

**SOCIAL JUSTICE AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE'S POLICY REVIEW  
'HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE'. PROGRESS REPORT ON  
IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS.**

**RECOMMENDATION 1**

Establishment of Older People's Forums to engage in housing and related services for older people.

**Progress**

Active debate on housing issues is encouraged within the forums although it is for the latter to determine their own agendas. There are over 70 such forums in Wales often supported by local authorities, Age Concern or Help the Aged. In respect of housing local forums have been established covering tenant participation, housing association matters and sheltered accommodation.

**RECOMMENDATIONS 2 & 3**

The Welsh Assembly Government should encourage better joint working between housing, health and social care agencies, building on the joint planning and funding mechanisms in place at the local level and requiring that each Local Housing Strategy should be revised to take account of guidance suggested in recommendations 3 & 19. The Welsh Assembly Government should also establish a task and finish working group to support local authorities in meeting the requirements included in recommendation 2.

**Progress**

The Health, Social Care and Housing Officials Group has better joint working as its key remit and has made progress in this field for example in respect of extra care and telecare and is fully involved in the current cross-sector 'Designed for Care' deliberations. The task and finish group will be finalised once the important research underpinning recommendations 18 and 19 is completed in Summer 2006. Fresh guidance on Local Housing Strategies will be issued for consultation in March 2006, incorporating the points recommended, with a view to new enhanced strategies being forthcoming from local authorities in 2007.

**RECOMMENDATION 4**

Care & Repair Cymru to lead an integrated community-based support service for older people.

## **Progress**

Positive discussions have been held with Care and Repair Cymru. The latter is currently finalising the pilot 'Staying-Put Home Maintenance Service' which seeks to improve on previous UK model and which will incorporate an annual healthy home and maintenance assessment for older people providing a comprehensive assessment of social care, welfare benefit and health provision that an older person may require but is unaware of or unable to access themselves. There will also be: a comprehensive home inspection service; a development of building work packages to address issues identified; a day to day maintenance service and a healthy home check. The pilot is proposed for Bridgend working with Valleys to Coast Housing Association and if successful will be rolled out to other agencies. In parallel with this a mapping exercise on service provision including security, welfare benefits, adaptations, energy action schemes is to be commenced through Care and Repair and other agencies.

In a wider context the development of integrated community-based support services for older people will be covered in the "Future Directions Paper for Social Services and Social Care".

## **RECOMMENDATION 5**

Promotion of a standing review to consider the practical applications of new technology and telecare.

## **Progress**

Guidelines have been issued to assist all Welsh local authorities and local health boards to develop local telecare strategies. The first all-Wales telecare conference was held in November 2005 from which local 'Champions' of telecare have been identified and a telecare Learning and Improvement Network (LIN) is in the process of development. A dedicated telecare micro-website is also being developed in partnership with the All-Wales Support Unit. The Assembly's Health, Social Care and Housing Officials Group is monitoring all these developments.

## **RECOMMENDATION 6**

Continued support for Care & Repair in Wales, and the strengthening of health and social care links and the development of initiatives to encourage home maintenance in property occupied by older people.

## **Progress**

Support for Care & Repair continues at an increased level (£4.021 million in 2006-07). Health and social care links have been strengthened particularly in the fields of health promotion, unified assessment, energy efficiency and preventative programmes such as the Rapid Response Adaptations Programme. Care & Repair has also played a key role in the unfolding

Wanless agenda particularly the Strategy for Older People in Wales and the National Service Framework for Older People. It was also prominent in the National Housing Debate on Independence and the Housing Needs of Older People. The progress detailed under Recommendation 4 is also relevant here.

## **RECOMMENDATION 7**

Solutions to the continuing shortage of occupational therapists, the establishment of best practice and the provision of guidance on ways in which flexible patterns of work make best use of all available professionals.

### **Progress**

A Therapy Strategy for Wales has recently been issued for consultation which makes reference to the importance of building capacity in Therapy Services and the development of support workers. National Occupational standards for Health and Social Care have also been recently agreed which provide a basis for new National Vocational Qualifications which will improve the career pathways and recruitment of support staff. Consultation is also underway on proposals for the National Leadership and Innovations Agency for Healthcare (NLIAH) to assume responsibility for workforce planning within the NHS. These arrangements will include mechanisms for collaboration with those with similar responsibilities in Social Care for staff groups such as OTs and support staff. A review of local models set up to explore greater flexibility in the workforce is due to be completed shortly. Several of these schemes focused on multidisciplinary reablement in which OTs and support staff were key.

The review of housing adaptations and disabled facilities grants (March 2005) detailed the problems arising from delays in OT assessments and made recommendations to fast-track applications in accordance with the flexibilities allowed under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002. These recommendations are currently being implemented.

## **RECOMMENDATION 8**

The review of housing adaptations and disabled facilities grants should be extended to cover other areas.

### **Progress**

The review was amplified to cover the areas listed. The review was published in March 2005 and accepted by the Minister and fully endorsed by Committee. The recommendations are currently being implemented and the Committee is regularly updated on progress.

## **RECOMMENDATION 9**

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002 should be reviewed and, if necessary, renewed guidance published.

### **Progress**

Two RRO seminars were held with Welsh local authorities in Autumn 2004 at which good practice examples, arising from the new flexibilities afforded by the legislation, were subsequently disseminated to local authorities and other providers. These will be formally incorporated into new guidance in early 2006 and a full evaluation of the RRO will be undertaken in 2007-08.

### **RECOMMENDATION 10**

The introduction of a funding stream to support innovative projects at the intersection of health and housing.

### **Progress**

The Joint Working Special Grant supports and encourages the development of flexible care and joint-working through the use of the Health Act 1999 Partnership Framework provisions (Increased Flexibilities) into mainstream services. The 2004 Joint Working Special Grant allocated local authorities a total of £11.05 million to encourage the greater use of the mechanisms contained within section 31 of the Health Act 1999 (including a mandatory £2.2 million for LHB support) for each of 2004-05 and 2005-06. This grant has recently been extended until 2008 and the new terms and conditions are currently out to consultation. New bids from local authorities are due in February 2006.

Other relevant funding streams include: the £30 million Wanless allocation for housing (primarily for extra care schemes) in 2006-07 (£10 million) and 2007-08 (£20 million); the Social Housing Management Grant Scheme and the Rapid Response Adaptations Programme.

### **RECOMMENDATION 11**

Co-ordination of schemes on security, safety and energy efficiency.

### **Progress**

Following an EU Procurement process the contract for HEES Scheme Manager has been awarded to Eaga Partnership for a five year period commencing on 11 December 2005.

The Assembly Government has recently announced an additional £5 million in each of 2006-07 and 2007-08 to extend the HEES. This will provide greater financial assistance to pensioner households to replace and improve heating systems, as well as other investment that will improve energy efficiency for sustainable reductions in fuel bills. People aged over 80 will be eligible for 100% support to improve the insulation, heating and security of their homes.

People aged between 60 and 80 who do not qualify for full support under the Scheme will be able to receive 50% support up to a maximum of £375.

These resources should primarily be spent on capital measures which save pensioners money, such as efficient heating and insulation. Some of the extra money may also be spent on security measures.

Community Safety Partnerships in Wales are including elderly reassurance schemes in their overall community safety strategies and are making older people more aware of bogus callers and distraction burglars. There is also provision of practical support and reassurance for older people through provision of 'HomeSafe' projects and dedicated CCTV at sheltered accommodation.

The police in Wales, working within Community Safety Partnerships, have delivered a range of effective projects tackling distraction crimes committed against older people. For example, South Wales Police employ a dedicated officer for tackling distraction burglaries and has produced a 'minimum standard for investigation'. Both Gwent and Dyfed Police Forces operate or oversee 'Bobby Van' schemes often through organisations such as Age Concern which fit locks and safety devices for older people. In addition, joint work is being taken forward by the Community Safety Partnerships and Local Authority Trading Standards Officers to tackle bogus trades persons.

The development of telecare (referred to in relation to recommendation 5) has a valuable role to play in home safety and security through the provision of sensors such as flood, heat and smoke detectors, PIR activity detectors, video door entry systems etc. All these are linked to a call centre and response service.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS 12-14**

Equity Release issues. Equity release loans for home improvement purposes should be removed from the constraints of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 regulations. A Welsh Home Improvement Lending Agency should be established. Local authorities should assess the feasibility of equity release schemes, as part of local housing strategies. Care and Repair should provide information to home owners to build trust and confidence.

### **Progress**

The establishment of a Welsh Home Improvement Lending Agency was not accepted but progress has been made with an alternative approach. This involves two loan pilot projects with a number of Welsh local authorities grouped as consortia. The 'Houseproud' model involving 3 local authorities and the Home Improvement Trust was launched in north Wales on 1 December and steady progress is being made to develop a viable scheme in south Wales with a consortium of 7 local authorities working in conjunction with Art Homes. Both pilots comprise an equity release element and we shall be monitoring these developments closely.

The feasibility of equity release schemes will feature in the Local Housing Strategy consultation guidance being issued to local authorities in March 2006 and Care and Repair Cymru is finalising publicity material for the benefit of potential clients. The report *The Facts You Need to Know About Equity Release Plans (Homeowners Aged 55+)* published by The Equity Release Information Centre in 2005, is also commended.

We are continuing to liaise with ODPM on Consumer Credit Act matters particularly in the light of our joint consultation paper *Draft Mortgage Sales Guidance for Local Authorities and Housing Associations*. The two pilots should also shed light on the implications of the Consumer Credit Act.

### **RECOMMENDATION 15**

Partnership working to increase the level of resources available to fund domiciliary care services; increasing support services for older people with lower levels of need; development of floating support schemes for older people through the Supporting People programme; recruitment and retention issues in domiciliary care, residential care etc.

#### **Progress**

The Revenue Support Grant Settlement for Local Government for 2006/07 includes an identified sum of £45 million over and above inflation for Adult Social Care. This is intended to address a range of pressures including meeting rising standards and improving commissioning.

### **RECOMMENDATION 16**

Provision of domiciliary care for older people.

#### **Progress**

This will be covered in the "Future Directions Paper for Social Services and Social Care".

### **RECOMMENDATION 17**

Introduction of building regulations requiring the adoption of Lifetime Homes standards to housing renovations and private sector new-build homes.

#### **Progress**

The UK Government is proposing that Lifetime Homes standards will be a component of the Code for Sustainable Homes and on 7 December 2005 sent out the consultation document. Work on the review of Part M of the Building Regulations has therefore been suspended. The implications of the introduction of a voluntary code are being considered and a report will be provided to the Minister on the implications for Wales.

Lifetime Homes was introduced in 2001 for RSL new build social housing grant funded schemes. Development Quality Regulations (DQR) were issued in July 2005 including requirements for extra care schemes and good practice guidance.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS 18 & 19**

Commissioning of baseline study regarding sheltered housing and a strategic review of sheltered housing.

### **Progress**

In October 2005 ECOTEC and Contact Consulting were awarded a contract to work for WAG to:

- Develop a database of current housing provision for older people in Wales,
- Evaluate whether current provision is meeting needs,
- To provide an appraisal of how the accommodation, care and support requirements of older people are likely to change over coming decades, and
- To make recommendations as to how the spectrum of existing accommodation and related needs should respond.

The aims of the project are to:

- Assess the current levels, types, locations and conditions of all accommodation provision for older people in Wales across all sectors;
- Assess the current provision of primary health, social care and support services provided to older people in general needs housing;
- Evaluate whether current accommodation for older people is meeting their age related requirements and assess the changes in demand for different forms of provision;
- Provide an appraisal of how the accommodation, medical, care and support requirements of older people are likely to change over coming decades; and how the spectrum of existing accommodation and related medical, care and support services will need to respond.

The draft final report will be submitted in June 2006. This way of working aims to ensure joint working and planning around the provision of accommodation for older people in Wales. In addition, the research will provide information to support the development of guidelines to support local authorities in planning in line with the Strategy for Older People in Wales and the National Housing Debate.

## **RECOMMENDATION 20 & 24**

Planning guidance issues regarding remodelled sheltered and specialist housing and the development of leasehold, commonhold and shared ownership accommodation.

### **Progress**

Position remains essentially the same as in the Written Statement of October 2004. Provision for appropriate access standards for new sheltered housing is adequately covered by national planning policy including Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 2002 and the Design Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12 (Design). PPW (2002) requires local planning authorities to take account of local housing strategies, informed by the housing needs of all sectors of society. Allocating land or identifying a general requirement for sheltered housing in UDPs is already feasible where it is based on local housing strategies and housing needs assessments.

### **RECOMMENDATION 21**

The Welsh Assembly Government should issue specific guidance on the provision of Extra Care housing.

### **Progress**

All local authorities have received "Accommodation Strategies and Developing the Role of Extra Care Housing" pack.

Extra Care guidance is being commissioned. Guidance to be presented at seminar for local authorities in Spring 2006.

Individual Extra Care Schemes funded through the Social Housing Grant programme are subject to detailed discussions with the Assembly. The guidance will build on the pack issued.

### **RECOMMENDATION 22**

The Welsh Assembly Government should undertake a study to document the potential benefits and financial viability of retirement villages.

### **Progress**

The Social Housing Grant (SHG) programme is funding a retirement village in Swansea. Building work will commence in March 2006. The village will be subject to review – completion in 2008-09.

### **RECOMMENDATION 23**

Development of protocols regarding the potential closure of a care home.

### **Progress**



Reference to the Assembly Government's guidance *Promoting Partnerships in Care* which covers best practice in commissioning formed part of the Written Statement of 1 October 2004. Officials plan to issue commissioning guidance in the first half of next year which will make reference to this subject. A number of local authorities have been working on care home closure policies and the Care Standards Inspectorate Wales has supported this work.

## **RECOMMENDATION 25**

Bed commissioning and residential care.

### **Progress**

The Revenue Support Grant Settlement for Local Government for 2006/07 includes an identified sum of £45 million over and above inflation for Adult Social Care. This is intended to address a range of pressures including meeting rising standards and improving commissioning.

This issue will also be covered in the "Future Directions Paper on Social Services and Social Care".

## **RECOMMENDATION 26**

Delivery of services to people with dementia

### **Progress**

This issue will be covered in the "Future Directions Paper on Social Services and Social Care". In addition, there are currently at least eight telecare services in operation or development in Wales that provide services to support people with dementia. At least two list the Alzheimers Society as a partner and three have received direct Assembly funding. Care and Repair have also been involved in operating dementia projects which are at the forefront of good practice.