South East Joint Improvement Partnership (JIP)

Think Local, Act Personal and Housing - Making the Connection (1)

Access to housing information, advice and assistance for adult social care service users

Final Report

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Executive Summary

Overview

This study examines how housing and adult social care in the South East Region can and do work together to provide housing related information, advice and signposting. It also identifies, at the strategic level, some processes and structures that adult social care can engage with, in order to influence the development of housing in support of transforming adult social care. It is one of two studies relating to housing and adult social care, the other of which concerns provision of disabled facilities in the home. Both studies were undertaken as part of the South East Region's Joint Improvement Partnership work programme and were carried out by an independent consultant.¹

Councils with Social Services Responsibilities (CSSR) have responsibility for enabling people who require support to live independently to access information and advice services about everyday services, beyond giving information only about entitlement to adult social care. Information about housing is therefore a key component of universal information and advice services that councils are putting in place. Housing is also seen as a “universal service”, which makes a vital contribution to health and social care by helping disabled and older people to maintain independence and promoting health and wellbeing.

Local Housing Authorities (LHAs)² are expected to assess and plan for the housing needs of their area, make provision for the housing needs of people with support needs, address homelessness and improve poor condition private housing. However, there is no statutory duty placed upon LHAs to provide a general housing advice service and public funding to provide new affordable housing and improve existing homes for older and disabled people is becoming increasingly limited. Furthermore, a policy tension exists between the policy of providing care and support to people in their own (often family sized) home and the overall shortage of housing – particularly homes for social rent.

The study reviews the developing policy context, summarises the key strategic planning processes and mechanisms that relate to housing, and goes on to define and describe the main ways in which housing support is provided, and a wider range of ways in which people can be supported to live. The essential role of information and advice is highlighted.

An important part of the study entailed carrying out survey work with a range of housing and social care professionals in the South East, in order to build a picture of developing practice across localities within the region (see below). This survey work

¹ Catherine Stubbings, Celandine Strategic Housing

² Housing is a responsibility of unitary and second tier (district) authorities. Unitary councils are therefore responsible for both housing and adult social care. In two tier areas, shire counties are responsible for adult social care (Councils with Social Services Responsibilities) and districts are the Local Housing Authority.
was undertaken prior to the publication of *Think Local Act Personal*, the successor to *Putting People First* (PPF). However, the importance of housing continues to be recognised as a key element in transforming adult social care and the findings of the study therefore remain relevant. As far as possible, the study has taken account of the Coalition Government’s developing policy, which places housing in a firmly localist context. A summary of the housing aspects of the Localism Bill has been included.

**Summary of Key Findings**

Key findings, case studies and resources identified through a survey of housing and social care professionals in the South East are set out to support service improvement. Survey responses highlighted four key themes:

- LHA awareness of Transforming Adult Social Care (TASC) and Putting People First
- How CSSRs and LHAs can work together
- How information and advice are provided to service users and professionals
- How joint working can contribute to the personalisation of housing-related services.

Within these themes, a summary of the key findings from research carried out with the participating local authorities are set out below, with the full findings reported in section three.

**LHAs' Awareness of Transforming Adult Social Care (TASC) and PPF/Think Local, Act Personal**

Awareness within LHAs of Putting People First and how adult social care is being transformed varied considerably across the South East.

A small number of LHAs surveyed were well informed about PPF and are developing sophisticated partnership initiatives with adult social care to open up new opportunities to service users.

Housing officers in district councils tended to be less familiar with PPF than their counterparts in unitary authorities. In general, housing officers had an appreciation of the concept of personalisation, but for some this was associated solely with Personal Budgets, rather than all the PPF domains (social capital, universal services, prevention & early intervention, choice and control).

**How CSSRs and LHAs Can Work Together**

Awareness of the housing needs of adult social care service users appears to be most well developed where Supporting People has influenced joint working to commission support services. Joint working has most commonly taken place in
developing Choice Based Letting schemes and commissioning Home Improvement Agencies (see below).

Engagement between housing organisations and adult social care staff appears to take place in a range of ways. This can be by ASC support for an individual service user seeking advice on their housing options, or collaboration on capital projects or service development.

Respondents from several LHAs indicated that they have more effective working relationships with Children and Families' Teams and that this way of working could potentially be replicated with Adult Social Care.

No evidence was found that joint working was more effective within unitary authorities.

Some respondents commented that commissioners of supported accommodation do not always have a good understanding of what constitutes appropriate quality and standards of accommodation or suitability of provider. Linked with this, adult social care staff and voluntary organisations were thought to need access to up to date information about costs, and rights and responsibilities associated with different types of tenure.

It is unclear whether the 'mainstreaming' of Supporting People (SP) funding represents a threat or an opportunity. Changes to the way supported housing services are funded may enable support and advice services to be reconfigured to use resources more effectively. However, some respondents were concerned that the potential loss of dedicated SP teams may lead to a dilution of knowledge and expertise.

How Advice and Information Are Provided to Service Users and Professionals

LHAs rarely give strategic priority to the universal provision of housing information and advice. Information and advice provision tends to be focussed on areas of specific responsibility such as homelessness, adaptations for older and disabled people and accessing affordable housing.

Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) are an important source of information and advice for some (but not all) older people, including those who fund their own care and would not consider approaching the local authority.

Local services do not typically bring together the full range of housing, care and finance options for older people. FirstStop makes this link at a national level and provides directories of retirement accommodation, but as a relatively new service is not widely known (see Case Study 5).

Information on the financial aspects of different housing options, such as equity release loans or downsizing to release capital in older age, is rarely provided by LHAs, possibly because of the stringent requirements for the provision of financial advice. However, many LHAs include links to advice agencies on their websites.
The standard and frequency of communication updating council staff and voluntary agencies on changes in housing-related issues and services varies from place to place.

**How Joint Working Can Contribute to Personalisation of Housing-Related Services**

Although the transforming adult social care agenda, and how it can be delivered, is not fully understood by some LHAs, examples have been identified of services being redesigned to support the increased personalisation of services (see case studies and resources).

Good communication through formal structures enables support for service users to be improved.

**Areas for Further Consideration and Development**

The following areas are recommended for further consideration and development:

1. Those working on transforming adult social care should seek to engage with housing colleagues to raise awareness of the objectives of *Think Local, Act Personal* and local priorities for adult social care.

2. Jointly consider the best way to integrate and make consistent the provision of information and advice on housing, within the overall development of universal information and advice services, as required by *Think Local, Act Personal*.

3. Raise awareness of existing tools to help people find out about their housing and funding options and review how well current local sources of housing information and advice meet the needs of local citizens/residents.

4. Consider the scope for joint approaches to developing preventative housing services such as:
   - Rent in advance, deposit and guarantee schemes.
   - Schemes to assist older people to move to smaller, more manageable homes.
   - Facilitating the provision of surplus public sector land for affordable housing that will appeal to older people and encourage their interest in releasing family homes.

5. Decision makers in adult social care are encouraged to investigate and take appropriate opportunities to participate in housing-related assessments, reviews, and consultations e.g.: 


- Strategic Housing Market Assessments, where adult social care may be able to contribute to robustness and value by providing demographic and/or other data relating to projected service and infrastructure needs.
- Compilation of a Local Economic Assessment, where housing and adult social care can put forward a united view of the direction housing support should take to contribute to local economic growth.
- Designating a named contact within adult social care for the Local Development Framework development, and communicating contact details to the LDF programme manager to ensure inclusion in formal planning policy consultation processes.
- Reviews of homelessness strategies and services.

6. At a regional level, consider producing an easy reference guide for adult social care staff on different forms of housing tenures and standards for adult social care professionals. This could be produced through the auspices of the Housing Learning Improvement Network.
1. **Introduction**

To explore what personalisation looks like from the perspective of housing and communities, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services published in 2010 *Personalisation - What's housing got to do with it?* [1]. This examines the steps that can be taken towards personalisation in four housing service areas and some of the organisational and cultural changes needed to transfer choice and control to individual people with support needs. This study builds on the ADASS publication by providing information and analysis designed to assist taking forward the development of housing and adult social care at the local level, both as a “universal service”, and in the specific area of information and advice.

The study reviews the national, regional and increasingly important local housing context, and demonstrates that at a policy level, the value of secure and decent housing in minimising care needs and contributing to health and well-being is recognised. A summary of key strategic planning processes and mechanisms that relate to housing is given. The report then goes on to define and describe the main forms of housing support relevant to adult social care; distinguishing between the types of specialised accommodation where support is provided and “floating support” for people living in the wider community. Also described is a wider range of ways in which people can be supported to live independently, through obtaining either a settled home, or help with improving or adapting their home. The main findings from field work carried out with housing and adult social care professionals working in various localities within the South East Region are reported, including a number of case studies of developing practice. The study also highlights a number of areas for further consideration and development.

The study was undertaken prior to the publication in January 2011 of *Think Local, Act Personal: Next Steps for Transforming Adult Social Care* [2] This partnership agreement replaces *Putting People First*, [3] and sets out areas where further action is required to transform adult social care services. Local leaders are expected to undertake two core sets of activities, which are to develop “universal approaches designed for all” and “targeted support for particular groups.” In both areas, the need to increase the range of housing options is stressed. This study therefore remains of relevance.

It should be noted that policy and practice are subject to change and development, as the Coalition Government sets its vision and direction for housing, social care and health reform. The direction of travel is to give greater control to local authorities and communities and housing is a key part of this localism agenda. At the time of publishing this report, the Localism Bill had recently been published and contains a number of housing and related provisions (see later).
There are a number of related reports that have been produced under the auspices of the Joint Improvement Partnership Programme which are as follows [4-8]:

- Providing Disabled Facilities in the Home
- Review of Extra Care Housing in the South East of England
- Signposts: Towards Universal Information and Advice
- Universal Services: Universal Matters: A Review
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in the South East: Review of Practice

The primary target audience for this report is those working in adult social care, although it is hoped that the report will also be of use to those working in the housing sector when reviewing and developing services.

2. Project Methodology

Building on the consultant’s extensive existing knowledge of housing, an initial desktop review of the developing policy context and current practice surrounding the links between housing and adult social care was undertaken. A number of questions were also posted on housing good practice forums³ and the responses used to develop a set of questions for the field work. The field work was then designed to test out the awareness of the Putting People First agenda (now Think Local, Act Personal) amongst key housing professionals, the extent of joint working with adult social care, and perceived obstacles and opportunities for taking this agenda forward. A total of 12 telephone interviews were undertaken with housing professionals working in the following localities: Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Kent, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Portsmouth and Wokingham. The research was therefore qualitative rather than quantitative. A full list of respondents can be found at Appendix 1. The information obtained is reflected in the key findings and in the case studies on developing practice in section three.

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³ Local Government Improvement & Development Strategic Housing Community of Practice, Housing Quality Network and Housing Learning and Improvement Network.
Section two

3. The Housing Legal and Policy Context

National Context

Recent housing policy has been based on meeting the needs of a growing and ageing population by encouraging a more rapid rate of house building and the creation of sustainable communities. At the same time, it has sought to address growing problems of affordability, the condition of the existing housing stock (where the most vulnerable households live in the worst conditions), climate change (25% of carbon emissions come from our homes) and providing improved access and choice of housing for older and disabled people.

Since the 2010 general election, the Coalition Government has placed great emphasis on localism, looking to local government to make and be accountable for decisions reflecting the needs of the local community. Through the rapid abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies, returning the setting of targets for house building to local authorities, housing has been placed at the centre of the Government's new approach.

Since 2008, the previous government's investment in providing new affordable housing (via the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the funding body for housing and regeneration) and improving private housing was increased to support policy priorities. National building targets, minimum standards for Decent and Lifetime Homes and the Code for Sustainable Homes were introduced. Despite this, even at the height of the house building boom, the national target of 240,000 new homes a year was never attained. As the housing market downturn and the economic recession took hold, HCA investment was able to keep a minimum level of house building going when private investment dried up. Due to the imbalance between supply and demand, the UK continues to have a market where housing can command a high price. For people who either cannot provide a sufficiently large deposit, or whose income cannot support repayment of a mortgage, housing choices are limited to the private rented or affordable housing sectors.

Affordable housing comprises:

- Social rented housing owned and managed by LHAs and housing associations (now termed Registered Providers of Social Housing)
- 'Intermediate' housing, which includes shared ownership and homes to rent at below (usually 80% of) market rents, and is intended to bridge the affordability gap between social renting and open market housing.
The price of social rented housing is controlled and provides affordable housing for people who are on low incomes and/or vulnerable. It is a rationed commodity and, here too, supply is not keeping pace with demand. Despite prevention work that has led to a dramatic reduction in homelessness, housing need is constantly rising; the number of households waiting on housing registers having reached more than 1.7 million by March 2009. The 2010 Spending Review introduced the notion that new social housing could be let at higher rents (80% of market rates) in order to generate additional revenue to fund building of affordable housing. The number of homes involved will not make any significant impact on the housing market in the short term.

*Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods*, the national strategy for housing in an ageing society, [9] sets out the challenge presented by the rate and scale of ageing in the population of England and Wales. The strategy sought to shift the focus of housing with care and support away from costly residential care by:

- Providing services enabling people to continue to occupy an independent home
- Improving advice and information for older people about their housing options.

*Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods* recognises that when people become physically disabled or their mobility becomes restricted as they grow older, their home can become unsuitable for their needs. It is well documented that people will often prefer to continue to occupy that home with its established links to family, friends and local amenities. National policy has been developing to reflect that preference, and the lower cost of enabling people to live independently at home, for as long as possible. A policy tension exists between promoting independent living (which often means that people continue to occupy homes suitable for families long after their children have grown up and moved away) and the fact that there is an acute shortage of social rented family accommodation. Older people ‘under-occupy’ family homes, particularly in the social rented sector, which could be released to relieve family homelessness and overcrowding. This point is discussed later in the report.

As has previously been mentioned, the Coalition Government wishes to give local authorities greater responsibility and accountability to local people. Plans for this are set out in the Localism Bill. Included within the Bill are a number of proposed changes to housing which are set out in the box below.
Housing and Related Provisions within the Localism Bill

Abolition of Regional Strategies, which will include regional housing strategies and targets.

Neighbourhood Planning introducing a right for communities to shape their local areas. Neighbourhood Plans will enable communities to permit development – in full or in outline – without the need for planning applications.

Community Right to Build giving local communities a power to take forward development in their area without the need to apply for planning permission, subject to meeting certain safeguards and securing 50 per cent support of the community through a referendum.

Social Housing Allocations Reform will give back to local authorities the power to determine who should qualify to go on their housing waiting list (the rules on eligibility will continue to be set centrally).

Reform of Homelessness Legislation to give local authorities the flexibility to bring the homelessness duty to an end with an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector without requiring the household’s agreement.

Social Housing Tenure Reform to enable local authority landlords to grant fixed term tenancies (minimum of two years) so that they can manage their social housing stock more flexibly.

Reform of Council Housing Finance replacing the current annual centralised system for subsidising council housing, and replace it with a locally run system. Under the new system, councils will keep their rental income and use it locally to maintain their homes.

National Homeswap Scheme requiring that social housing landlords participate in web-based mutual exchange services that enable tenants to see a wide range of properties across providers in England, in order to create more mobility within the social stock and give greater choice to tenants over where they live.

Facilitating Moves Out of the Social Rented Sector by ensuring that housing association tenants who are also members (e.g. share holders) of their landlord organisation are allowed to take up incentive schemes which facilitate moves out of the social rented sector into owner occupation.

Reform of Social Housing Regulation with the abolition of the Tenant Services Authority and transfer of its functions to the Homes and Communities Agency.

Further Information:

Localism Bill - Background Note
Regional Context

South East Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) 2008-11

The RHS sets out housing priorities for the South East, particularly in relation to affordable housing and the balance of public investment between priorities.

The RHS recognised the expansion of the ageing population, and connections between housing and health and support for vulnerable people as key challenges for the future, and committed to undertake research to develop a better understanding of the implications of the demographic challenge. Regarding the ageing population, research into the housing needs and aspirations of older people [10] and into releasing larger social rented homes [11], identified key areas for improvement in the South East.

Consultation on the draft RHS highlighted the importance of connections between housing and health issues for everyone in the region, notably disabled people, young homeless, those in overcrowded housing, and black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. The Regional Housing Board (RHB) sought to reduce health inequalities through an £80m three year programme of investment, to bring private sector homes occupied by the most vulnerable households up to a decent standard.

The consultation process also highlighted that evidence of the level of demand for housing support services in the South East was lacking. Furthermore, uncertainty about how effectively move-on accommodation was being used had implications for investment in new provision. There was a suggestion that more could be done to free up some supported housing by moving service users who no longer required it to independent accommodation, thereby reducing the amount of new supported housing that would be required.

To clarify the level of demand for accommodation-based support for vulnerable people to inform future funding decisions, research was jointly commissioned by the RHB with the Regional Supporting People Implementation Group. While waiting for that clarification, the RHS committed that at least 5% of all capital funding for affordable housing should be allocated to accommodation-based supported housing schemes. This commitment was designed to ensure that supported housing provision to meet a range of needs continued to receive some priority for funding, to provide local authorities with greater confidence that schemes would be built, and that revenue funding could be committed locally to meet scheme running costs.

Although the RHS now has no influence, as RHBs are part of the regional structure dismantled by the Coalition Government, the issues and priorities identified remain relevant, and will have to be addressed as local planning policies and housing strategies are developed based on local evidence, without a framework of regional targets and policies. A potential significant development is the setting up of Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs), replacing Regional Development Agencies. LEPs are intended as business led partnerships designed to promote growth and private

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4 The group is made up of Supporting People lead officers from local authorities in the South East Region.
sector jobs. There are seven LEPs that fall within the South East (although some of these cross current regional boundaries). They are all at an early stage of development and there is no template that they are working to. However, one of their roles may develop around strategic housing delivery, including aligning and pooling funding streams to support this.

**South East England Regional Health Strategy (RHS)**

Published in 2008, the RHS sent out a message that many health-related challenges remain in the South East, particularly among those living with chronic illnesses. Housing plays an important part in achieving the strategy's aims: sustainable development in the public sector, reduction of health inequalities in line with local targets, and promoting the independence and engagement of older people. One key action identifies housing as a means to reduce health inequality, by highlighting that regional and local housing strategies should positively address the impact that poor housing has on health by increasing the percentage of decent homes in the region. This is being delivered through the £80m programme of improvements to existing homes referred to previously.

The RHS states that many older people live in sub-standard housing, which can exacerbate certain health conditions and have a negative impact on mental health. To address this, the strategy recommends that, among other actions, local authorities consider:

- How they work with private landlords, and those living in the private rented sector, to improve standards and address fuel poverty
- Protecting older people from cold and heat-related illness
- Linking assessments conducted by housing and environmental health departments to single/common assessment processes run by health and social care agencies of vulnerable clients
- Promoting independence and health through accessible, safe and secure homes, by supporting the development of a full range of appropriate housing, to enable older people to have choices as to where to live in later life, supporting housing adaptations, assistive equipment or technology, and promoting warmth, safety and security inside and outside the home.

Making information and advice about these issues available to older people, support agencies and landlords has an important role in addressing poor health by improving the worst housing.
South East Regional Forum on Ageing (SERFA) Viewpoint

SERFA has consistently championed the importance of housing choices for older people. Workshops conducted during SERFA's Living Well in the South East conference, held in spring 2010, identified a number of solutions to help meet people's changing needs as they age:

- Finding holistic solutions to home adaptation and energy efficiency improvement backed up by clear, widely publicised information about the help available and certainty of funding. Integrated working between statutory services was seen as a key area for improvement in delivering those holistic solutions.
- The 'Total Place' approach, identifying overlap and duplication between organisations, and redesigning the way public services are planned and delivered to avoid these, was seen as a means of encouraging health investment into home improvement.
- Where the preferred option is for a move to a more suitable home, financial, practical and emotional support were recognised as essential to achieving a successful move. The conference recognised that the supply of attractive and suitable alternative homes is currently limited.
Local Context

Local authority strategic housing role

As previously stated, housing is the responsibility of unitary and second tier (district) councils. LHAs have statutory responsibilities to provide advice and assistance to people at risk of becoming homeless, and to develop a housing strategy to set out how housing needs and poor conditions will be met. Housing advice services tend to focus on homelessness, access to social rented housing, and older and disabled owner-occupiers and private tenants living in unsuitable conditions. There is no general obligation to provide information or advice about housing.

Local Housing Strategy

Development of a local housing strategy is a statutory requirement under the Housing Act 2004. The strategy will usually be reviewed annually, and a new strategy produced every three to five years, as evidence of local need requires updating. LHA are currently required to:

- Assess and plan for current and future housing needs of the local population
- Make the best use of existing housing stock
- Plan and facilitate new supply
- Plan and commission housing support services, which link homes to support, and other services that people need to live in them
- Keep the housing conditions in their area under review, identifying any action that may need to be taken to rectify them
- Have working partnerships that secure effective housing and neighbourhood management

In relation to housing conditions, the LHA has the power to take enforcement action to address defined risks to the health or safety of an actual or potential occupier, arising from a deficiency in the dwelling.

Thus, a local housing strategy will typically set out policy priorities and actions to address:

- The provision of new housing to meet housing need and affordability (including vulnerable and other groups identified as having specific needs e.g. older people, Gypsies and Travellers, young vulnerable people, people from a BME background)
- Housing quality and design
- Support needs
- Stock condition (all tenures)
- Regeneration
- Empty homes

It may be supplemented by voluntary sub-strategies relevant to the characteristics of the area e.g. older people, diversity and equality, homelessness (see below), private sector housing.
Statutory guidance [12] encourages local authorities to take full and proper account of housing as part of the strategic vision for the area. It indicates that, where possible, housing and homelessness strategies should be incorporated within Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS). Housing and homelessness strategies are expected to reflect SCS priorities. The future of these working arrangements will need to be kept under review in light of the Government’s plan for changing the NHS, particularly the establishment of Health and Wellbeing Boards in localities.

Housing strategies are not required to comply with a prescribed format or timescale, but should:

- Fully reflect the wider vision of the authority and its partners
- Reflect a clear and evidenced approach
- Provide a strong focus on how partners will deliver their commitments

The guidance emphasises that housing activity can help to deliver improved services (including social services, health, education), a safe environment, accessible transport, a strong sense of community, and decent homes at a price people can afford.

An LHA strategic housing group will often exist to review, develop, implement and monitor delivery of the local housing strategy action plan. A group is usually led by the LHA with the CSSR, health, housing association and other provider partners as members.

**Local Investment Plans**

LHA partnerships have either developed, or are in the process of developing Local Investment Plans (LIPs), setting out their ambitions to deliver homes and regenerate communities through all available sources of investment. LIPs are the first stage in developing a closer relationship (the Single Conversation) between local authorities and the HCA. In most cases, the LIP is developed by a group of local authorities within a county or housing market area.

LIPs provide the HCA with an overview of investment requirements for the Comprehensive Spending Review and demonstrate which LHA partnerships have clear plans in place. Those plans will include housing to meet the needs of people with support needs, on low incomes, or who have reached retirement age. For the future, this is likely to be the best vehicle for alignment of capital and revenue funding for new developments providing housing with support.

**Local Economic Assessments**

Upper tier (county and unitary) authorities have a statutory obligation to develop Local Economic Assessments (LEAs) to set the context and direction for local economic growth and future investment. Official guidance requires that evidence of housing supply and affordability issues form a key part of the LEA. Wider social and environmental issues, including additional housing-related issues, can be included as appropriate to local circumstances. In two-tier areas the LEA authority has a duty to consult any district councils (which are the LHAs) within its area and districts have a corresponding duty to participate.
Local housing authority role in improving housing conditions

As indicated above, LHAs have specific duties to review housing conditions, to take action to rectify poor conditions, provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and other, discretionary, financial assistance.

The regional role in determining the level of public investment available to improve private sector housing ends in 2011. The amount of funding available will be allocated by central government, with decisions on investment programmes made locally. Discussions should be starting now to develop the approach for the future.

Homelessness

Homelessness legislation establishes a clear requirement for joint working between housing and social services authorities. The Homelessness Act 2002 gave LHAs the power to carry out a homelessness review for their district, formulate and publish a strategy based on the results of the review, and publish a new homelessness strategy - based on the results of a further review - within a period of five years.

The social services authority (a primary tier authority) is required to assist in the development of the strategy, and take the homelessness strategy into account in the exercise of their functions in relation to that district. The Homelessness Code of Guidance for local authorities, issued by the Secretary of State, provides statutory guidance on local authority housing and social services statutory functions in respect of people who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness [13].

The housing role of the local planning system

Planning is also the responsibility of unitary and second tier authorities. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the local planning authority must keep under review the matters which may be expected to affect the development of their area, or the planning of its development, including the principal purposes for which land is used in the area and the size, composition and distribution of the population of the area.

The local planning authority (LPA) must prepare and maintain a local development scheme, known as a Local Development Framework (LDF). This consists of a core strategy and a series of more detailed policy documents relating to specific issues, including housing supply and affordable housing. LPAs have a statutory obligation to consult widely on the LDF and on individual policies. The timetable for the LDF process, including a formal consultation period, will be publicised on the LPA's website.

LDFs had to comply with levels of housing provision set out in Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS), until June 2010 when the Government ruled that RSS should no longer be taken into consideration. A new approach to local planning policy development, including greater freedom for local authorities to decide the level of housing growth, is expected to emerge. The Comprehensive Spending Review in
October 2010 confirmed that financial incentives will be available to encourage councils to support housing development, including a New Homes Bonus, which from April 2011 will match fund the Council Tax on every new home for each of the following six years. However, there is no certainty that development will be sufficient to meet the housing needs of service users or to make an impact on affordability.

**Strategic Housing Market Assessments**

Planning policy also has an important role in regeneration and place-making. *Lifetime Homes Lifetime Neighbourhoods* illustrates the benefits to older people of good place-making, making neighbourhoods accessible to the whole community. An essential component of the evidence gathering process, for both housing strategy and planning policy development, is the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). Local authority housing and planning officers, located within a single local housing market, work together to undertake the SHMA, which identifies key needs, drivers and opportunities for a five year period. The SHMA process includes assessing the need for affordable housing in the area and makes provision for stakeholder consultation, to which CSSRs can expect to be invited.

There is a two-way relationship between housing strategies and spatial plans, which will influence and be influenced by the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), developed by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The latter usually comprises local authorities in partnership with representatives from the health, education and business communities.

Many LSPs have established housing sub groups to develop and deliver the housing priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy. These often function on a county-wide or housing market area, which may be quite closely aligned with the geographical responsibility of the CSSR. Typical topics of interest at this level would be:

- Provision of/support for use of surplus public sector land (possibly at below market value) for housing that meets shared objectives (such as extra care housing and independent affordable housing for older people)
- Commissioning of Home Improvement Agencies services across LHA boundaries, to deliver benefits for service users and economies of scale e.g. through common policies for use of adapted homes and equipment, and setting consistent standards and targets for the delivery of DFGs.

SHMAs should also inform Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and local Health and Wellbeing Boards, as these become established.
Defining housing related support services

This section summarises the principles that underpin the concept of housing support and describes the types of support commonly available in specialised housing and for people living independently in the community. It also outlines how housing support services are provided, and comments on changes emerging following the May 2010 general election.

Commissioning guidance [14] sets out pre-requisites for a good quality of life and describes circumstances where this may be difficult to achieve for some individuals. To experience a good quality of life, people need a home:

- Where they can use all the facilities safely and without difficulty
- Where they can go about daily activities without feeling at risk from other people
- That is affordable to rent or buy and to run
- Warm, dry and well-maintained
- Where they can welcome friends and family and maintain social contact and other activities
- In an area that is convenient for the services and people they want to contact

Achieving these requirements can be difficult for individuals in certain circumstances including:

- Mental or physical health problems/ disabilities which affect individuals' day to-day activities within the home
- Services which are inaccessible due to location and/or their abilities (e.g. mobility, transport or anxiety)
- Insufficient income, information or skills to maintain the fabric of the home, manage housing and other costs, or fulfil tenancy requirements
- An individual is ejected from their home or leaves due to conflict with, or fear of, other people in the home
- The neighbourhood is perceived to be unsafe

Housing support services help people to overcome those difficulties. The aim is to enable people to stay in their homes and live independently, if possible, or to secure alternative housing when their support needs cannot be met in their current home.

Types of housing support

Service users may live in specialised accommodation where support is provided by staff attached to the accommodation. Alternatively, people in need of support who live in any type of accommodation (except sheltered or supported housing where they would already be receiving housing related support) can receive 'floating' support. Older people are the largest group of service users. The main forms of specialised housing are described below.
Sheltered Housing
Sheltered housing, which is available for social rent, shared and private ownership - also known as leasehold retirement housing. Models vary, but as a minimum, accommodation is available to people aged over 50, and will provide individual self contained flats with access to an emergency call service and some communal facilities such as a residents' lounge and laundry room. Some schemes still provide bedsit flats and some still have shared facilities, such as bathrooms.

Tenants of social rented sheltered schemes run by local authorities or housing associations will pay a relatively low rent, a service charge for additional services provided specifically for that home plus support charges for the alarm and any on-site warden service. Tenants on low incomes can apply for housing benefit (HB) to cover rent and service charges. For historic reasons, Supporting People (SP) funding usually meets the cost of housing related support and emergency call alarms. Sheltered and retirement housing that meets modern standards continues to have an important role in prolonging independence with a low level of support. A checklist for adult care staff has been published to improve joint working with sheltered housing providers, help deliver personalisation and well being, and enable an organisation to assess progress in making the most of the potential of sheltered housing [15].

Extra Care Housing
Extra care housing can be flexible in tenure. Models exist of social rented, shared ownership, privately rented or owned, or a combination of these tenures. Models of provision vary but are based on the principle that each resident has independent, self-contained accommodation with access to a greater range of facilities than in sheltered accommodation, and a level of care and support that can be varied as an individual's health and mobility change.

Supported Accommodation
- Long and short term accommodation based supported housing for people with specific support needs e.g. associated with learning disability or mental health.
- Hostels providing short term accommodation for homeless individuals and services to help them into a more settled way of life.
- Foyers to help young people into work, by providing independent accommodation and advice on skills for life and work, while undertaking an agreed programme of training.
- Women's refuges providing temporary accommodation for women and their children who leave the family home due to domestic abuse.

Floating Support
Floating support available to people living in independent accommodation can include help with:

- Understanding tenancy or occupancy agreement
- Setting up home and resettlement
- Managing money, budgeting and applying for benefits
- Identifying training and job opportunities
- Dealing with other agencies
- Taking up daytime activities including training, education and employment
- Getting on with neighbours
Staying safe at home
Life and social skills

Many of these support services have been provided through the SP programme, which was designed to provide coherent funding and policy for housing support to the most vulnerable in society, including older people, people with mental health problems and learning disabilities, and people who are vulnerable in other ways. Independence and Opportunity, the national strategy for Supporting People, [15] announced that a number of grants, including SP, would be pooled into a single non-ring-fenced Area Based Grant (ABG), designed to allow flexibility to more effectively respond to local need and deliver more efficient services that can be tailored to meet the needs of their users.

The SP administration grant was un-ring-fenced in April 2009 and abolished retrospectively (from April 2010) in June 2010. The main grant has been un-ring-fenced and placed within ABG from April 2010. How the funding is used in future will be for local authorities to decide. The integration into ABG can be regarded as a threat or an opportunity. On one hand, floating support services could be decommissioned and would no longer be available for vulnerable households. This could lead to increases in homelessness and rough sleeping. On the other hand, continued funding of floating support from ABG offers potential for a more integrated and personalised approach to meeting need. The interconnection between housing, support, and funding - together with the partnership structures to deliver the SP programme - makes SP the key forum where support needs can be articulated, priorities and alternative approaches discussed, and support services developed and adapted.

Levels of support needs

As previously mentioned, work has been completed to map the nature and extent of support needs in the South East and to indicate what proportion of service users will require specialised housing.

This work was done in two stages. Firstly a methodology was produced by HGO Consultancy covering the estimation of the need for housing support services for non-older groups in the South East, and a report was produced in April 2010. As a subsequent piece of work HGO worked with Housing Vision to produce an analysis of the need for a range of housing and support services for the over 65 population. In both cases the methodology has been designed so that local authorities can re-run the methodology using their own local assumptions.5

5 Details of the two reports and the methodology used can be found at the Housing Vision website.
Sources of housing support

LHAs commission and provide accommodation where support is available. They also work with SP - a primary tier responsibility - to commission and provide a range of support services.

Support in accessing housing

For people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or wishing to apply for social rented accommodation because they cannot afford to rent or buy privately, LHAs provide advice about options for access to housing.

Sources of advice and information about the private rented sector are limited. The previous Government's proposals to improve choice and quality in the sector, by requiring registration of private landlords and establishment of a national advice service, have not been pursued by the Coalition Government.

Local authorities often operate or participate in local rent deposit schemes for people who have low incomes, or are vulnerable to obtain settled accommodation in the private rented sector. Under these schemes, the deposit required at the commencement of a tenancy will be paid directly to the landlord on the tenant's behalf by the scheme operator. The value of the deposit is subsequently repaid by the tenant, usually by instalments. These schemes can be vital in enabling people to move on from the supported housing sector, releasing that accommodation for other vulnerable households.

A rent guarantee scheme operates on a similar principle, but without any money changing hands at the outset. Where a landlord is reluctant to accept a prospective tenant for reasons such as lack of references or a poor credit history, the scheme operator will guarantee to pay up to a specified sum of unpaid rent to landlord if the tenant fails to make payment. This allows time for support to be put in place to enable the tenant to get back on track. Guarantee schemes are backed by a number of partners who all commit to pay a relatively small agreed sum if required. Rent deposit and guarantee schemes are very cost effective ways to stabilise the housing situation of a vulnerable person.

Access to social rented housing is via a local authority housing register. Vacant homes are allocated to registered households according to need. By law, the LHA’s allocations policy, including criteria for needs assessment, must be publicly available. The majority of LHAs now operate Choice Based Lettings (CBL), which involves advertising all available homes and inviting bids from interested applicants on the housing register. The bidder with the greatest level of assessed housing need will be offered the tenancy. CBL is intended to be more equitable, transparent and to give the applicant more choice and control. It should enable a more integrated approach to housing and support, as the same degree of choice is available for everyone, but with extra support provided to vulnerable people in using the service.
This approach creates greater transparency in the letting process and should ensure that vulnerable people are not excluded from suitable housing.

In many areas there is a particular shortage of larger social rented homes, leaving many families living in overcrowded conditions or in temporary accommodation. The shortage could, at least partially, be alleviated by encouraging and supporting older people to downsize from family-sized homes that, as their children have moved away, have become too large for their physical needs. Although many local authorities offer financial incentives to downsize, practice in this area is not fully developed. Areas for further development include:

- Linking downsizing policies to developing new affordable housing specifically for older people
- Priority for downsizing moves within CBL schemes

**Housing Benefit**

Housing Benefit (HB) plays a key role in enabling people on low incomes to retain a settled home. The June 2010 Budget introduced provisions for housing benefit to be linked to family size from April 2013. This would mean that older tenants occupying social rented homes larger than they need, and who are eligible for full HB (i.e. currently paying no rent), would have to pay a proportion of their rent themselves. Older people could be in the position of seeking to move to a smaller home out of financial necessity rather than choice (thereby adding a fresh dimension to the policy tension outlined earlier). The 2010 Spending Review introduced the possibility that social tenancies should no longer be for life. This proposal will be the subject of Government consultation and is part of the Localism Bill described earlier.

Where CBL has not been implemented, and the local authority operates a 'traditional' allocations scheme based on awards of points for different priority needs, a vacant home will be allocated to the applicant with the highest level of assessed need. The applicant can express some general preferences about the type and location of home for which they wish to be considered, but has very little other opportunity to exercise choice or control over the housing offered to them.

**Support for independent living at home**

In the South East, private rented housing and homes occupied by older homeowners (who are often 'asset rich but cash poor' and cannot afford to repair or improve the home) are in the poorest condition [17]. LHAs play a vital role in managing the safety, suitability and condition of private sector housing and can exercise a range of powers to improve conditions. They are responsible for:

- Enforcement of the duty to ensure (in response to complaints) that homes are improved where the occupier's health is at risk due to slips, trips, falls, excess cold and other hazards
• Financial assistance policy, providing loans and grants for repairs and home improvements to people on low incomes

• Administration of the Disabled Facilities Grant and aids and adaptations, to enable people with mobility problems to remain living at home

• Encouraging improvements in residential energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty through home insulation schemes

Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) and handy person services play an important part in providing services to deliver the LHA’s private sector responsibilities and support independent living for older and vulnerable people.

HIAs are an important source of advice and information for older people, and often have a reputation or position in the community that enables them to support those who would not consider approaching the local authority. They are sometimes known as Care and Repair or Staying Put Schemes. Many have been established as independent organisations for many years, and are known and respected in their communities for their independent status. More recently, many have been commissioned by local authorities, often through SP, to fulfil LHA private sector housing responsibilities, and integrate delivery of cross-agency services with the focus on the user. They can take a holistic view of a person’s needs and provide a range of services, which may include:

• Home visits to give advice about any problems with the condition of the home
• Setting out the options available
• Help to obtain other support services
• Checking for any entitlement to financial help
• Helping with getting home improvement and adaptation work done
• Liaison with others who might be involved in the work, such as council grants officers and occupational therapists
• Additional services such as a handyperson to carry out small jobs around the home, help with gardening, or coming home from hospital
• Help to make the home more energy-efficient

The Government’s legislative programme for 2010/11 includes an Energy Security and Green Economy Bill. This is designed to promote home energy efficiency with incentives to householders to save energy through a ‘pay as you save’ approach, based on the Conservative Party election manifesto pledge to make loans of £6,500 available for all households to spend on the energy efficiency measures most suitable for their needs. The proposed scheme will be of particular benefit to older people on low incomes who experience fuel poverty and are most at risk from excess cold.
Financial support to sustain a mortgage or tenancy

LHA housing advice and options services can help people affected by the housing market downturn and the recession. The Mortgage Rescue Scheme was introduced in 2008 to help the most vulnerable homeowners to remain in their home. This can assist families with dependent children and older people and vulnerable groups who can no longer afford their mortgage repayments, who would be entitled to homelessness assistance if repossessed, and where their lender was actively seeking possession of the property through the courts. In July 2010, the housing minister introduced tighter financial criteria for the scheme.

Local authority benefits services assess and administer HB entitlement (for social tenants) and Local Housing Allowance ((LHAlwce) - the equivalent benefit for private sector tenants). People considering renting in the private sector can request an advance determination from the benefit service to help them decide if they can afford the rent, before committing themselves to a legally binding tenancy agreement.

Proposals to reduce the maximum value of LHAlwce were already under discussion prior to May 2010. The June 2010 Budget capped the maximum allowance for each property size and restricted the allowance for homes with more than four bedrooms to the maximum for a four-bedroom home from 2011/12. The Budget also introduced changes to HB which may assist people with support needs:

- An additional bedroom allowance for disabled people who need a live-in carer
- Discretionary housing payments (where local authorities have discretion to pay HB/LHAlwce above and beyond normal entitlement) increase by £40m from 2012

Other sources of support

Other organisations and/or services that commission or provide support to enable people to live independently include:

- Post-hospital discharge housing support teams and probation services, which have explicit roles in resettling people into the community.
- Citizens Advice Bureau and community legal services, who offer help in claiming benefits, debt and housing cost management and asserting legal rights around tenancies.
- PCTs can currently commission remote health monitoring equipment to enable people to manage long-term health conditions safely.
- The police and fire service, who can offer advice on improving home security and safety. The police also work closely with local authorities through Community Safety Partnerships to tackle anti social behaviour.

Protocols between agencies can support vulnerable people in a holistic way, ensuring that all agencies can use relevant information to tailor support to a service user's needs.
4. Current and Developing Practice

This study’s survey was designed to establish how CSSRs and LHAs work together to deliver housing-related information, advice and signposting, in the context of “universal information and advice” being regarded as an important element of the transformation of adult social care. Key findings from survey responses are set out below, illustrated by details of developing practice and sources of additional information. As many of the case studies identified relate to more than one of the key issues discussed, they are grouped together at the end of the section.

LHAs’ awareness of Transforming Adult Social Care (TASC) and Putting People First

Key findings

- Awareness within LHAs of Putting People First and how adult social care is being transformed varied considerably across the South East.

- A small number of LHAs surveyed were well informed about PPF and are developing sophisticated partnership initiatives with adult social care to open up new opportunities to service users.

- Housing officers in district councils tended to be less familiar with PPF than their counterparts in unitary authorities. In general, housing officers had an appreciation of the concept of personalisation, but for some this was associated solely with Personal Budgets, rather than all the PPF domains (social capital, universal services, prevention & early intervention, choice and control).

- One respondent reported that the county council had not engaged actively with LHAs in this area, taking the view that ‘the LHAs are the housing experts’, and can provide sound advice in their field of expertise without CSSR input. There is a risk that such an approach can result in gaps in the range of advice and information provided, due to misplaced expectations of what is available. In this instance, it was assumed that the district councils provide a more comprehensive housing advice and information service than is usually the case. One district within the county concerned indicated that its advice service is tailored to responding to individuals who are homeless, or at risk of becoming so.
Resources

CSSRs and LHAs can signpost older people to HOOP (Housing Options for Older People), a self-appraisal tool designed to support older people in making complex decisions about housing equity and the future nature of the accommodation they wish to live in as they grow older and less active. Presented in the form of a questionnaire, it acts as a framework to analyse an individual’s housing and financial situation objectively, suggesting options and who to contact. Further telephone advice can be obtained by mailing the completed questionnaire to the Elderly Accommodation Counsel. HOOP can be downloaded from: [HOOP Self Appraisal Tool](#).

How CSSRs and LHAs can work together

Key findings

- Awareness of the housing needs of adult social care service users appears to be most well developed where Supporting People has influenced joint working to commission support services. Joint working has most commonly taken place in developing Choice Based Letting schemes and commissioning Home Improvement Agencies (see below).

- The main area of joint work to date has been to establish mechanisms to enable service users to access social rented housing via Choice Based Lettings (CBL). Most LHAs now operate a CBL scheme for the allocation of vacant social rented homes. Vacant homes are advertised for a specified period of time during which applicants can express their interest in any suitable vacancy. In developing schemes, CSSRs were consulted on how service users could be supported to have fair access to the bidding system. Practice varies as to whether families and carers are encouraged to assist service users to make bids, or whether assistance is provided by LHAs or care and support workers.

- In some LHAs, a small proportion of vacancies are allocated outside the CBL scheme for purposes including assistance to applicants with specific needs. In Kent, a more inclusive policy has been developed, which enables people with a learning disability and people mental health needs to participate in the scheme and have access to the full range of available vacancies.

- Engagement between housing organisations and adult social care staff appears to take place in a range of ways. This can be by ASC support for an individual service user seeking advice on their housing options, or collaboration on capital projects or service development. For example, Portsmouth City Council's multi-disciplinary team established to commission Extra Care housing is led by ASC.
• Respondents from several LHAs indicated that they have more effective working relationships with Children and Families' Teams and that this way of working could potentially be replicated with Adult Social Care (see resources below).

• Responses from the two unitary authorities in the survey showed that ASC and housing teams had close working relationships and shared priorities arising from common aims and budgets. Drivers for engagement were cited as: the existence of a single LSP, size of organisation, a single set of corporate priorities. However, unitary authorities were not alone in having more developed approaches to information and signposting. Other drivers for joint working include externally identified poor performance, economies of scale, individuals with vision, clear links with the corporate centre, LSP and/or sub-regional strategic objectives. Respondents did not report *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods* or the HAPP report on choice and design in housing for older people as specific drivers for their work. [18]

• Some respondents commented that commissioners of supported accommodation do not always have a good understanding of what constitutes appropriate quality and standards of accommodation, or suitability of provider. Linked with this, adult social care staff and voluntary organisations were thought to need access to up to date information about costs, rights and responsibilities associated with different types of tenure, including private renting and less common housing ‘products’ such as extra care and shared ownership.

• It is unclear whether the 'mainstreaming' of Supporting People (SP) funding represents a threat or an opportunity. Changes to the way supported housing services are funded may enable support and advice services to be reconfigured to use resources more effectively. However, some respondents were concerned that the potential loss of dedicated SP teams may lead to a dilution of knowledge and expertise.

**Resources**

As stated above, several respondents suggested that joint working could be modelled on working arrangements with Children and Families teams such as Oxfordshire joint housing team for 16/17 year olds. Case Study 3 provides a summary of the team's working arrangements and achievements.
How advice and information are provided to service users and professionals

Key findings

- Commissioning of HIAs has also been a feature of joint working. Many HIAs in the South East have a remit from commissioning authorities to make a holistic assessment of a service user's needs and to signpost or refer them to a range of services. HIAs are considered in more detail in this study’s companion report on the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).

- Councils in East Sussex are participating in a project with FirstStop (see case study 5) to provide information and advice on housing and care and support options to older people via a specialist telephone advice service. Initiatives such as FirstStop East Sussex are overcoming barriers such as locating integrated information about housing and financial options faced by older people funding their own support.

- Housing advice services operated or commissioned by LHAs tend to focus primarily on preventing and managing homelessness. LHAs will also make information available about accessing affordable (i.e. social rented and shared ownership) housing owned by the council or local housing associations. Information or advice about other local housing options for people who pay for their own support and/or housing is less readily available.

- Local services do not typically bring together the full range of housing, care and finance options for older people. FirstStop makes this link at a national level and provides directories of retirement accommodation, but as a relatively new service is not widely known.

- Information on the financial aspects of different housing options, such as equity release loans or downsizing to release capital in older age, is rarely provided by LHAs, possibly because of the stringent requirements for the provision of financial advice. However, many LHAs include links to advice agencies on their websites.

- The standard and frequency of communication updating council staff and voluntary agencies on changes in housing-related issues and services varies from place to place.
Developing Practice

In Oxford a range of mechanisms are used to keep partners up to date with housing matters which include:

- Housing officers meet quarterly with the partnership of the nine largest housing associations working in the city
- Surgeries are held with the youth offending agency
- A group of voluntary agencies dealing with single homeless people meets quarterly
- Housing Benefit voluntary sector liaison group meetings ensure that a range of advice agencies have up to date information.

In commissioning a new service to deliver DFGs, East Sussex County Council has specified that the service provider will be required to work with people who will fund their own home adaptations. The service will focus on providing a wider range of advice about choices of equipment, contractor and financial options than the traditional model of providing advice on obtaining an OT assessment and applying for DFG.

A housing advice directory is circulated widely and regularly to agencies in Aylesbury Vale District Council's area.

Resources

Hampshire Home Choice Scheme User Guide is designed to help people making bids through the CBL scheme operated by Winchester, Havant and East Hampshire councils. The guide is presented in a step by step, partly pictorial format that is clear and easy to use, accessed via the below link:

Hampshire Home Choice Scheme User Guide

How joint working can contribute to the personalisation of housing related services

Although the transforming adult social care agenda, and how it can be delivered, is not fully understood by some LHA’s, examples have been identified of services being redesigned to support the increased personalisation of services (see case studies and resources).

Good communication through formal structures enables support for service users to be improved. For example, in Wokingham, the ASC team maintains awareness of the needs of service users with learning disabilities and communicates this to housing officers in a timely fashion. This enables support to be provided in accessing the housing register with appropriate priority.
Case Studies

Case Study 1 - Wokingham Council helps vulnerable people find homes in the private sector

Housing and Adult Social Care have developed an interest-free loan scheme to assist vulnerable residents to pay rent in advance. Without such a scheme, service users on low incomes and benefits would be unable to obtain a tenancy in the private sector. The scheme was developed by Wokingham's Housing Needs team with support and funding from Supporting People. The driver for ASC was the potential to prevent homelessness among service users, particularly young men with mental health and drug and alcohol problems.

The council has also developed an accommodation-finder service which is linked to floating support. Like the rent in advance scheme, this provides service users with an easier route to settled accommodation.

Further information:
James Burgess
Commissioning and Development Manager Community Care
Wokingham Borough Council
Tel: 0118 9746235
james.burgess@wokingham.gov.uk
Case Study 2 - Joint Working in Kent to Expand Local Housing Options

Kent County Council has worked in partnership with Local Housing Authorities and housing providers at a strategic level to expand the housing options for vulnerable adults. Developments include:

- Advice and information is made available in accessible formats for people with learning disability to enable them to live in mainstream housing
- Social rented homes are made accessible to Learning Disability and Mental Health service users through the Choice Based Lettings scheme, with support from ASC/LHA staff
- 'Avoid the void' - a joint venture with the National Landlords' Association has promoted the benefits to landlords of letting to vulnerable tenants
- Extra care housing is being provided in partnership with Housing 21 with Private Finance Initiative funding
- Adult Social Care, Local Housing Authorities and Supporting People officers work in partnership to commission supported housing and shared ownership options for vulnerable people.

Further Information:
Claire Martin
Head of Supporting People
Kent County Council
Tel: 01622 221179
Claire.martin@kent.gov.uk
Case Study 3 - Lessons from effective joint working between Children and Families' Teams and Housing - Oxfordshire Joint Housing Team

Prior to 2006, the Children, Young People and Families Directorate (CYPFD), the Supporting People Partnership and the five LHAs all provided separate funding for services to support homeless and vulnerable young people in Oxfordshire.

It was recognised that streamlining funding and procurement across different divisions had the potential to prevent and reduce youth homelessness. The Joint Housing Team was created to review services and funding arrangements.

Oxfordshire’s Children’s Social Care, the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and Oxford City Council funded a post to manage this new team and to start building relationships across the different departments that deal with homelessness and vulnerable young people in Oxfordshire. Funding from seven separate sources was pooled in a joint commissioning process to develop a clear pathway of services for young people, replacing separate services for vulnerable young people aged 16 to 24, looked after children aged 16 to 18, and young people leaving care.

Key features of the service pathway are a single point of referral, emergency, short-term provision focused on assessing needs, and longer-term supported housing. In addition, there are specific services for young asylum seekers and young people who present a high risk because of their multiple needs.

Effective joint commissioning of services was achieved by setting out clear objectives in a partnership agreement, clear project management guidelines for such work, including structures for projects to gain support from senior managers. A project team monitored progress and reported regularly to a steering group.

Challenges were addressed by: robust and transparent needs-matching analysis, ensuring decisions were consensual before moving on to the next stage, clear and open discussion about use of funding, and changes to services to ensure issues were understood and resolved. Success was attributed in part to the employment of a dedicated project manager.

Outcomes: the Joint Housing Team's approach enabled a 20% efficiency saving to be made while maintaining the level of provision in the county. Wider, less quantifiable outcomes include increased trust and a positive effect on relationships between departments and authorities.

Further information:
John Terry
Joint Housing team
01865 323103
John.Terry@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

A more detailed case study can be downloaded from the Commissioning Support Programme website below: [Strategic commissioning of housing for vulnerable young people (Oxfordshire)](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)
Case Study 4 - Structures enabling effective engagement and joint working

In Wokingham the Housing Needs Manager sits on the Commissioning Group of the Health and Wellbeing Group of the LSP (which has replaced the former SP Commissioning Body).

The county and district councils in East Sussex have well developed mechanisms to take forward PPF priorities for housing. The Head of Supporting People acts as a communication channel between the PPF implementation team in ASC and housing. Within the implementation team a subgroup is responsible for communications and marketing. The implementation team's work links to specific actions in the county's Older People's Strategy relating to advice and information. Elected members are involved and informed through a Strategic Forum (which has its origins in SP). Strategic officer groups seek to address the challenges of cross-authority working, such as inconsistencies between individual districts' policies.

In Kent, key structures have been established, which have been described as fundamental to effective working in partnership on housing, SP and social care issues. The Kent Housing Group (KHG), a forum for social housing organisations in Kent, encourages discussion around best practice in housing amongst Chief Housing Officers of local authorities and Chief Executives of housing associations. The Kent Joint Policy and Planning Board for Housing (JPPB) is a strategic partnership between Health, Housing and Social Care. The Board incorporates representation from the LHAs, SP, East Kent PCT, Social Services, Children Families and Education, and a range of wider stakeholders. The JPPB provides the forum where strategic issues requiring joint working between Health, Housing and Social Care can be raised and measures to address them developed. By employing coordinators, KHG and the JPPB have had the capacity to implement innovative work across the housing spectrum.

Further information:
James Burgess
Commissioning and Development Manager Community Care
Wokingham Borough Council
Tel: 0118 9746235
james.burgess@wokingham.gov.uk

Sue Dean
Head of Supporting People
Adult Social Care Department
East Sussex County Council
sue.dean@eastsussex.gov.uk
Tel: 01273 482805

John Littlemore
Head of Housing and Community Safety
Maidstone District Council
Tel: 01622 602207
JohnLittlemore@maidstone.gov.uk
Case Study 5 - East Sussex Council and FirstStop pilot project providing information to older people and signposting to local services

http://www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk/partnerships/east-sussex.aspx

FirstStop Advice is an independent, free national service which aims to promote independence, dignity and choice for older people in meeting their care and housing needs by providing advice and information for older people, their families and carers about housing and care options in later life. The service, provided by Elderly Accommodation Counsel in partnership with other national and local organisations, brings together a wealth of expertise through one telephone number and one website to help older people, their families and carers explore the choices open to them and access the housing, support and care services they need.

In East Sussex, FirstStop is working with partners to enable older people to access information and advice on their housing, care and support options more easily and in a way they prefer, providing a specialist telephone advice service for the county, signposting callers to local services wherever appropriate. An important aspect of the project is the directory of local services for housing, care, help at home, legal and financial advice which has been compiled and is available to users of the website and the advisors based in the FirstStop team. A comprehensive FirstStop in East Sussex Guide is also available from the FirstStop team which offers an introduction to services for older people in East Sussex.

Leading the partnership are East Sussex County Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council and Wealden District Council. Also involved are many local organisations that provide services to older people.

Further information:
Emma Winter
Project Officer
Supporting People Team
East Sussex County Council
Tel: 01273 482805
emma.winter@eastsussex.gov.uk
Case Study 6 - Innovative approaches to signposting and personalisation in East Sussex

County and district councils in East Sussex have collaborated to plan and deliver a range of information, signposting and support services:

The **Navigator** service funded by ASC helps East Sussex residents aged 60 and over to live independently by offering a single home visit to assess their help and support needs and signpost them to other services. Residents can approach the service directly or may be referred by a health professional. Support available via Navigator tends to be broader than the usual range of Home Improvement Agency services including leisure activities and community transport services.

**County Connect** is a paper based referral service for professionals including the Pension Service, Adult Social Care, Police, Library Service, Fire service, Energy Advice and District Councils. Its purpose is to make referrals between services, coordinated from a central point, to help deliver a seamless service to the customer. Referrals are made when professionals pick up on areas of need relating to other services. They complete and send a form to the Independent Living Service who run the service. They will then make referrals on to the relevant service(s). County Connect is hoping to develop their work into health and have begun by sharing the referral form with community matrons and working with commissioners.

Outcomes have been improved for older people needing help with small jobs around the home. It was agreed that **handyperson funding** would be delivered in line with the personalisation agenda set out in PPF. The aim was that the needs, choices and wishes expressed by older person would drive the nature of the small jobs required to improve the quality of their life at home. It was agreed that the target group was the most deprived people and those older people aged 75 and over.

The project was established to deliver grants of up to £200 per household to help older people with the cost of small jobs around the home. The grant was available to people aged 65 or over, living in East Sussex, who have less than £23,250 in savings (£46,500 for a couple). Evaluation of outcomes from the first 1,338 grant applications was extremely positive, concluding that:

- The handyperson grant has been a successful personalisation pilot project that has benefited a large number of older people and made a positive difference to their quality of life
- The project has been successful in reaching the target group of people aged 75 in all districts and boroughs
- In general, older people found it easy to find someone to do the work for them and liked having choice and control in this area of their life.

**Further information:**
Sue Dean  
Head of Supporting People  
East Sussex County Council  
Tel: 01273 482805  
Sue.Dean@eastsussex.gov.uk

Caryl Ganley (for County Connect)  
Independent Living Manager  
Tel: 01323 446446  
Caryl.ganley@anchor.org.uk
Section four

5. Conclusion

Although awareness and practice across the South East vary considerably there are clear examples of positive outcomes for service users and opportunities to build on existing models of joint working. Changes in the direction of government policy represent both challenges and opportunities to work more flexibly to respond to the needs of local communities. The following areas are recommended for further consideration and development

Areas for Further Consideration and Development

The following areas are recommended for further consideration and development:

1. Those working on transforming adult social care should seek to engage with housing colleagues to raise awareness of the objectives of Think Local, Act Personal and local priorities for adult social care.

2. Jointly consider the best way to integrate and make consistent the provision of information and advice on housing, within the overall development of universal information and advice services, as required by Think Local, Act Personal.

3. Raise awareness of existing tools to help people find out about their housing and funding options and review how well current local sources of housing information and advice meet the needs of local citizens/residents.

4. Consider the scope for joint approaches to developing preventative housing services such as:
   - Rent in advance, deposit and guarantee schemes.
   - Schemes to assist older people to move to smaller, more manageable homes.
   - Facilitating the provision of surplus public sector land for affordable housing that will appeal to older people and encourage their interest in releasing family homes.

5. Decision makers in adult social care are encouraged to investigate and take appropriate opportunities to participate in housing-related assessments, reviews, and consultations, for example:
   - Strategic Housing Market Assessments, where adult social care may be able to contribute to robustness and value by providing demographic and/or other data relating to projected service and infrastructure needs.
- Compilation of a Local Economic Assessment, where housing and adult social care can put forward a united view of the direction housing support should take to contribute to local economic growth.
- Designating a named contact within adult social care for the Local Development Framework development, and communicating contact details to the LDF programme manager to ensure inclusion in formal planning policy consultation processes.
- Reviews of homelessness strategies and services.

6. At a regional level, consider producing an easy reference guide for adult social care staff on different forms of housing tenures and standards for adult social care professionals. This could be produced through the auspices of the Housing Learning Improvement Network.
### Appendix 1

#### Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dave Scholes</td>
<td>Housing Needs Manager</td>
<td>Oxford City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed Watkinson</td>
<td>Senior Joint Commissioner (Housing, Housing Related Support and Prevention)</td>
<td>Buckinghamshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigel Baldwin</td>
<td>Enabling Manager Community Housing</td>
<td>Portsmouth City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine Bastable</td>
<td>Housing Needs Manager</td>
<td>Portsmouth City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Burgess</td>
<td>Commissioning &amp; Development Manager, Community Care</td>
<td>Wokingham Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Carter</td>
<td>Quality and Performance Officer, Supporting People</td>
<td>Oxfordshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue Dean</td>
<td>Head of Supporting People</td>
<td>East Sussex Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olu Fajuyitan</td>
<td>Senior Housing Needs Officer</td>
<td>Winchester Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy Brooks</td>
<td>Housing Needs and Advice Manager</td>
<td>Aylesbury Vale District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire Martin</td>
<td>Head of Supporting People</td>
<td>Kent County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Littlemore</td>
<td>Head of Housing and Community Safety</td>
<td>Maidstone Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Gordon</td>
<td>Housing Strategy Manager</td>
<td>Aylesbury Vale District Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affordable housing</td>
<td>Social rented and intermediate housing (i.e. part rent-part buy or let at a rent below market value), provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Based Grant (ABG)</td>
<td>Central Government grant paid to local authorities to support provision of a range of local services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice Based Lettings</td>
<td>Involves advertising all available homes and inviting bids from interested applicants on the housing register. The bidder with the greatest level of assessed housing need will be offered the tenancy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council with Social Services responsibility (CSSR)</td>
<td>County and unitary local authorities which have a statutory duty to provide social care services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Improvement Agency (HIA)</td>
<td>Local not for profit organisations providing advice, support and assistance to elderly, disabled and vulnerable people, helping them to repair, improve, maintain or adapt their home to meet their changing needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local housing authority (LHA)</td>
<td>Unitary and district councils with statutory responsibility to provide advice and assistance to people at risk of becoming homeless and to develop a housing strategy to set out how housing needs and poor conditions will be met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)</td>
<td>The national housing and regeneration agency for England. The HCA manages and allocates public investment in affordable housing. It is a non-departmental public body whose sponsor government department is Communities and Local Government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Learning Improvement Network (HLIN)</td>
<td>The national network for promoting new ideas and supporting change in the delivery of housing, care and support services for older and vulnerable adults. The HLIN is sponsored by the Department of Health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing Revenue Account (HRA)</strong></td>
<td>Local housing authority budget relating only to council-owned housing. The HRA receives income from rent payments and government subsidy and grant. Expenditure is restricted to management and maintenance of the council homes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Local Economic Assessments (LEAs)</strong></td>
<td>An evidence-gathering and analysis exercise which will feed into numerous council and partnership plans to inform the direction of action to support and develop the local economy. Production of an LEA became a statutory duty for upper tier and unitary local authorities on 1 April 2010.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Investment Plan (LIP)</strong></td>
<td>Plan developed by the HCA with a group of local authorities setting out local housing priorities for public investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)</strong></td>
<td>A partnership that brings together organisations from public, private, community and voluntary sector in a local authority area. The key objective is to improve the quality of life in that area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupational Therapist (OT)</strong></td>
<td>Health professional qualified in assessment and treatment of physical and psychiatric conditions using specific, purposeful activity to prevent disability and promote independent function in all aspects of daily life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personalisation</strong></td>
<td>Personalisation describes a process for fitting services to individuals and not the other way round. Key elements are tailoring support to people’s individual needs and ensuring that people have access to information, advocacy and advice to make informed decisions about their care and support. Personalisation also involves finding new collaborative ways of working (sometimes known as co-production) that support people to actively engage in the design, delivery and evaluation of services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)</strong></td>
<td>Assessment undertaken across a housing market area (which may cover several local authority areas in full or in part) to provide evidence of housing need and demand and housing market drivers as a basis for strategic planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting People (SP)</strong></td>
<td>Funding mechanism for investment in local support services for vulnerable people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)</strong></td>
<td>County, unitary and district councils have a duty under the Local Government Act 2000 to prepare 'community strategies', for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. It also gives authorities powers to improve and promote local well-being to help them implement those strategies. Preparation and implementation should be undertaken by a broad local strategic partnership through which the local authority can work with other local bodies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenant Services Authority (TSA)</strong></td>
<td>The regulator for social housing in England.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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1. ADASS Housing Network and the National Director, Social Care Transformation (2010) *Personalisation – What’s Housing Got to Do with It?*

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