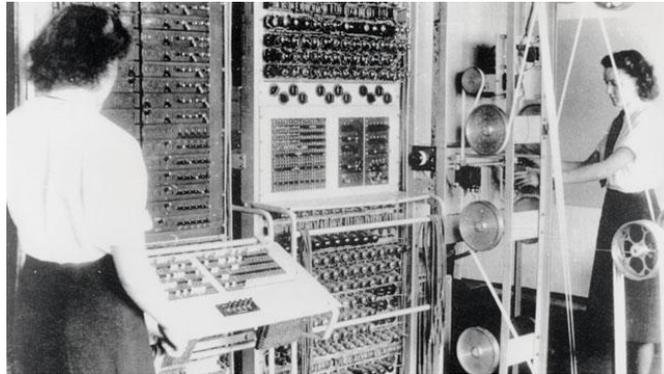


## Catch 22: *Improving the health, housing and ageing evidence base*



### Background

- At a time of unprecedented reductions in public expenditure higher standards of evidence are being demanded of the cost benefits of even established provision.
- Housing provision which is at great risk includes help with home adaptations and practical housing repair services, such as handyman schemes and home improvement agencies.
- The lack of investment in academic research concerning housing, health and ageing interconnections makes it difficult to cite studies of a high enough standard to make the case for housing and housing related services, particularly to the health sector.

### Connecting Academic Research & Practice

The '**Catch 22**' reference is that practical housing services can't prove their worth to policy makers & commissioners without academic research, but in recent years there has been very little activity in this field by academics, let alone funding for such research.

In order to address this issue **Care & Repair England** established its 'Catch 22' project in 2014 to forge new partnerships between researchers and stakeholders and stimulating fresh interest in undertaking research in the health/ housing/ ageing field. It is also making the case for the need for such evidence to potential funders, including Research Councils, related NGOs, national government and others. Its initial focus has been on home adaptations for disabled people but it will widen the scope to other aspects of housing, ageing, health & care interconnections.

### Action to date

- **Created a virtual Research & Practice Network** - this is continuously being expanded as fresh contacts are established with academics across the country
- **Brought people together at events and stimulated new partnerships**
  - **Bletchley Day**, run along the lines of a sandpit, which forged new partnerships and stimulated fresh research ideas in the field of home adaptations/ housing interventions.

- **Falling Through the Gaps**: *Connecting Research, Policy and Practice in the Fields of Ageing, Falls Prevention and Housing Interventions*, organised in partnership with the **British Society of Gerontology (BSG)** to bring together academics and stakeholders.
- ***The Right Prescription*** - forthcoming event in Manchester focussing on how interventions in the home can impact on health, especially on use of hospital and NHS services. This is also a joint venture with **BSG and MICRA**.
- **Contributed** to research working and advisory groups & networks, including **Hact, Public Health England, regional Schools of Public Health, NICE, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, genHOME and the Centre for Ageing Better**.
- **New Active research clusters underway including:**
  - **Research proposals (using Random Controlled Trial approach) to quantify benefits of home adaptations** - active development underway in range of Universities, including follow on work by University of West of England, plus joint work led by Exeter University involving Queen Mary University of London and Manchester University.
  - **Housing decision making in later life** - research options scoped with Open University
  - **Bathing adaptations impact** - research about to commence (Nottingham University)
- **New publications** have resulted including:
  - **Modelling cost benefit of adaptations** - innovative work led by the Building Research Establishment after the Bletchley Day. Report due for publication early 2016.
  - **Off the Radar**: *Housing disrepair and health impact in later life* - this was a joint project with data analysis by BRE and report production by Care & Repair England (2016)
  - **Infographic** about older people, housing, health and care - utilising above data/ reports.

## **What can you do?**

Care & Repair England will continue to work with the current research networks and clusters and is keen to facilitate new groups & initiatives, grow the research network and make representations to policy makers & funders concerning the importance of new research in this field.

***Please contact us*** to join the *Research & Practice Network*, or talk to *Martin Hodges*, the programme lead, if you would like to work with us to develop a group/ research proposal.

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**About Care & Repair England** : *Care & Repair England is an independent charitable organisation established in 1986, which aims to improve older people's housing. Its vision is that all older people have decent living conditions in a home of their own choosing. It aims to innovate, develop, promote & support practical housing initiatives & the related policy and practice which enable older people to live independently in their own homes for as long as they wish, particularly for older people living in poor or unsuitable private sector housing. Charitable I&P Society 25221R [www.careandrepair-england.org.uk](http://www.careandrepair-england.org.uk) [Edited March 2016]*

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