most people want to age well at home, remaining part of their community and involved with family and friends.

We believe that decision makers across planning, housing, health and care need to reflect this aspiration, set it as an underlying objective for all their policies, and then work together to ensure that all older people have access to a decent home in later life.

## Our 10 Headline ‘Asks’

### Improve existing homes for good ageing:

The vast majority of people spend most of their later life in ordinary housing (not specifically designed for a particular group).



**96% of older households live in ordinary homes**

1. Home adaptations assistance should be mandatory, delivered quickly, efficiently and be a core part of future integrated health, social care and housing systems.
2. There should be nationwide provision of practical, affordable housing repair and adaptation services – including home improvement agencies and handyperson services for older people in all housing sectors.
3. Small “healthy at home” grants or low cost loans for essential repairs and improvements (including heating systems) should be made available for disadvantaged older people, resulting in benefits both for individuals and society.

4. Local authority house condition audits should be re-introduced alongside private sector housing renewal programmes to tackle disrepair and prevent existing housing stock decline.

**Build new homes to meet the range of diverse needs in later life:** An ageing society means we need more imaginative housing options for older people of all tenures, both mainstream<sup>2</sup> and specialist housing.



93% of homes lack even basic accessibility features

5. Build all ordinary housing for all ages – all new homes should be built to accessible standards and be suitable for further adaptation.
6. Build more innovative mainstream housing of a design and size that is particularly suitable for later life.
7. Build a wider range of specialist and supported housing for those with later life care and support needs.

**Provide independent, impartial information and advice:** Timely, integrated information and advice about later life housing, care and related finance (from a trusted, impartial source) enables older people to make well-informed decisions.

8. A national source of independent, specialist, housing, care and finance information, combined with impartial local one-to-one advice and support, is urgently needed for older people, their carers and professionals.

There are **2.5 million long term sick or disabled** people over 65 years and these numbers are likely to increase

9. A register of accessible, adaptable housing would help people locate suitable homes quickly when their needs change.

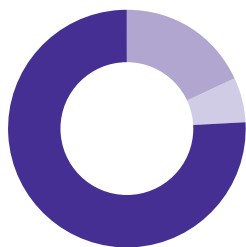
**Plan and engage with older people:** We need local housing strategies developed that consider solutions for all housing tenures and place housing at the heart of health, care and wellbeing for older people.

10. Older people – experts through experience – need to be engaged and involved in developing and delivering housing strategies and solutions for later life at all levels locally and nationally.

# Homes and Ageing – the numbers<sup>3</sup>

There are **11.6 million** older people aged over 65<sup>4</sup> in the UK.

**96%** of older people live in ordinary ('mainstream'<sup>5</sup>) homes<sup>6</sup>



Most older people are home owners (76%), 18% are in social housing<sup>7</sup> and 6% private rented housing<sup>8</sup>

There are **9.5m** older households<sup>9</sup> living in **43%** of all homes<sup>10</sup>



There are c.500,000 homes in the specialist housing category for older people<sup>11</sup>

**Two million** older households live in non-decent\* homes<sup>12</sup>

## Homes for healthier ageing<sup>13</sup>

Not everyone ages in good health. An estimated four million older people in the UK (36% of people aged 65-74 and 47% of those aged 75 plus) have a limiting longstanding illness. This equates to 40% of all people aged 65 plus in the UK.<sup>14</sup>

How long we live, and how long we live in good health, are very unequal. There is a large disparity between healthy life expectancy and geographical area. For example, at birth males in Wokingham, Surrey could expect to live 15.5 years longer in good health than males in Blackpool, Lancs.<sup>15</sup>

Good housing is fundamental to health and wellbeing. 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.

An adequate supply of decent quality, well-designed, accessible ordinary housing, as well as specialist and supported housing, can enable many more older people to live healthier lives in their own homes for longer.

There are **2.5 million long term sick or disabled** people over 65 years and these numbers are likely to increase<sup>16</sup>

**93%** of homes lack basic accessibility features<sup>17</sup> 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<sup>18</sup>

The home is the most common place for falls. **One in three** people over 65 and **one in two** over 80 in England and Wales have fallen at least once each year<sup>19</sup>. Well designed or adapted homes reduce risk of falls



40% of the NHS budget in the UK is spent on caring for older people over 65 years<sup>20</sup>

The estimated cost of poor housing to the NHS is 1.4 billion per annum<sup>21</sup>



Ensuring that all older people (especially those with a medical need) have access to a decent, suitable home in later life is critical to healthy ageing. Ageing well at home results in wider benefits for:

- The NHS – through reduced GP visits and hospitalisation
- Social care – through extending safe, independent living and delaying need for more expensive residential care
- Individuals – through improved quality of life and reduced worry for families and carers

## What older people say about their homes

When older people were asked<sup>22</sup> what their homes meant to them – they said:



They told us what makes for a good home in later life. Top of the list were:



# What needs to be done?

## Improve existing homes for good ageing

### Home adaptations

Most (96%) of older people live in mainstream<sup>23</sup> housing. Home adaptations can extend safe, independent living at home. They also have a significant impact on health and wellbeing, by preventing falls and accidents.

*Home adaptations assistance should be mandatory, delivered quickly, efficiently and be a core part of future integrated health, social care and housing systems.*



Two million older households live in non-decent\* homes

### Safe, warm and well-maintained homes

A significant number of older people, particularly low income homeowners, live in poor quality, cold homes which have a negative impact on their health. Many homes occupied by older people require repairs and maintenance.

*There should be nationwide provision of practical, affordable housing repair and adaptation services – including home improvement agencies and handy person services for older people in all housing sectors*

*Small “healthy at home” grants or low cost loans for essential repairs and improvements (including heating systems) should be made available for disadvantaged older people resulting in benefits for individuals and society.*

*Local authority house condition audits should be re-introduced, alongside private sector housing renewal programmes, to tackle disrepair and prevent existing housing stock decline.*

## Build new homes to meet the range of diverse needs in later life

### Build all ordinary housing for all ages

An ageing society means we need to build more homes that are suitable across the life course. Better general housing standards and inclusive design results in improved health and independence for all current and future occupants. An ageing society means we also need more imaginative housing options for older people of all tenures both mainstream and specialist housing.

*All new homes should be built to accessible standards and be suitable for further adaptation.*

*Build more innovative mainstream housing of a design and size that is particularly suitable for later life – e.g. using HAPPI<sup>24</sup>, DWELL<sup>25</sup> principles.*

*Build a wider range of specialist and supported housing for those with later life care and support needs.*

Demand for specialist housing is likely to outstrip supply. More supported housing options for older people of all income groups are needed – both to rent and to buy.

## Provide independent, impartial information and advice

Timely, integrated information and advice about later life housing, care and related finance (from a trusted, impartial source) enables older people to make well-informed decisions. This in turn can result in benefits to both individuals and the public purse, as people make best use of their own, sometimes limited, resources.

A database of accessible, adapted or adaptable housing would enable better use of housing stock as well as improving older people's ability to find a home that best meets their requirements.

*A national source of independent, specialist, housing, care and finance information, combined with impartial local one-to-one advice and support, is urgently needed for older people, their carers and professionals.*

*A register of accessible, adaptable housing would help people to locate suitable homes when their needs change.*

## Planning and engaging with older people

We need local housing strategies which consider solutions for people in all housing tenures and place housing at the heart of population health, care and wellbeing for older people.

### Engaging older people in developing solutions

The wide range-of-life experiences of older people need to be heard to better reflect the diversity of later life and capture this spectrum of experience and views. This 'reality check' is needed to plan housing, care and health services more effectively.

There are good examples of older people effectively being engaged in local and national decision making, harnessing the potential of people with constructive ideas and ready to help shape a society that is better for everyone<sup>26</sup>. This engagement needs to take place at all levels, using a range of communication methods (remembering that whilst digital engagement is a useful tool we must also not exclude older people who currently do not use new technologies).

### Planning for the impact of ageing

The 2017 Housing White Paper states that 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. The guidance needs to make it clear that development plans should link housing, health and care policies together more effectively. Enabling older people to live safely and independently at home also reduces demands on health and social care.

*Older people – experts by experience – need to be engaged and involved in developing and delivering housing solutions and strategies for later life at all levels locally and nationally.*

## In conclusion

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

We believe that decision makers across planning, housing, health and care need to reflect this aspiration, setting it as an underlying objective for all their policies, and then working together to ensure that all older people have access to a decent<sup>27</sup> home in later life.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> A home in good repair, warm and accessible
- <sup>2</sup> Housing not specifically designed for a particular group
- <sup>3</sup> **The Statistics used are for England unless otherwise stated**
- <sup>4</sup> Mid – 2015 population estimates UK Office of National Statistics 2016
- <sup>5</sup> Housing not specifically designed for a particular group
- <sup>6</sup> Garrett H, Burris S, (2015) Homes and ageing in England BRE Bracknell, IHS BRE Press Analysis for all people aged 55yrs and over
- <sup>7</sup> Housing association or council homes
- <sup>8</sup> Garrett H, Burris S, (2015) Homes and ageing in England BRE Bracknell, IHS BRE Press Analysis for all people aged 55yrs and over
- <sup>9</sup> Head of Household 55yrs or over.
- <sup>10</sup> Garrett H, Burris S, (2015) Homes and ageing in England BRE Bracknell, IHS BRE Press Analysis for all people aged 55yrs and over
- <sup>11</sup> Pannell, J, Aldridge, H, & Kenway, P (2012) Market Assessment of Housing Options for Older People London: New Policy Institute
- <sup>12</sup> Source: Garrett H, Burris S, (2015) Homes and ageing in England BRE Bracknell, IHS BRE Press Analysis for all people aged 55yrs and over \*The Decent Homes standard is a nationally defined standard which is measured by indicators that include need for urgent repairs, age of the kitchen and bathroom facilities and thermal comfort, as well as presence of a 'Category 1 hazard'. This is a hazard that presents a significant risk to the health of the occupant.
- <sup>13</sup> **The Statistics used are for England unless otherwise stated**
- <sup>14</sup> The estimate is for the UK, based on Great Britain data from the General Lifestyle Survey 2011, Office for National Statistics, 2013
- <sup>15</sup> Age UK Later Life fact sheet 2017
- <sup>16</sup> Special analysis of English Housing Survey 11-12 Data undertaken by BRE for Care & Repair England in 2016. Age of household refers to the age of the household reference person. Similar analysis for all people aged 55yrs and over is published in Garrett H, Burris S, (2015) Homes and ageing in England BRE Bracknell, IHS BRE Press
- <sup>17</sup> Age UK Agenda for Late Life Full Report 2015
- <sup>18</sup> Housing in England 2006/07, Communities and Local Government, 2008
- <sup>19</sup> Assessment and prevention of falls in older people NICE CG161 June 2013
- <sup>20</sup> APPG (Housing & Care) Living Well at Home Inquiry Westminster, House of Lords 2011
- <sup>21</sup> Nicol S, Roys M, Garrett H The cost of poor housing to the NHS 2014
- <sup>22</sup> More than Bricks and Mortar Care & Repair England 2013
- <sup>23</sup> Housing not specifically designed for a particular user group
- <sup>24</sup> <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design-building/HAPPI/>
- <sup>25</sup> <http://dwell.group.shef.ac.uk/>
- <sup>26</sup> One example is in Leeds where the Leeds Older People's Forum is working with the council to develop a housing strategy for older people for the City
- <sup>27</sup> A home in good repair, warm and accessible

Care & Repair England provides administrative and technical support for the Older People's Housing Champions Network. It is an independent charitable organisation (IPS Reg 25121R, est. 1986) which aims to improve older people's housing. It innovates, develops, promotes and supports practical housing initiatives & related policy and practice which enable older people to live independently in their own homes for as long as they choose.

[www.careandrepair-england.org.uk](http://www.careandrepair-england.org.uk)