



# Bridging the gaps



*“Bridging the Gaps”* is a review of the work undertaken by Care & Repair England between September 04 and August 05 to bring about improvements to the homes, lives and future prospects of older and disabled people.

Our focus remains very much on 'bridging the gaps' between housing, health and social care, both in terms of services and also wider policy.

The *'Healthy Homes, Healthier Lives'* initiative is highlighting the close connections between people's health and housing in practical ways, including the creation of *'Healthy Homes Awareness'* training and Toolkit.

Working with older people themselves, offering information and resources to better enable self help, remains an important part of our work, and this is reflected throughout the report.

May I take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported us practically and financially – without this help none of the work described in this report would be possible.

*Peter Archer, Chair of Care & Repair England*



## Aim

To innovate, develop, promote and support housing policies and initiatives which enable older and disabled people to live independently in their homes for as long as they wish.

## Values

Care & Repair believes in the importance of:

- *Working directly with people who are affected by poor or inadequate housing conditions to develop solutions to their housing problems.*
- *Enabling people to live independent lives in their own homes for as long as they wish.*
- *Addressing housing, health and social care issues in ways that improve people's whole quality of life.*
- *Actively encouraging effective participation of constituents in the activities, service delivery and decision making of Care & Repair England.*
- *Actively promoting and implementing good equal opportunities and anti-discrimination practice in relation to age, disability, faith, race or sexual orientation.*

## Strategic objectives

Care & Repair will:

- *Raise awareness of the scale and nature of the impact of poor and unsuitable housing on the health and well being of older and disabled people and influence change, particularly in the health sector.*
- *Develop and promote new and diverse services which help to address the needs of older and disabled people in poor housing.*
- *Encourage the participation of service users in the development and delivery of any of the services it may promote.*
- *Aim to increase the involvement of older and disabled people in policy setting and decision making.*
- *Develop an infrastructure and fundraising strategy to enable it to carry out its strategic objectives.*

# Healthy Homes, Healthier Lives

The *Healthy Homes, Healthier Lives* programme aims to bridge the gaps between housing, health and social care through raising awareness of the ways in which poor or unsuitable housing can have a negative affect upon people's health and well-being.

A key objective is to increase understanding amongst front line staff in the health and social care sectors of the services and resources that may be available to improve housing conditions and to encourage referral to such services.

In this way it is hoped that the living conditions of inadequately housed people may be improved. Health sector staff will become more aware of how better housing can contribute to prevention of illness and accidents, improved hospital discharge, increased independent living in the community, and the redress of health inequalities.

In its first year of operation the project has created practical resources, including a *Healthy Homes Awareness* package, a *Self Training Toolkit* and a web-based information bank as well as organising related training courses and events across England.



*“ Can you put this Healthy Homes Awareness training on every six weeks so that I can put all of my team on it!”*

Hospital OT Senior Manager after presentation by Cotswold HIA

*“ If you have any mobility problems, or you're a carer, or you're old, or on a low income, or depressed, your home becomes more important, not less, because you're spending more of your time at home!”*

(Service user)





# Helping Ourselves

Increasingly older people are being expected to plan ahead for their retirement, particularly with regard to personal finances, accommodation and care. However, there is a gap between this ideal and the availability of accessible, impartial information and advice.

Care & Repair England has worked with older people's groups and advice organisations to improve housing information and develop resources for self help, including a free presentation package for older people's groups.

Local information materials have been developed using 'Staying in Your Home' (the local housing guide that Care & Repair England helped to design with the Elders Council of Newcastle upon Tyne) as a blueprint.

'In Good Repair' is Care & Repair England's self help guide to organising home repairs and adaptations. This has been featured in a wide range of magazines and journals, highlighting its availability to older and disabled people across England. Connections with employers' retirement organisations have been developed, promoting the importance of encouraging and enabling employees to plan their housing in retirement.

Care & Repair's informative 'News and Policy Update' is published quarterly with an ever widening audience.



*"A lot of useful information – it's amazing how much help there is if you know about these things"*

Mrs P, 81yrs



# Shaping all our Futures

The housing and environment that we plan and build today will have to meet the needs of an ageing population for generations to come. But there is a gap between planners and older people who can help to create homes and communities that enable independent living throughout people's lifetimes.

Care & Repair England has pioneered 'Listening Events' – a specially structured day that better enables older people to help to shape local strategies. Practical Information about staging an event has been made freely available to a wide range of organisations, with Care & Repair England advising on and helping out at events in Stoke on Trent, Southport, Sefton and Merton.

The key messages arising from such events were highlighted in Care & Repair England's latest publication "*Housing for an Ageing Population: An agenda for action*". This new brochure is aimed at the non-housing specialist who has any influence over housing and services for older people.

Care & Repair England seeks to highlight the importance of housing to all aspects of improving the lives of older and disabled people through publications, responses to consultation documents and events. The Director of Care & Repair England is now vice chair of the government's advisory body on housing and older people (HOPDEV) and speaks at an increasing number of conferences and events.



*“ Older people want information and choice, leading to accessible, affordable, spacious and secure accommodation ”*

Mr G, older person taking part in a 'Listening Event' to shape local housing plans.

*“ We want independence, not isolation ”*

Mrs M, at a 'Listening Event'

# Should I Stay or Should I Go?

Whilst most people make a positive choice to stay put as they get older, this is not the best option for everyone. However, making the decision to move home, perhaps after living in the same place for many years, is not easy.

The aim of our *Should I Stay or Should I Go?* programme was to increase older people's access to impartial, independent housing options information and advice plus practical help with moving home.

The programme has helped to create 8 pilot services, supported service planning and development in a further 18 areas, developed resource materials and an information bank to help service providers, and pioneered *Housing Options Advice* training (374 staff trained).

A report about Housing Options Services was launched at the Houses of Parliament in February 05. This report summarises the findings of a detailed evaluation of the pilot projects undertaken in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University and has further raised the profile of this important issue.



*“I very much welcome this valuable initiative”*

Dr Stephen Ladyman MP, then Minister for Community Care, Department of Health launching the report.

*“Excellent – thought provoking and directly relevant to my job and practically improving older people's lives”*

(Comment from course participant)

*“I would never have dreamt that moving here was possible before [the housing options adviser] suggested it”* Mrs S



## Management Committee

### PETER ARCHER (CHAIR)

Peter is a founder member of Care & Repair England and its Chair for the last 9 years. Director of consultancy, Regeneration and Housing Services and Affiliate Housing Inspector at the Audit Commission. A Trustee of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and the Chairman of The European Federation of Environmental Health. Char of St Peter's Housing Association in Birmingham. Major part of career spent working in the regeneration of UK's major towns and cities

### LAURENCE SHURMAN

Laurence is a retired solicitor; formerly the Banking Ombudsman; council member and director of the Executive Board of JUSTICE; director of the Accountancy Investigation and Discipline Board; trustee of AgeCare; school governor.

### ANNE GLEESON

Anne has been involved in the home improvement agency movement since 1984, initially with Anchor Trust then as Director of Bristol Care & Repair (1992–2000). Followed by work with South Gloucestershire joint Health & Social Services planning team around issues of disability and carers, now currently as a consultant in housing, older people and disability.

### MARIA BRENTON

Maria Brenton has worked in the university sector and the NHS. She was chair of Bristol Care and Repair for a number of years. She has a professional and personal interest in old age and works as a consultant on Co-Housing Communities of older people. She has also had some involvement in the development of extra care housing for older people.

### DR IAN P DONALD

Ian is a consultant physician for older people, and has worked at Gloucester Royal Hospital since 1988. He is enthusiastic about community care for older people, and care at the interface of primary and secondary care. Ian's research has been in the epidemiology of disability in older people, falling and intermediate care.

### DAVID GARDINER

David represents London Region on the Better Government for Older People UK Advisory Group, and is a member of several housing/health/care advisory bodies including ODPM/DoH, Housing Corporation, Joseph Rowntree, Audit Commission, CHI and hact. In the 1990s he was a member of the TPAS UK Management Committee, DoE/York University study into LA/HA housing management and a community director of Brixton Challenge.

### LESLIE GREEN

Leslie is a retired Chartered Accountant. He is Treasurer and/or Trustee of a range of charities in the housing and social care sectors.

### TOM HOYES

Tom Hoyes died in February 05. He had been a committee member for 10 years and was a great supporter of the work of Care & Repair England. Amongst his many other roles, Tom was Vice President of the National Council on Ageing/ Age Concern England, member of the Centre for Policy on Ageing and Experts Panel, European Commission, Directorate of Social Affairs and Employment. He is sadly missed.

### KATHIE MARTIN

Kathie has been the Home Improvement Manager for Orbit Care & Repair Coventry since 1988. She has developed projects working with a range of voluntary organisations for older people. She has been a trustee and chair of Coventry Age Concern, and represented the HIA sector on the review of Home Improvement Agencies with the ODPM.

### ANGELA NICHOLLS

Angela has over 25 years experience in social services departments in a variety of roles from social worker to senior manager. Since January 1998 Angela has worked as an independent consultant and researcher on a number of projects in the West Midlands, mainly concerned with services for older people.

### ELIZABETH PHILLIPS

Elizabeth has been Director of Age Concern Warwickshire for 14 years, developing and managing a wide range of services across the county, including South Warwickshire Care & Repair, which Elizabeth set up in 1995. Previously worked for a national housing association establishing and managing Care & Repair agencies across the country.

### DANIEL PEARSON

Daniel is the Practice Development Manager at Help the Aged, responsible for Homelessness, Housing Advice, Intermediate Care, Minority Ethnic and Telephone Support programmes. Prior to this was involved in the Citizens Advice Bureau movement and worked for Age Concern Lancashire. Has been responsible for developing Care & Repair services; the author of a report on Housing Conditions of Older People in Rural Areas.

## Equal opportunities statement of intent

*Care & Repair England believes that equality of opportunity is important in order to enhance people's choice and dignity and enabling them to live a more fulfilling life.*

*Care & Repair England recognises that people are discriminated against on the basis of colour, class, creed, ethnic or national origin, sex, age, disability, physical appearance or sexuality. The organisation is committed to counteracting such discrimination.*

*Care and Repair England is committed to the active promotion of equality of opportunity in every aspect of its operations. This includes provision and development of policies, services, employment and management practices.*

## Acknowledgements

Care & Repair England wishes to thank all of the donors, funders and strategic partners who have supported and contributed to its work over the past year

Age Concern England, The Albert Hunt Trust, Anchor Trust, The Beatrice Laing Trust, Better Government for Older People, Bristol Care & Repair, The Charles and Elsie Sykes Trust, The Countryside Agency, The Mrs F B Laurence Charitable Trust, Department of Health Housing Learning and Improvement Network, Department of Health, The Dulverton Trust, Elderly Accommodation Counsel, The Goldsmiths Company, Help the Aged, hact, The John Lewis Partnership, The Morgan Crucible Company plc, The Housing Corporation, Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, The Rayne Foundation, The Tudor Trust

## Patron

*Care & Repair England would like to thank its patron, Baroness Greengross OBE, for her ongoing support for the work of Care & Repair England. This is greatly valued and appreciated by all of the Trustees and staff.*





*“I just want to be able to have a bath, go to bed and eat what I want, when I want – it’s not that much to ask is it?”*

Mrs J, 79, talking about housing and independence.

*“What’s important is not just giving you a piece of paper, but having somebody you can talk to or phone up - somebody that’s there for you”*

Mrs A, talking about the help she gets from a Housing Options service.



## About Care & Repair England

Care & Repair England is a national charity established in 1986 to improve the housing and living conditions of older and disabled people.

Our aim is to innovate, develop, promote and support housing policies and initiatives which enable older and disabled people to live independently in their homes for as long as they wish.

### For further information contact:

Care & Repair England,  
3 Hawksworth Street,  
Nottingham NG3 2EG

Tel/Fax: 0115 950 6500

e-mail: [info@careandrepair-england.org.uk](mailto:info@careandrepair-england.org.uk)

website: [www.careandrepair-england.org.uk](http://www.careandrepair-england.org.uk)

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