

# Improving health and wellbeing through housing

A High Impact Change Model



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# Introduction

The Improving Health and Wellbeing through Housing High Impact Change Model (HICM) aims to support local care, health, and housing partners to work together to deliver the range of housing that is most effective in enabling older people and other people with health and care needs to live independently and to shape local housing markets and services to achieve this.

The model encourages local partners to integrate housing delivery with local health and care commissioning and service provision. This is important because:

- housing is an important determinant of health; substandard housing is a cause of health inequalities
- ensuring people have good housing can help to delay or reduce a person's need for health and care services in the future and help them retain their independence, health and wellbeing for longer
- it is estimated that the cost of poor housing to NHS is £1.4 billion per year; the actions in this model can help reduce the cost of poor housing to the NHS.

The model recognises that the majority of people are seeking to remain living in their existing homes as they get older, but this will not always be possible for everyone. It also recognises that there are people who may want to move to a more suitable home, but there are often limited housing choices available.

It identifies the key housing-related actions and activities that will successfully enable older people and other people with health and care needs to live independently for as long as possible.

This model was developed for the Local Government Association (LGA) by Housing LIN, authored by Ian Copeman and Lois Beech.

## Who this document is for

System leaders and staff from across local government, the NHS, the housing sector, and voluntary and community groups, and people receiving services all have a part to play in working together to improve the range of housing options, adaptations, and services available for people with health and care needs.

By working together, partners can build on their collective local knowledge and expertise to create the appropriate mix of housing opportunities that will sustain people to live well in their homes, and work with housing providers to deliver diverse housing choices that meet local and demographic need.

Local partners should take from this model what is most relevant and appropriate for their context, prioritising what is most needed and acknowledging that not all the interventions outlined here will be appropriate for all individuals and in all circumstances.

## Overview of the model

The model focuses on two goals and five high impact changes that help realise both goals:

Goal 1: Improving population health through good quality housing

Goal 2: Supporting people to live independently in the community

The **five high impact changes** to realise these goals are:

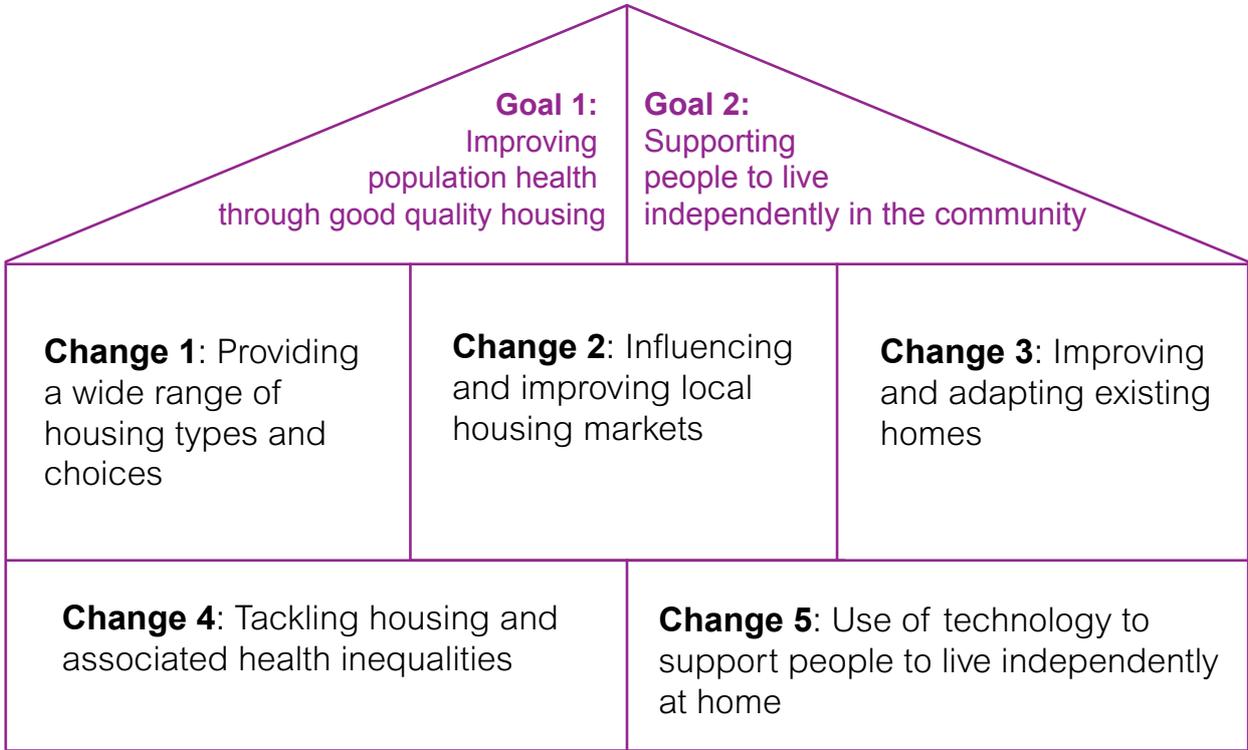
- Change 1: Providing a wide range of housing types and choices
- Change 2: Influencing and improving local housing markets
- Change 3: Improving and adapting existing homes
- Change 4: Tackling housing and associated health inequalities
- Change 5: Use of technology to support people to live independently at home

Each high impact change has:

- corresponding **I** and **We** statements from [Think Local Act Personal's Making it Real framework](#)
- suggested top tips and actions
- examples of good practice from local systems around the country
- links to relevant national guidance and other publications.

The model is intended to support other high impact change models:

- supporting people to live independently in the community
- reducing preventable admissions to hospital and long-term care.



# Context: Improving health through housing

## The scale of the challenge

One in three – 7.7 million – households in England experience at least one housing problem and around one million households (13 per cent) experience multiple housing problems. Research from The Health Foundation found that 17 per cent of homes in England were classed as non-decent in 2019, and that there was notable variation between housing tenures. The proportion of homes that are non-decent was highest in the private rented sector, at 23 per cent. Sixteen per cent of owner-occupied homes were non-decent, and 12 per cent of social rented homes.

The Health Foundation also found inequalities in who lives in non-decent homes. Single adult households, particularly those over 60, and those on low incomes are more likely to live in non-decent housing.

Around a third of people aged 50 and over say their home needs work to make it suitable as they get older.

## Policy context

This HICM is informed by:

- The Adult Social Care Reform White Paper, People at the Heart of Care (2021) vision to: ‘make every decision about care a decision about housing’.
- Health and Housing Memorandum of Understanding: Improving health and care through the home (2018)
- The Government’s guidance for councils in preparing planning policies on housing for older and disabled people that sets out the rationale for councils and their partners offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs which can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the health and social care systems.
- Government guidance that councils and their partners should consider different types of specialist housing designed to meet the diverse needs of older people and other people with health and care needs.
- The Levelling-Up White Paper, which expects to launch a taskforce on older people’s housing, looking at ways to provide better choice, quality, and security of housing for older people.

- Government guidance on the preparation of integrated care strategies
- The Government's National Statement of Expectations for Supported Housing (2020) which provides guidance for councils and their partners in terms of planning for, commissioning and managing the quality of supported accommodation for older people and other people with health/care needs.
- The Ministerial Statement from March 2022 about the need to improve the quality and regulation of supported housing.
- The series of Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) reports that have proved influential in raising awareness of the importance of appropriate and attractive design of housing suited to older people and other people with health and care needs.

# Change 1: Providing a wide range of housing options and related services

When developing mainstream and specialist housing, consider how local health, care and housing partners can better support healthy ageing and enable independent living for people with health and care needs. This should include integrating health, care and housing as well as housing-related services that support and improve people's health and wellbeing.

## 'Making it Real' – I/We statements

- **I** can live the life I want and do the things that are important to me as independently as possible.
- **We** have conversations with people to discover what they want from life and the care, support and housing that will enable this, without restricting solutions to formal services and conventional treatments.

## Tips for success

- Ensure the delivery of additional mainstream housing which caters for people who need an accessible home and/or wheelchair adapted homes, for rent and for sale, by adhering to mandated standards.
- Promote the development of 'care ready' forms of mainstream housing for rent and for sale; care ready housing is a home that is capable of adaptation over time to meet people's changing needs. Through good design homes can be built to be better suited to possible future requirements such as the need to have an overnight carer, storage for mobility scooters and space to retain independence.
- Provide examples of 'care ready' housing to private and social housing developers as 'exemplars' to follow and emulate.
- Promote the adoption of HAPPI design principles for both new-build mainstream and specialist housing in order for it to be attractive to older people and people with disabilities.

- Consider and assess the demand for multi-generational homes that promote supportive neighbourhoods for older people and people with health and care needs. Draw on notable practice, for example, healthy new towns for guidance and exemplars.
- Work with housing associations and private housing developers to specify and develop specialist housing with care schemes for rent and for sale for older people and other people with health and Care needs that include integrated community and health facilities, such as GP practices or pharmacies.
- Involve housing associations and specialist voluntary sector organisations to bring their perspectives and those of the people they support to better understand, for example, the housing needs of those with learning disabilities and complex support needs.
- Work with housing funders such as Homes England to identify and secure capital funding to develop specialist housing.
- Work with local organisations that support people living with dementia to ensure that specialist housing with care provides an environment that is suited to people living with dementia to help avoid unnecessary or premature moves to care homes.
- Commissioning housing with care that enables people to ‘step down’ from hospital or people with serious mental ill health to step down from psychiatric inpatient settings increases post-discharge options and capacity.
- Commission housing providers to develop housing-related services to support hospital discharge, for example providing rapid home adaptations, ensuring heating systems are functioning and ‘decluttering’ homes where hoarding is an issue.
- Involve local housing providers to ensure that housing services for older people and other people with health and care needs are designed to be sensitive to specific needs, such as people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people who are LGBTQ+, for example by ensuring a diverse workforce with access to equality and diversity training.

## Examples of emerging and developing practice

Ebbsfleet District Council: ‘Healthy new town’ – Ebbsfleet Garden City, in Kent, is the largest of the ‘healthy new towns’. The Healthy New Towns Programme is intended to shape new towns, neighbourhoods and communities to promote health and wellbeing, prevent illness and keep people independent.

Trafford Council and Trafford Housing Trust: a housing and health hub – Limelight integrates 81 extra care apartments with a GP surgery and community facilities, including a café, event space, library and nursery. Offices for council services and social enterprises are also provided, together with sports and recreation facilities and the re-provision of a church.

Leeds City Council LGBT+ older person's housing in partnership with Pride of Place Living and Clarion, developing a multi-generational community-led LGBTQ+ housing in Leeds with a mix of different types of homes and tenures to suit the range of age and care related needs in the LGBTQ+ community.

North Lincolnshire Council/Golden Lane Housing: housing suited to people with learning disabilities – consists of 15 1-bed self-contained homes with support on site for 15 tenants with a learning disability.

## Supporting resources and materials

Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) Design Principles, 2009 - 2020

Guidance: Housing for older and disabled people, UK Government, 2019

Statutory guidance: Access to and use of buildings: Approved Document M, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2021

'Care ready' housing in practice, Home of 2030

Housing LIN resources:

- Intergenerational and multi generational living: exploring housing models that promote intergenerational connections within both mainstream and specialist housing
- Housing for people with learning disabilities: provide resources, references, tools and outline good practice to ensure that people with learning disabilities and autism have increased choices and quality of where they live.
- Housing for people living with dementia: a range of resources and good practice to support people living with dementia to live independently for as long as possible
- Housing for LGBTQ+ older people: provides resources and good practice to ensure LGBTQ+ older people have a range of housing choices
- Housing for people from ethnic minorities: a range of resources on the housing needs and preferences of people from different ethnic minority backgrounds

# Change 2: Influencing and improving local housing markets

Work with council planning policy colleagues to guide and influence local housing markets to deliver additional mainstream, accessible and specialist housing that will better meet the needs of older people and working age people with care/health related needs. This will help to reduce demand on health and care services and support individuals to lead healthier lives.

Working with a wide range of housing providers at a local level will help deliver a mix of good quality mainstream accessible housing and specialist housing, for rent and for sale, that support an ageing population and working age adults with health and care needs.

## ‘Making it Real’ – I/We statements

- **I** have a place I can call home, not just a ‘bed’ or somewhere that provides me with care.
- **We** work in partnership with others to make sure that all our services work seamlessly together from the perspective of the person accessing services.

## Tips for success

- Use data from the local joint strategic needs assessment and demographic data to assess the future housing needs of older people and working age adults with health and care needs which can be referenced in the council’s local plan and other forward planning activity.
- Work with council planning policy colleagues to ensure that council local plans include explicit reference to evidence of the housing needs of older people and working age adults with health and care needs.
- Work with council planning policy colleagues to develop supplementary planning documents which provide more detail of the types, location, and design of housing required by older people and working age adults with health and care needs.
- Set out to housing providers expectations in terms of the percentage of homes to be built to national accessible housing standards including wheelchair user standard dwellings.

- Use these council planning documents to show housing developers from the private and social housing sectors the intentions of commissioners to support housing development that meets these identified needs.
- Set out the local need for housing among older people and working age adults with health and care needs, for example as a local housing investment plan, as a means of attracting housing providers to develop the housing required.
- Incentivise housing providers to develop specialist housing, for example through providing access to potential sites and providing pre application planning advice at no cost.
- With council housing strategy colleagues identify opportunities for the development of mainstream accessible housing for rent and for sale, and specialist housing, within general mainstream housing programmes and sites.
- Work with housing providers already operating in the local area and a sample of housing providers that are yet to invest in the local area, to identify potential sites for housing and what individual housing providers can offer.
- Work with providers of existing specialist housing and accommodation about how some these properties could be remodelled, or the sites redeveloped (such as outdated care homes and/or sheltered housing), to better meet the future housing needs of older people and working age adults with health and care needs.
- Consider the use of town centre sites and re-purposing existing commercial building – especially large retail spaces such as those formerly occupied by department stores – to provide housing for older people and other people with health and care needs and the role this can have in revitalising high streets.

## Examples of emerging and developing practice

Telford and Wrekin Council: Accessible and Specialised Accommodation supplementary planning document – sets out the council's expectations for housing developers. This includes targets for the delivery of accessible homes.

South Gloucestershire Council: supplementary planning document – supports the local authority, developers, housing providers and local communities to deliver a wide range of housing through successful planning applications with particular focus on the provision of affordable housing, the delivery of exception sites in rural areas and the provision of extra care housing, including affordable extra care.

Leicestershire County Council Investment prospectus – a local housing investment plan which aims to attract a wide range of housing providers to deliver its housing and supported housing requirements for older people and working age people with health and care needs.

## Supporting resources and materials

National Planning Policy Framework glossary, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2012

Guidance: Housing and economic needs assessment, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2020

Guidance: Housing for older and disabled people, produced by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2019

Statutory guidance: Access to and use of buildings: Approved Document M, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2015 (updated 2021)

Guidance: National Statement of Expectations for Supported Accommodation, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2020

Regulatory judgements and notices, and gradings under review, The Regulator of Social Housing, 2015 (Updated 2022)

Commissioning and Market Shaping Library, Local Government Association, Example: Birmingham City Council

TCPA - The State of the Union: Reuniting Health with Planning (2021)

LGA/TCPA – Developing Healthier Places: How councils can work with developers to create places that support wellbeing (2018)

# Change 3: Improving and adapting existing homes

Support people to remain independent for longer in their homes through providing adaptations and retrofitting to existing homes in both the social and private housing sectors, to improve accessibility, housing standards and long-term housing sustainability.

## ‘Making it Real’ – I/We statements

- **I** live in a home which is accessible and designed so that I can be as independent as possible.
- **We** make sure people feel safe and comfortable in their own home, which is accessible, with appropriate aids, adaptations, technology and medical equipment.

## Tips for success

- Consider how to develop and offer an enhanced home improvement and adaptations service that may include access to telecare/care technology, handyman services, falls prevention services, information/advice about housing adaptations, or housing services related to hospital discharge systems.
- Audit existing local home improvement and adaptations services to assess whether the current service offer is comprehensive in meeting the needs of older and disabled people and whether it could be improved.
- Develop a specification that provides a comprehensive home improvement and adaptations service offer including minor adaptations, major adaptations funded by Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and access to aids and equipment as a minimum baseline service offer.
- Pool funding for home improvement and adaptations through the Better Care Fund, or other local joint funding agreements, and develop a local action plan to provide a consistent baseline and enhanced home improvement and adaptations service.
- Consider setting up a non-injurious falls response service, provided by, for example, housing providers/community alarm providers, to deliver an out of hours response services to minimise ambulance call outs and unplanned hospital admissions.
- Establish local occupational therapy staff resources within housing improvement and adaptations teams, both at councils and commissioned home improvement agency services, to provide a more seamless service for older and disabled people who need to access adaptations, particularly DFG funded adaptations.

- Support safe and timely hospital discharge for those who may need housing adaptations, by including local authority housing/housing provider colleagues in early discharge planning and streamlining referral processes between health, care and housing colleagues (see [Managing Transfers of Care High Impact Change Model](#)).
- Ensure that the type and range of home adaptations offered are as attractive as possible to avoid any stigma associated with having adaptations at home; draw on examples of home adaptations that are designed to be 'non stigmatising'. [Motionspot](#) and [Invisible Creations](#) offer good examples.
- Undertake a local publicity campaign to promote the existence of home improvement, adaptation and related services to ensure these services are easily accessible to older people and other people with health and care needs.
- Ensure that there is clear and comprehensive information, targeted to the local demographic, for older people and other people with health and care needs about how to access home improvement and adaptations, equipment and aids.

## Examples of emerging and developing practice

[Gloucestershire County Council: Joint action plan for home adaptations and healthy homes](#) – the county council, NHS and six district councils pool funds and develop a joint health and housing plan that aligns to the outcomes of the Better Care Fund.

[Manchester City Council's: Manchester Care and Repair](#) – an example of housing and health integration. It is jointly commissioned by the NHS and Manchester City Council to provide a comprehensive home adaptations service and housing related services to the local hospital discharge system.

[Oxford City Council: In-house Home Improvement Agency](#) – a comprehensive home improvement and adaptation service.

[Mansfield District Council: Advocacy, Sustainment, Supporting Independence and Safeguarding Team \(ASSIST\)](#) – an enhanced home improvement and adaptations service that provides support with hospital discharge.

[St Helens Borough Council: Partnering with Housing Associations on Home Adaptations](#) – the council negotiated substantial contributions from housing associations which enabled them to remove the means test and deliver a comprehensive agency service across all tenures.

## Supporting resources and materials

Housing associations, home adaptations and independent lives: Finding ways to say yes, Foundations, 2022

Adapting the Private Rented Sector, The National Residential Landlords Association report and guidance, 2021

Local Authority Domestic Retrofit Handbook, Local Partnerships on behalf of the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), to 2021

The Retrofit Playbook, UK Green Building Council, 2020

Royal College of Occupational Therapy – Adaptations without Delay

# Change 4: Tackling housing and associated health inequalities

Housing and health-related inequalities can be tackled by improving housing conditions to keep people well at home by; improving the provision of warm homes initiatives; energy efficient homes with lower running costs; and by improving housing standards, particularly in the private rented sector.

## ‘Making it Real’ – I/We statements

- **I** am valued for the contribution that I make to my community.
- **We** have conversations with people to discover what they want from life and the care, support and housing that will enable this, without restricting solutions to formal services and conventional treatments.

## Tips for success

- Draw on a range of evidence to review the condition and standards of social and private housing in the local area, for example by using housing condition surveys that may be available to councils, estimating the level of fuel poverty using government-collected data and evidence from councils regarding housing standards in the private rented sector.
- Establish a wide range of referral pathways that enable frontline health, housing and social care professionals and community groups to refer vulnerable people for energy efficiency and home improvement programmes.
- Provide accessible information and advice, in person and online, about improving housing conditions and access to any grants/funding to tackle cold homes. Raise awareness among frontline health and care staff of what is available locally to improve housing conditions, such as warm homes/energy efficiency grants. Consider joint training of these services for health and care staff, to ensure a consistent understanding.
- Develop and expand local programmes that provide grants and other funding to improve energy efficiency and/or help to provide warmer homes for lower income older people and other people with health and care needs.

- Set up a 'Warm and Well' service to improve people's homes through interventions such as cavity wall insulation through to the installation of central heating, to avoid and/or minimise the likelihood of health issues arising from people living in cold and/or damp homes.
- Make use of the local council's mandatory house in multiple occupation licencing scheme to ensure shared accommodation, including specialist housing, is safe and identify opportunities to improve housing standards and access to warm home programmes as appropriate.
- Consider Passivhaus certification for new builds, particularly for specialist housing. Appoint a Passivhaus 'designer' to design from concept stage and carry out Passivhaus Planning Package modelling.

## Examples of emerging and developing practice

Derby City Council: Healthy Housing Hub – works with care coordinators to receive cold homes referrals from GP surgeries. Derby City Council's Healthy Housing Hub has set up a strong partnership with care coordinators within local GP surgeries.

Gloucestershire County Council: Cold Homes Referral Service – tackling cold homes by working with NHS partners to fund the Gloucester and District Citizens Advice cold homes referral service.

Cornwall Council and Isles of Scilly: Winter Wellbeing Partnership – includes the Reducing Fuel Poverty, Improving Health and Progress to Work programme. Its guide to 'Winter Wellbeing' provides information and advice about how to keep well and the support that the council and other partners provides.

Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board: Warm and Well Service – supports households whose health is at risk from living in cold/damp homes through the provision of advice/support and ongoing referrals for physical measures.

Forest of Dean, Cotswold and West Oxfordshire District Councils: New Zero Carbon Toolkit – aimed at small or medium-sized house builders, architects, self-builders and consultants, the toolkit covers a range of steps – from pre-planning through to construction – for delivering net-zero carbon, low-energy homes.

## Supporting resources and materials

Local Authority Toolkit: Supporting Fuel Poor and Vulnerable Households, Citizens Advice Bureau and Cornwall Council, 2020

Improving the private rented sector: A guide for councils, the Local Government Association (LGA), 2020

Guidance about the requirements associated with renting Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO), UK Government

Sustainable warmth: protecting vulnerable households in England, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2021

Passivhaus certification, The Passivhaus Trust

# Change 5: Use of technology to support people to live independently at home

Make the best use of mainstream digital technology and care-enabled devices to support older people and other people with health and care needs to live independently in mainstream and supported housing.

## ‘Making it Real’ – I/We statements

- **I** have care and support that enables me to live as I want to, seeing me as a unique person with skills, strengths and personal goals.
- **We** work with people to manage risks by thinking creatively about options for safe solutions that enable people to do things that matter to them.

## Tips for success

- Ensure that the approach to the use of technology used to support older people and other people with health and care needs to live independently at home, is tech ‘agnostic’, ie enable access to a wide range of mainstream technology as well as specialist care-enabled devices.
- Develop a care technology service offer for older people and other people with health and care needs that provides social work practitioners, community nursing staff, occupational therapists and other frontline professionals new ways to support people to live independently in their own homes. Consider integrating this with a home adaptations service offer.
- Plan for an effective transition from analogue telecare systems to digital compatible systems by 2025 for all people accessing care technology, within specialist housing schemes. Note that the transition may occur prior to 2025 so check with your telecommunication provider the dates they will transition.
- Create a specification for the inclusion of mainstream digital technology and care-enabled devices in relation to the development of new specialist housing for older people and other people with health and care needs.
- Ensure that specialist housing for older people and other people with health and care needs offers wi-fi and has the right digital infrastructure to promote digital inclusion.

- Develop programmes to assist older people and other people with health and care needs who wish to improve their digital skills, building on any work already happening locally to promote digital inclusion of these groups.
- Support smaller technology providers to develop their services; smaller technology providers can play an important role in delivering holistic and bespoke approaches to the use of mainstream and care enabled technology in people's homes.
- Use technology to complement rather than wholly replace staff-based support.
- Identify good practice examples and pilots which have successfully used mainstream and care technology to support to older people and other people with health and care needs to live independently and consider where this can be replicated locally.

## Examples of emerging and developing practice

Liverpool City Council: Liverpool 5G Create – provides free connectivity for Health, Social Services and Education services via a 5G high speed private network. The aim is to address digital poverty and help lessen the health inequalities in the city, as well as keeping people healthy in their homes for longer.

Essex County Council: Digital Boomers – a group of local councils, NHS, fire, care delivery organisations and voluntary sector organisations that coordinates how technology can be better used across Essex to promote independent living for older people.

Telford and Wrekin Co-operative Council: Virtual House – provides an interactive tour showing examples of occupational therapy, assistive technology and sensory aids, equipment and solutions that are designed to enable people to maintain their independence in their own homes.

Newcastle City Council: Future Homes Project – a partnership with the Future Homes Alliance and its development agent Karbon Homes to create an exemplar of sustainable urban housing, with flexible living space to suit residents' changing needs, including trialling a range of technologies.

## Supporting resources and materials

Technology for our Ageing Population, Panel for Innovation (TAPPI), Dunhill Medical Trust and the Housing Learning and Improvement Network, 2021

Resetting the Digital Premium report, the Good Governance Institute (GGI), 2022

Digital Innovation Challenge: Unlocking technology to improve care, ADASS and Microsoft, 2021

The TEC Services Association (TSA) has a range of downloadable resources to help us all prepare for the analogue to digital switch over in 2025

Digital Care Technology Resource Hub, LGA 2022



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