

Social Justice and Regeneration Committee. Policy Review 'Housing for Older People Progress Report on Implementation of Recommendations.

SJR(2)-03-07(p.2) Annex 1

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. A review of the role of forums is included in an Evaluation of the Strategy for Older People in Wales that is underway.

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 Strategy for Social Services in Wales Over the Next Decade (Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities) deliberations. It was recommended that the work of the Task and Finish group be completed by summer 2006 but its establishment was dependent on the important research underpinning recommendations 18 and 19 of the Committee's policy review being completed. Because of the extensive nature of this recently completed research it is only now that plans for a Task and Finish group can be advanced. The Task and Finish group will consider the areas

described in Recommendation 2 of the policy review nearly all of which mirror the said research viz sheltered housing, enhanced sheltered housing, extra care, residential and nursing care. The Task and Finish group will work in close conjunction with the Health, Social Care and Housing Officials Group.

Local authorities are currently producing new local housing strategies and working to a deadline for submission of June 2007. The guidance is explicit in the joint working between housing, health and social care as well as other disciplines such as planning and the environment.

Recommendation 4

Care & Repair Cymru in collaboration with partners from the statutory, voluntary and commercial sectors and linking with older people's forums to lead an integrated community-based support service for older people.

Progress

Care and Repair Cymru has strong links with partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors. As a member of Age Alliance it is committed to taking forward the Strategy for Older People in Wales as well as the National Service Framework for Older People. The outcome of the current mapping of services for older people research (The provision of housing – related goods, services and advice to older people in their homes) in the next few months, which includes Care and Repair and Age Concern, should be a pointer towards the effective development of an intergrated community-based support service for older people and who should lead it.

Recommendation 5

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

Progress

£9.8 million of funding has been made available to local authorities to promote the development of telecare service delivery. All 22 local authorities in Wales have produced strategies for the development of local telecare services in partnership with LHBs and others.

An independent evaluation of the impact of the telecare grants on the social care, health and housing economies in Wales has been commissioned and will report in summer 2008.

An All- Wales Telecare Learning & Improvement Network (LIN) is established with representation from all 22 local authorities and Wales plus Care & Repair Cymru. The LIN meets quarterly and operates as an email community for the dissemination of learning and information. A website for all matters relating to the development of telecare in Wales has been established at

A joint Telecare/Telehealth Policy Board is in the process of formation to a design agreed at a workshop held in November 2006 by the Welsh Assembly Government in Partnership with

Informing HealthCare. The design allows for the Policy Board to be informed by two groups established to consider both technical design and service design issues and with oversight of joint implementation programmes.

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 (£4.366 million in 2007-08). 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 whose budget is to increase from £1.5 million this financial year to £2.0 million in 2007-08 and whose success has previously been conveyed to the Committee. 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.

One of the cornerstones of the Care and Repair service is prevention. The Staying-Put House Maintenance Service, which featured in the first progress report, has been operational from September 2006. Key partners include Bridgend Care and Repair, Bridgend County Borough Council, Valleys and Coast Housing Association, Porthcawl Shout and RSVP. The Strategic Business Planning process, associated with Care and Repair, identified the need to extend the service through local funding and fill gaps in existing service provision for older people identified in the Bridgend Joint Strategy for Older People. It has been recognised in the time that the pilot service has been running, that housing repair, maintenance and safety issues can be resolved if day to day maintenance and repair services are available on a similar basis to those provided by registered social landlords and based on a preventative rather than crises intervention. The initial findings indicate a need for the service and a potential to develop a preventative cyclical home maintenance service for older people within the county borough. Partnership –working along with a sustainable funding framework will play a crucial role in taking this service forward as part of an ongoing preventative service to older people in their own homes. Progress on the maintenance pilot is being monitored by Care and Repair Cymru and the outcomes will be disseminated throughout the movement.

A major review of the Care and Repair service and governance is shortly to commence (March 2007) and this is likely to highlight the strong health and social care links that exist. Care and Repair Cymru is also finalising proposals as to the potential for expanding its services cross-tenure taking account of capacity, competing priorities and the need to build up expertise.

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. Responsibility for workforce planning and strategy in the NHS has been assumed by the National Leadership and Innovations Agency for Healthcare (NLIAH). Its work plan includes work on new roles-development as part of whole system service redesign. These arrangements 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 has been published. 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 have been implemented.

Recommendation 8

The review of housing adaptations and disabled facilities grants should be extended to cover other areas listed in the SJ & R Committee's policy review report.

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 vast majority of therecommendations have been implemented and revised guidance is being finalised as is publicity material. 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 discussed. Among the varied good practice schemes introduced as a result of the RRO are: Stairlift Grant; Home Improvement and Minor Works Grants; Rebuild Grant; Disabled Plus Grant; Minor Works

Assistance (Priority) Grants; Discretionary Landlord's Grant; Energy Conservation Assistance; Emergency Repair Grant and Children with Asthma Scheme. These and other examples will be formally incorporated into revised guidance when that relating to DFGs is finalised shortly. Proposals for an evaluation of the RRO are being considered.

Recommendation 10

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

Progress

The Joint Working 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 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, 2005-06 and 2006-07. This grant has recently been extended until 2008.

Other relevant funding streams include: Extra care (see progress under Recommendation 21), the Social Housing Management Grant Scheme, the New Ideas Fund and the Rapid Response Adaptations Programme.

Recommendation 11

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

Progress

The Assembly Government has announced an additional £5 million for this financial year and the same amount for 2007-08 to extend the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (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 80 and over will be eligible for 100% support to improve the insulation, heating and security of their homes from early 2007. 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 £500 towards the cost of any scheme measures.

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 continues to be 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 by the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration in north Wales on 1 December 2005 and steady progress is being made to develop a viable scheme in South Wales with a consortium of 6 local authorities working in conjunction with Art Homes. Both pilots comprise an equity release element and we shall be monitoring these developments closely. Among early findings of the "Houseproud" pilot are that the fear of cowboy builders is extensive and that owner-occupiers are quite willing, if circumstances permit, to fund improvements or adaptations themselves. In addition, Carmarthenshire County Council is working independently with Art Homes to develop a loans scheme in that county.

Care and Repair Cymru's DVD (Unlocking the Future) and associated publicity material were launched by the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration on 5 April 2006. These were distributed to every Care and Repair agency who are building up expertise in this area. In addition there are a number of comprehensive reports in existence whose aim is to protect the interests of older people when faced with considering equity release as an option. Among more recent examples are those published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation *Overcoming Obstacles to Equity Release* (2006) and *Help the Aged's Equity Release. A Guide To Unlocking The Wealth In Your Home* (2006). Age Concern's comprehensive advice to homeowners can also be cited in this regard whilst the report *The Facts You Need To Know About Equity Release Plans (Homeowners Aged 55+)* published by The

Equity Release Information Centre (2005) is also commended.

We are in liaison with the Department of Communities and Local Government on Consumer Credit Act matters although the latter department has no plans to make changes to the CCA regulations at this stage. The two loan pilots, cited earlier, should however shed light on the CCA regulations.

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; encourage the 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 per annum over and above inflation for Adult Social Care. This is intended to address a range of pressures including meeting rising standards and improving commissioning. The Settlement for 2007-08 includes a further £15 million per annum to, in part, build on the earlier allocations. The Strategy for Social Services in Wales will place further emphasis on this issue.

Development of the Supporting People's floating support schemes continues to be encouraged. In addition, Cymorth Cymru and Care and Repair Cymru are working together to identify key areas where Supporting People provides and Care and Repair agencies work more closely and inform supported housing and health policy development.

Recommendation 16

The Welsh Assembly Government should explore with private sector residential care home owners, the potential for providing domiciliary care to older people in line with local needs and how this may be funded.

Progress

The crucial contribution of domiciliary care is referred to throughout the forthcoming Strategy for Social Services in Wales – its vital role in fulfilling older people's wishes to remain in their own homes, the efficiency and effectiveness opportunities of combining it with telecare and housing, the importance of more intensive support to recover independence and reduce future care needs, improving commissioning from the range of providers and of more explicitly seeking to manage the mixed market. Workforce pressures are recognised and the need to work to the concept of a single workforce and develop a national workforce plan.

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 launched a voluntary Code for Sustainable Homes in December 2006 and a consultation document Building a Greener Future that considers how the Code could be used to introduce future step changes in building regulations. Officers will be advising Ministers on the implications for Wales and on a response to the consultation document due in March 2007.

Recommendation 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 research was entitled Accommodation for Older People in Wales. The Foundations for the Future. The final synthesis report is submitted at this meeting. A number of supplementary reports are also available and all the reports will be placed on the website. The synthesis report has an executive summary and a list of recommendations for further action. The extensive nature of this research and the importance attached to its commissioning in the SJ & R policy review report meant that its timeframe had to be extended which has resulted in the Task and Finish group (which formed part of the policy review's recommendation 3) to take forward the outcomes/recommendations of the

research not yet being established. Plans for this to happen will now be advanced by the Health, Social Care and Housing Officials Group.

Separately, under the Supporting People initiative a number of local authorities in Wales are reviewing the strategic relevance of the support provided in sheltered housing provision and whether there are ways in which it can be remodelled to increase its impact.

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

Guidelines on developing Extra Care housing in Wales were issued in April 2006 and are available on the Assembly's website. From 2006-07 Extra Care schemes are being funded from the Extra Care Programme. In this financial year £13 million is being made available to local authorities for such schemes and £21 million is being made available in 2007-08. The indicative budget for 2008-09 is also £21 million. Seven schemes (252 units in total) have been completed, 2 are under construction, 8 are included in the 2006-07 and 2007-08 programme and 3 are included in the 2008-09 programme. The units either under construction or projected total 651.

Recommendation 22

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

Progress

A 120 unit retirement village in Sketty, Swansea, is being constructed. The scheme has a total cost of £15 million and is receiving £9.3 million in Social Housing Grant. Building work commenced in April 2006 and the scheme is due for completion in April 2008.

Recommendation 23

The Welsh Assembly Government should provide guidance on the development of protocols within each local authority concerning the potential closure of a care home. It should convene a working party drawing upon existing work in other parts of the UK and elsewhere, to develop a voluntary charter of rights for those residents in care homes..

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 are developing draft guidance for commissioners of care homes' places which, subject to Ministerial agreement, will be issued for consultation towards the middle of 2007. An advisory group involving representatives from local government, the NHS and the care sector are supporting the development of the guidance.

Recommendation 25

The Welsh Assembly Government should consider the appropriate level of funding that will allow local authorities to commission beds from residential care homes at a level that will enable the sector to meet current and future demand, as established in each area and provide stable services for users.

Progress

The Revenue Support Grant Settlement for Local Government for 2006-07 includes an identified sum of £45 million per annum over and above inflation for Adult Social Care. This is intended to address a range of pressures including meeting rising standards and improving commissioning. The Settlement for 2007-08 includes a further £15 million per annum to, in part, build on this earlier allocation.

Improved commissioning will be a strong theme in the Strategy for Social Services – the need to engage with providers and manage the market place more explicitly. New guidance is likely to be an early element of implementation. The need to model future resource implications of demographic change came through clearly in the responses to the consultation.

Recommendation 26

Delivery of services to people with dementia

Progress

This issue will be acknowledged as a pressure point in the Strategy for Social Services. 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. More generally, the development of telecare services in Wales (referred to in response to recommendation 5) will enhance the potential for providing services to people with dementia in their own homes. Care and Repair have also been involved in operating dementia projects which are at the forefront of good practice. In addition local authority Supporting People lead officers are working with colleagues to identify how Supporting People services can complement telecare services in this regard. Extra Care has a contribution to make in promoting the independence of individuals with dementia and the extra care guidance makes reference to it. A 40 unit scheme completed by Pembroke Housing Association has an 8 bed unit for people with dementia and the 38 unit scheme being developed by Gwalia Housing Association (from the 2008-09 programme) will have design features to accommodate the needs of people with dementia.

The Health, Social Care and Housing Officials Group will further consider the commissioning of a plan for the coherent delivery of services to people with dementia in the light of the recently completed Accommodation for Older People in Wales: The Foundations for the Future research which arose out of Recommendations 18 and 19.