



Patron: Dame Esther Rantzen DBE

Why you should prioritise housing and support for older people

1. Introduction

Erosh (www.erosh.co.uk) is a national charity representing organisations providing specialist housing and support services for over 120,000 older people. We champion the need for good quality older people's housing and support and lobby nationally for continuous improvement and to promote good practice.

Older people's housing is at our roots and we remain committed to: lobbying for good quality sheltered and retirement housing; raising the profile of all forms of housing and support for older people particularly in terms of the preventative benefits and their valuable role in providing access to services and social activities for all older people in a wider community; and promoting how housing and support services save money for health, social care and public health at a time when these agencies are facing the challenges and demands of a growing older population.

This documents sets out our key messages, what we would like you to do to support housing and related support services for older people and why.

2. What you know already

In 2013, Office for National Statistics (ONS) published [“What does the 2011 Census tell us about the "oldest old" living in England & Wales?”](#) which examined characteristics of people aged 85+. The findings concurred with the well-documented evidence that more people are living to 85 and beyond and in future more of the population will live to 85+.

The 2011 Census showed that:

The number of people aged 65+ increased from 8.31 million to 9.22 million

The number of people aged 85+ increased from 1.01 million to 1.25 million

In this age group women outnumbered men by 2:1 but there had been a larger % increase in the number of men (45%) than women (16%)



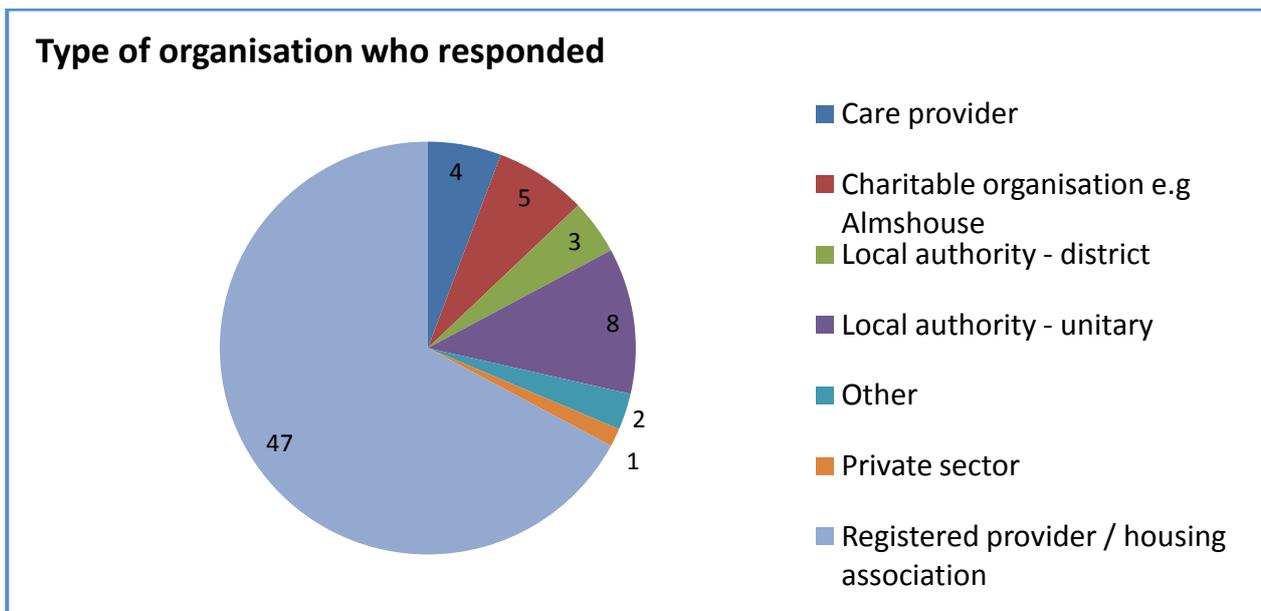
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3. What we know

In recent years there have been huge changes to the older people’s housing and support sector not least because of the refocusing or, in an increasing number of cases, withdrawal of Supporting People funding. New models of service delivery have grown up around sheltered housing schemes and Government has placed greater emphasis on the importance of preventative services in improving health and well-being as evident in the Care Act 2014.

In 2014, we asked erosh members and non-members representing many different types of older people’s housing and support provider (Fig 1) across the whole of the UK to take a ‘Sector Selfie’ so we could better understand the ‘state of the nation’ in relation to older people’s housing and support; how organisations providing these services are coping with the current changes; whether the spending cuts are killing services or driving efficiency; and whether older people are benefitting from the changes or struggling to get support.

Figure 1



The results show a sector struggling to provide services to more older people in need with less funding (or even no funding) but a sector which is still responding creatively to the enormous challenges it faces and which is still committed to providing quality services to older people.

- Over half of respondents reported that support services had shrunk
- Over half of respondents reported that sheltered housing services with on-site managers had reduced
- There has been an increase in floating support services and other service models which offer much lower levels of support
- Most respondents had lost Supporting People funding and it had been partly replaced by increased service charges to residents and subsidy from rents



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- Other forms of funding are being sought e.g. charitable funding, but this is short term and insecure which makes it difficult to plan
- Services are shifting away from universally providing a little bit of help when needed to new service models which don't offer support to all residents
- Many respondents were concerned that the loss of traditional sheltered housing has eroded its preventative role which saves money for health and social care services
- Older people in sheltered housing are becoming increasingly frailer with greater support needs at a time when levels of support are reducing. This has been exacerbated by budgetary constraints within Local Authorities which has led to placements in residential care being restricted to those with higher care needs.

Our survey respondents said:

"With the threat of SP funding completely finishing in some areas, housing providers are looking for ways to fund their services. This in turn is diluting the excellent preventative support work and will lead to more and more vulnerable people being in crisis with no access to support. This will have a knock on effect to housing providers as they may not have the money to pay their rent as they won't have the help to ensure they maximise their income and manage their tenancy."

"As with any preventative service I do not feel the full value of them is appreciated as everything these days has to have a cost saving attached to it and this is difficult to quantify. The forthcoming Care Act is placing great emphasis on preventative services and a person's well-being but sadly many of these services are under threat due to the drive to save money.....very short-sighted!"

"Emergency alarm call systems are so essential. Given the fast demise of SP due to on-going financial austerity in public finances, they should once more be made a HB eligible item to preserve them. Councils may cut SP but they, and also the NHS who contribute nothing to SP yet benefit from it, will pay dearly via higher social care and NHS spend down the line."

"Without urgent alternative funding streams I cannot see services we manage being available in 20 years. The growing demands from an ageing older population with increasingly complex needs is not being met by existing stock and we are not developing sufficient affordable alternative provision. The loss of SP funding has not impacted on local authority nominations yet but I foresee significant issues with bed blocking, declined nominations and safeguarding issues as reduced staffing at schemes prevents services being provided in sheltered and even some extra care housing schemes."

"We are concerned how support will be funded when our contract with local authority comes to an end next year. Residents moving in to our sheltered housing schemes need higher level of support than before e.g. help with budgeting, claiming benefits and



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4. Housing and support services for older people really do save money for health, social care and public health

As the number of older people and their support needs increase, placing even more demands on other agencies, we would really like you to appreciate more the role of sheltered and retirement housing and support services in saving money for health and social care, contributing to the preventative agenda and reducing admissions to hospital. Sheltered and retirement housing offer relatively inexpensive forms of support which enhance people's sense of security and well-being and promote independence.

We have just developed our [Service Impact Tool \(SiT\)](#); a quick, easy-to-use framework developed with [Interactive Toolkits](#) for recording evidence needed to demonstrate the value of housing and related support services to local authorities, statutory services, and other key stakeholders and how they contribute to the prevention agenda and save money for health and social care. Erosh will periodically collate this valuable data to build up a national picture of the contribution housing and support for older people makes.

Our survey respondents said:

"Sheltered Housing provides an alternative choice of housing for older people that is good value to service users and reduces impact on other budgets such as adult social care and NHS. It can also have a significant impact on the lives of older people, enabling them to maintain independence, feel safe and secure and maintain their health and wellbeing."

"Traditional sheltered housing is not sexy but offers quiet, caring support to older people - many with disabilities, long-term illnesses, mental health problems and no other forms of support. Studies show the positive impact this has on hospital admissions and health services. Traditional sheltered housing is a great preventative service which is steadily vanishing. We don't appreciate the impact this will have on the health and wellbeing of tens of thousands of older people across the country."

"A policy change and investment in Older People's services is required as continuation of these services provides a huge social return on investment on the preventative agenda. We have calculated that, in older people's services, each £1 invested saves the public purse at least £5."

"The break between tenure and support will impact on sheltered housing services in Wales. Funding streams providing onsite scheme managers varies considerably with HB meeting varying levels of costs in different LA areas resulting in different levels of services in different areas."

"There is a significant role for designated housing for older people in achieving the early intervention and preventative agendas. Providers need to find new, innovative ways to showcase and highlight the positive impact they make to the general health and wellbeing of our older communities and in reducing the national health bill by keeping older people fitter, for longer, and with greater independence."



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Case study example

2015 Erosh Award Winner

Yarlington Housing Group - Wincanton Community Pilot

Brings Yarlington residents together with people in the wider community (including isolated rural areas) to a central point where they access information about services and health and well-being initiatives as well as socialise. Reconsidering their own support networks has resulted in residents assessing themselves as having low need as long as help is there when they need it, thereby reducing costs. Older people support each other to manage their conditions reducing visits to GPs and saving costs.



Case study example

2015 Erosh Award Winner

Alliance Homes Group – Festival of Ages

An inter-generational solution to solution to a problem with anti-social behaviour (ASB) amongst local school students resulting in positive change reducing costs for the police in dealing separately with ASB. Community spirit improved resulting in strong community partnerships as well as attracting over £8,000 of voluntary donations.



5. Older people’s aspirations must be taken into account in decisions relating to design, delivery and development of homes and services which should promote empowerment, independence and choice

Too often changes in service delivery have been made without sufficient involvement of older people. Providers of housing and support for older people have also found this increasingly challenging as options have been significantly reduced as a result of reductions or withdrawal of Supporting People funding. However, failure to take into account older people’s views, and those of people who are going to be older in the next decade or so, is short-sighted and, given the well-publicised demographic information, is likely to result in poorly designed services which do not meet future older people’s needs and aspirations.

There is much evidence to show how older people’s aspirations are changing partly driven by higher levels of home ownership, changing lifestyles and a greater need for independence. Older people of the future are more likely to want more space and more bedrooms, more choice and more independence, in a place where services and facilities are close by. Older people are more likely to want to remain in their own home, dip in and out of services depending on their needs and have greater choice over the way services are delivered and by whom. Options and flexibility will be key as well as quality, fairness, and transparency as well as good quality, accurate and independent advice and information to facilitate informed choice.



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6. Housing and support for older people play a vital role in combatting social isolation and loneliness

Loneliness and social isolation amongst older people in the UK, particularly in rural areas (AgeUK, 2014) is increasing as the numbers of older people increase.

- Of those aged 16 and over in England and Wales living alone in 2011, 17% were aged 50 to 64 and 59% were aged 85 and over (ONS, 2014).
- Two fifths all older people (3.9 million) say the TV is their main company (Age UK, 2014)
- 63% of adults aged 52+ who have been widowed, and 51% of the same group who are separated or divorced, report feeling lonely some of the time or often (Beaumont, 2015)
- 59% of adults aged over 52 who report poor health say they feel lonely some of the time or often, compared to 21% who say they are in excellent health (Beaumont, 2015)
- A higher percentage of women than men report feeling lonely some of the time or often (Beaumont, 2015)

Loneliness has a major impact on health and social is one of the key determinants of health amongst the [Public Health Outcomes Framework 2013 to 2016](#).

Housing related services for older people play an essential role in supporting people to family and social networks and sheltered and retirement housing schemes provide a valuable resource for all older people in a community in terms of both social activities and access to services, including health and well-being activities which meet the Government’s preventative agenda.



Case study example

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Yarlington Housing Group - Wincanton Community Pilot

Brings Yarlington residents together with people in the wider community (including isolated rural areas) to a central point where they access information about services and health/well-being initiatives as well as socialise and develop new friendships and supportive networks. Reconsidering their own support networks has resulted in residents assessing themselves as having low need as long as help is there when they need it, thereby reducing costs.



Case study example

2015 Erosh Award Winner

Rooftop Housing – ‘Can Do’ Club

Often socially isolated disabled residents and older people from the community come together for a variety of activities and outings. The ‘Can Do’ Club promotes positive messages about what people can do and empowers individuals to develop new friendships and socialise. Wider benefits have included: improving people’s experience of care, building stronger relationships between services and communities, mutual support, developing confidence, improving health and well-being; and reducing isolation.





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Case study example

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Lambeth Living - Castle House Sheltered Housing Scheme Website

30 residents of Castle House, aged 70-95, have launched their own website which they now manage themselves. Older people are often digitally isolated and this project has helped to overcome isolation and loneliness, strengthened community links, reconnected residents with families, and developed important external relations that have improved quality of life.



7. Services for older people should be person-centred and promote empowerment, independence and choice

There needs to be much better integration of services for older people so they receive holistic, person centred services from Health, Social Care and Housing which facilitates empowerment, independence and choice; and it is important that housing is recognised by other sectors for the preventative work it achieves on a continuous basis. We welcome the emphasis in the Care Act 2014 on more integrated approaches but are concerned about the reality of achieving this given the impact of funding cuts on services. With increasing numbers of older people to support and fewer staff, it is difficult to see how more integrated, person centred approaches are achievable.

Our survey respondents said:

“There needs to be continued lobbying for better and easily accessible services, increased partnership working with the NHS, standardization of care and support across all sectors and removal of a post code lottery.”

“We need to ensure we reach a range of organisations as partnership working across sectors is becoming even more essential.”



Case study example

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8. Housing for older people must be designed to meet older people’s current and future needs and be affordable, accessible, inclusive and non-discriminatory

There is much research around designing homes suitable for both today and tomorrow’s older people. The Housing LIN for example in its 2011 resource guide [Planning, designing and delivering housing that older people want](#) suggested that, whilst there might be more property owning older people, this doesn’t necessarily mean they have good health, live in decent homes or have sufficient access to or choices about alternative housing and services. “Despite publications, such as the innovative [HAPPI report](#), the notion of a wide choice of rented or purchased property for older people of different designs, tenure arrangements and prices still seems a long way off”.

Back in 2009 the [HAPPI report](#) highlighted the need to improve housing choice and quality and to offer older people a variety of housing options but with some key physical characteristics e.g. space, light, a focal point for social and community interaction – characteristics found in good quality existing sheltered housing schemes - as well as meeting [Lifetime Homes standards](#) and providing appropriate accommodation for more older people with dementia.

Our survey respondents said:

“Little help is available for tenants suffering from dementia and very small housing associations are worried about how they can pay for improvements to schemes that need updating without using reserves.”

“We are greatly concerned about the shrinking of services and where it will leave frail older people.”

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Case study example

2015 Erosch Award Winner

Catalyst Housing Group – 20 Years and Still Counting

O’Grady Court is a sheltered housing scheme in West London with residents from a wide variety of backgrounds speaking many different languages reflecting local demographic changes. The project is an example of inclusivity and increases mutual understanding, promotes common interests and decreases social isolation of older people in the community through non-language based activities.

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9. Older people's housing and support services should comply with appropriate nationally recognised quality standards

Housing for older people must be good quality and promote empowerment, independence and choice and meet nationally recognised standards such as the [CHS Service Excellence Standards](#) or [CIH Service Quality Tool](#).

10. Staff working with older people should be appropriately qualified, formally inducted and regularly trained to ensure they are up to date and comply with professional standards

Staff working with older people should ideally hold a nationally recognised qualification e.g. the Chartered Institute of Housing, Level 3 in Housing Practice (Older People option). Our survey however showed that training budgets at best haven't increased for a long time or at worst decreased and that, because of the impact of funding cuts, emphasis is now on on-job training and short training courses at the expense of longer, relatively more expensive qualifications. ErosH is trying to fill the gap by providing members with cost effective on-line good practice.

11. So, what we are doing?

- Promoting the positive impact sheltered housing and retirement housing and related support services have on health and social care (and potential savings) through our lobbying activity, our good practice guidance and case studies, our annual awards and our new Service Impact Tool (SiT)
- Developing good practice guidance on *partnership working* to reflect the increased need to work in partnership with a wide variety of partners across the sector
- Reminding all stakeholders of the preventative benefits and value of housing and support for older people
- Continuing to support our members at both a national and regional level

12. And we would like you to recognise that:

Sheltered and retirement housing and support services for older people:

- **Save money for health and social care**
- **Promote independence and choice**
- **Involve residents and older people in the wider community**
- **Tackle loneliness and isolation**
- **Are inclusive**
- **Are great quality**
- **Employ staff with great skills**



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