

MANSFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOUSING AND HEALTH INTEGRATION A COMPREHENSIVE 'EVIDENCE LED' APPROACH TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES

The economic masterplan for Ashfield and Mansfield³⁶ is focused on growth and prosperity and a better quality of life for local communities to tackle the long-term economic challenges and rebuild the economy. This is intended to address, since the late 1970s, the challenges in the area resulting from major economic change in the UK.

The Mansfield District Council housing strategy 2016-2021³⁷ is a key component of delivering improved prosperity to the area. An objective within the housing strategy is to meet the housing, care and support needs of vulnerable households, including older people, across the district.

Housing and older people context

The number of people of pensionable age³⁸ will grow from 21,100 in 2012 to 32,300 in 2037; with the number of people over the age of 75 increasing from 8,400 in 2012 to 15,900 in 2037.

A housing needs survey undertaken in 2014 found that an estimated 24.2 per cent of households in Mansfield contained someone with a support need. The main support needed amongst respondents was due to a physical disability.

The health of people in Mansfield is significantly worse than England's average – there is lower life expectancy and higher levels of limiting long term illness. The range and complexity of services provided in the wider health and social care system, and the pressures and strains placed upon local residential care and hospitals, are reflective of this.

How is it innovative?

The council's approach

The council has implemented an holistic approach to meeting the housing needs of older people, set out below, with a particular focus on developing an integrated health and housing 'model' for supporting older people across all tenures.

Planning and developing new homes for older people

Since the Government allowed councils to access grant funding with the advent of the local authority New Build Programme in 2009, the council has carried out a development programme of 215 new homes (54 of which are currently under construction). Of these, 159 have been built for older people in a range of settings.

³⁶ www.mansfield.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8697&p=0

³⁷ www.mansfield.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8736&p=0

³⁸ From 2019, the state pension age will start to increase for both men and women to reach 66 by 2020. The Government is planning further increases, which will raise the state pension age from 66 to 67 between 2026 and 2028.



One of the developments was an 84 unit extra care scheme (Poppy Fields) which also includes 10 bungalows set in their own secure courtyard setting for people with dementia.

The scheme was funded directly by the council along with grant funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and funding from Nottinghamshire County Council in return for which the county council received nomination rights. Ten of the properties built were made available for shared ownership.

The scheme currently being constructed is a 54 unit senior persons living scheme. It is anticipated that this scheme will provide new homes for a range of needs ie active elderly, older people with support needs and older people with care needs. Six bungalows will be made available for shared ownership. Both schemes have communal facilities.

The remaining older persons housing has been built as general needs older persons housing across three sites. Two sites were disused garage sites and have provided two bungalows on each site. The last site is a development of 17 bungalows near a community centre. The neighbouring open space has been landscaped and provides a trim trail around which are positioned external exercise equipment chosen with older and disabled people in mind.

The council's local plan consultation draft³⁹ sets out the policy intention to support future development of specialist housing for older people.

³⁹ www.mansfield.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8348&p=0

Planning permission for 10 or more dwellings, or for sites with a gross area of 0.3 hectares or above, will be granted if at least 10 per cent of the dwellings are bungalows or specially adapted housing for older people or vulnerable groups, unless the development is specifically for apartments.

Housing and health service offer

In relation to the evidence of the need for an integrated health and housing service offer for older people, the council responded by transforming, reorganising and restructuring elements of its own housing service to create ASSIST – the Advocacy, Sustainment, Supporting Independence and Safeguarding Team.

This scheme commenced operations as a pilot in October 2014 to provide holistic 'whole system' interventions that support the early discharge of patients from hospital.

It was delivered in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council and Sherwood Forest Hospitals Trust based at King's Mill Hospital in Mansfield. Its purpose is to help avoid or reduce delayed transfers of care ('bed blocking').



The service is designed to deliver and facilitate:

- expediting hospital discharge
- preventing hospital readmissions
- sourcing alternatives to residential care
- utilising housing stock to meet local need including direct matching
- fast-tracking repairs to properties
- providing key safe installation and minor adaptations and handy person service
- installing lifeline and telecare
- prioritising the letting of existing adapted accommodation
- using temporary accommodation to facilitate discharge
- supporting the hospital's emergency department 'front door' by engaging with people who have a social need and freeing up hospital staff to deal with emergencies.

Working in collaboration with social care and health partners, the ASSIST hospital discharge scheme has been a significant success within Kings Mill hospital, with referrals coming to the team from all over the hospital site. There are a wide range of case studies that demonstrate the variety of circumstances that hospital patients face in relation to housing needs and the range of ways that ASSIST has been able to respond to these situations on a case-by-case basis, to ensure speedy hospital discharge.

The funding received initially to deliver this service was £233,250 per annum. The council has recently undertaken a full review of housing needs services and as a result has reduced the costs of the service to £149,500 from April 2017. Funding for the scheme was secured from NHS and local authority partners.

Promoting wider health and wellbeing

The council's approach to housing and older people contributes significantly to the Nottinghamshire health and wellbeing strategy and the Nottinghamshire Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP). Nottinghamshire is one of few areas to include housing as a specific theme within the STP and the council has played a significant role in producing the housing and environment theme of the STP, focusing on how the council's hospital discharge scheme and Nottinghamshire 'Warm Homes on Prescription' (WHOP) scheme improve health through the home.

The WHOP scheme has been very successful in Mansfield with further funding secured through the Better Care Fund to provide new heating systems, insulation and advice to vulnerable home owners in fuel poverty. The council has ensured that the STP has the following key objectives within the housing 'theme':

- expanding the Mansfield hospital discharge model across Nottinghamshire
- expanding the WHOP scheme across Nottinghamshire.



Outside communal hub at Poppy Fields



Adaptations for older people

The council has streamlined disabled adaptations processes to reduce delays for the applicant and ensure better value for money.

As well as offering mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) in private and council properties, the private sector housing service secured Better Care Funding (BCF) for 2016/17 to provide discretionary assistance with a prevention/early intervention focus. The council is offering 'healthy homes grants' to owner occupiers on low income to remove the most serious hazards in their homes (trips/falls/dampness/electrical/fire etc). The hospital discharge staff will be a key referral link for these grants. As part of this policy the council also offers hospital discharge assistance for those in hospital but where housing issues delay their safe discharge. Assistance will include minor decluttering, partial deep-cleaning, testing of gas fires etc to facilitate a safe discharge.

The council offers discretionary assistance to top up the mandatory disabled facilities grant to £40,000 for larger schemes and offers a 'rapid adaptation grant' for stairlifts initially as a means of preventing hospital admissions/re-admissions as a result of falls in the home. The grant is not means tested and is processed on receipt of an email from a trusted assessor from the local falls prevention team with minimal paperwork.

Outcomes

The programme of building new homes for older people has been very successful in attracting downsizing amongst older people, across all tenures:

- one scheme of two bungalows – both occupants downsized both from council accommodation
- one scheme of 17 bungalows – 10 occupants downsized (seven from council accommodation and three from registered provider accommodation)
- one scheme of two bungalows – one occupant downsized from council accommodation
- one scheme of 84 properties (extra care scheme) – 15 occupants have downsized (10 from the owner-occupied sector, three from private rented and two from council accommodation).

The ASSIST scheme currently covers Mansfield and Ashfield in Nottinghamshire and has been independently evaluated by Nottingham Trent University Business School. The initial evaluation demonstrated that over the period of July 2015 to April 2016, of 1,129 admissions, 5,078 bed days were saved across Mansfield, Ashfield and Newark. The Nottingham Trent University external evaluation calculated the full year effect of system savings on the reduction of acute bed days at £1,371,060.

Mansfield District Council has recently been awarded a National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Shared Learning Award for its ASSIST early discharge scheme.

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