

# Ageing Well at Home

Living independently where we choose...



This brochure explains why *Ageing Well at Home* needs to be the cornerstone of national policies



**The simple aspiration of the majority of older people is to live safely and well at home.**

Most older people are happy where they live. They need either no help or 'just that little bit of help' to stay living independently in their ordinary home.

***Enabling older people to age well at home needs to be the guiding principle of all housing, health, social care and planning policies.***

This is because:

- **There are over 7 million older households** - only 500,000 specialist housing units <sup>(1)</sup>
- **Independence at home reflects reality** - 90% of older people live in ordinary housing <sup>(1)</sup>
- **Ageing well at home is cost effective** - it reduces NHS & social care costs <sup>(1)</sup>
- **Independence at home is cost effective for older people** - 75% of whom are home owners <sup>(1)</sup>

## Home - the cornerstone of a healthy later life

A safe, warm, well maintained home is the foundation of health and well-being.

Home adaptations can make or break older people's ability to live independently and well. They are a cost effective way of reducing falls and hospital admissions as well as improving quality of life for individuals and carers.

### Living well, feeling safe

*Mrs Jones is an 81 year old lady who had just been discharged from hospital. She was struggling to get out of bed and use the bathroom and was very worried about falling. The local Care & Repair service raised the bed, put in motion sensor lights, a second stair rail and adapted the bathroom. Mrs Jones is much safer and she has been able to maintain her independence at home. She is also very reassured that she can call on Care & Repair should she need them in the future.*

## The forgotten million

There are now more low income home owners than low income tenants<sup>(1)</sup> and a million vulnerable older home owners live in non-decent homes.

Simple, low cost voluntary sector schemes offering affordable, trustworthy help with repairs and maintenance are cost effective and highly valued by older people<sup>(3)</sup>.

### Small things matter

*Mr & Mrs Green are both in their 80s and live in the small terraced house which they bought when they married over 60 years ago. During the winter the frame of the front door became increasingly distorted as a result of wet rot and they could no longer close it fully or lock it. Living on a small pension and with no savings left to pay for a new door and frame, they could see no way to deal with their problem. Their solution was to drag a chair to the door each night and Mr Green would sleep there so that no-one could get in whilst Mrs Green slept upstairs.*

*When they read in the local paper that the council was supporting a new handyman service they contacted them straight away. Their doorframe was repaired within 2 days and a secure lock fitted. They are just so delighted and Mr Green can once again get a good night's sleep.*



*“My home is a haven”*





## What makes a 'good home' in later life?

**LOCATION** - Proximity to family, friends, social opportunities, public transport, GP/health facility, library, shops, good neighbours

**DESIGN** - Warm, with affordable heating; safe; secure; adaptable/adapted; with space - for belongings, to socialise, for family; privacy - "My own front door"

### Main reported housing difficulties

**COLD** - "Cost of heating is greatest worry", "My home is damp & cold"

**REPAIRS** - "My biggest worry is repairs & maintenance"

**ADAPTATIONS** - "I have mobility difficulties... steps to kitchen and bathroom mean I need help... ramps would make all the difference"



Older people live in a third of all homes (c 7million)



Cost benefit - 300 older people helped by a handy person (avg job value £100<sup>(3)</sup>) vs cost of one place in a care home for a year (£30,000)

*"My home is full of memories and happiness"*

## £600 million

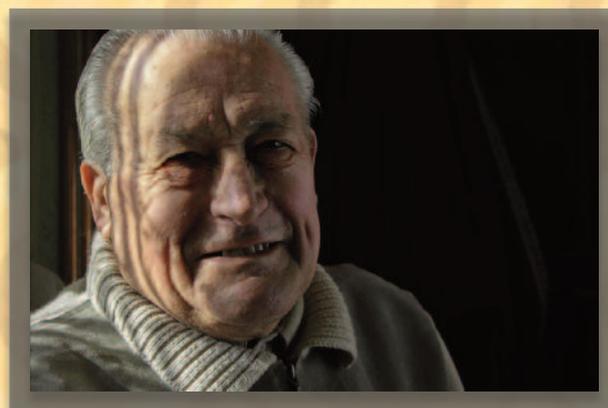
Poor housing costs the NHS £600m pa<sup>(2)</sup>

## 1 million

A million vulnerable older people live in non-decent homes<sup>(1)</sup>

## 750,000

Over three quarters of a million older people need accessible or adapted housing because of a medical condition or disability<sup>(1)</sup>



# Decision Makers - Time to Act

Older people across the country tell us how important their homes are.

*They want to age well at home, be safe, warm and comfortable, part of their community and actively involved with family and friends.*

Those undertaking policy reviews need to ensure that this vision underpins their policies, particularly for housing, health & care.

- **To stay living independently most older people either need no help, or may need just 'that little bit of help' including:**

- Independent, impartial information & advice about housing, care & finance
- Practical, affordable services & support to keep homes safe, secure and warm

- **Most older people prefer to remain at home and receive care 'at or closer to home' in a home that is suitable. This requires:**

- Design all homes to make them healthy & adaptable for all ages
- Rapid, accessible, affordable home repairs and adaptations
- Truly integrated planning and commissioning ie. health and care services which also address housing conditions

- **Older people's economic and social circumstances vary widely and change over time. A spectrum of flexible housing options is essential:**

- Future proof all new homes (of all tenures) thereby maximising independence & improving health for an ageing population
- Require all plans for housing and neighbourhoods to specifically address population ageing
- Develop a range of housing options for older people, across tenure, with both general and specialist types
- Enable older people to play an active role in local planning and decision making



Care & Repair England is a charitable industrial and provident society (IPS Reg No 25121R) established in 1986. It aims to improve older people's housing and believes that all older people should have decent living conditions in a home of their own choosing.

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#### References:

- (1) ODI Census Data/ DCLG (Annual) Survey of English Housing
- (2) Building Research Establishment, 2010,
- (3) DCLG (2012) National Evaluation of the Handyperson

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