

# Older Persons Housing Plan

Improving housing options and services for older people in Amber Valley  
March 2016

# Our Older Persons Housing Plan

## Summary

This document updates the plan previously published in 2012. With a rapidly shifting policy position the main focus is the action plan which sets out a series of priorities/policy areas and activities and supports the overall Housing Strategy. In delivering the plan the Council works closely with a wide range of organisations from statutory agencies to the voluntary sector. The plan supports Health and Wellbeing priorities around keeping people healthy, delivering the Cold Weather Plan and tackling fuel poverty. Housing is particularly important to older people who spend up to 90% of their time at home. Ageing well is a key priority for our ageing population, particularly mental and physical wellbeing to prevent dementia, depression, accidents and deaths from the cold all of which are directly related to housing. Housing is embedded within the Care Act and will require increasingly close work with County Council colleagues.

Priorities of the plan will be to meet future housing need, deliver adaptations, deliver housing advice and help people to stay put.

There is a significant volume of evidence articulating the importance of the home in helping older people remain independent, warm and safe much of which can be accessed through the Care and Repair Website <http://careandrepair-england.org.uk/reports/>. It is not intended to repeat this evidence, but acknowledge that activities will focus on the priorities above. A health and housing joint strategic needs assessment is being completed and results will inform future detailed activity and focus. There are increasing numbers of residents with dementia that will impact on being able to live at home independently and this will require new solutions.

Since 2012 the Council has delivered some very successful work providing advice, services and support to Amber Valley's older residents working alongside a range of organisations. The Council's work with partners has been recognised as good practice in a number of national publications. Since 2012 when the previous plan was agreed the Council has been represented on the Amber Valley and South Dales Clinical Commissioning Locality Board which has enhanced relationships between NHS and the Council. This relationship has also helped the Council to attract much needed funding to help mainly older residents with heating improvements.

Occasionally the Council has also had to use its statutory enforcement role and has worked with partners on increasing numbers of cases involving hoarding and disrepair that have meant that rehousing and enforcement has been used.

## **What have we achieved?**

### **Meeting future Housing Need**

- Draft planning policies include a requirement for developers to include meeting housing needs for the whole population including older people.
- The Council has continued to work Futures Homescape in supporting them to find clients for their adapted properties.
- The Council has worked closely with Derbyshire County Council in the allocation of the Maple Mews Extra Care Scheme

### **Delivering Adaptations**

- Approved 494 DFGs since April 2012, representing a total investment of £2,522,031.
- Maintained a substantial investment since 2012 to meet mandatory duties to provide Disabled Facility Grants
- With Derbyshire County Council introduced Home Improvement Agency triage process which has reduced waiting times and improved access to housing options for clients requesting adaptations.
- Introduced co-location of assessment, design and grant approval that has improved coordination of case management and reduced waiting times.
- Reduced associated bureaucracy to reduce times and minimise avoidable delays through making exchange of information easier
- Worked with Futures Homescape to reduce the number of avoidable adaptations by supporting those in need of an adapted home to move.

### **Delivering Housing Advice**

- Improved referral mechanisms to ensure that residents with housing needs are referred to Council and partner services
- With partners produced a DVD 'Happy in Your Home' that has been used to showcase options for older people.
- Worked with organisations to sign post to debt and benefit advice

### **Helping people to Stay Put and Remain Independent**

- Worked with the Home Improvement Agency and other partners to help access heating and energy efficiency improvements.
- Helped to promote and support a range of commissioned services designed to help people stay at home.
- Secured funding from the Southern Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Department of Energy and Climate Change in recognition of our developed partnership working.
- Worked with Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service to tackle an increasing prevalence of hoarding

## **Future Activity**

The Council will continue to work with Derbyshire County Council, NHS and others to make the case for a greater level of understanding of the importance of housing as a wider determinant of health. There are numerous studies that make the links and provide evidence to commissioners and senior managers that a person's home can have a major impact on their health. Housing's role in supporting Health and Social Care integration and preventative services to keep people at home should be increasingly significant. It is anticipated that through Better Care Fund and Devolution that joint working can improve and build on the successes achieved and optimise local resources.

## **Meeting Future Housing Need**

Through the adoption of the Local Plan it is anticipated that new housing development will deliver more choice for older owner occupiers. A county group led by DCC Public Health is coordinating ambitions around the delivery of new housing. The Council will aim to work more closely with Derbyshire County Council and other partners to identify how more bespoke housing can be provided for older people and how we can improve identification and meeting older persons housing need. It is anticipated that this plan could support an overall and more detailed strategy that exists across the county and the Council will work with neighbouring Councils to secure investment in new housing schemes for older people.

## **Delivering Adaptations**

Despite significant improvements to all elements of the process there is still considerable scope to improve the overall process of supporting those with disability to access housing that they need. This is not just about speeding up the delivery of Disabled Facility Grants but improving the whole system in which Disabled Facility Grants form a part. A major piece of transformation work is underway that should provide Derbyshire with a vision for how the needs of disabled Derbyshire residents will be met from 2017. The outcomes of the Transformation Project will inform the plan in greater detail. Increased funding for adaptations has been promised recognising the need, but at the same time even greater innovation will be required to support more effective prevention of admission to hospital and supporting faster discharge.

## **Delivering Housing Advice**

The Council is completing a piece of work that will set out who is able to provide what housing advice and identify any gaps in provision. This will require close discussion with the Derbyshire County Council to ensure that advice is consistent with advice provided within their Care Act functions. Valued housing support services are under threat due to financial pressures and the Council will work with partners to seek to secure the most important services that help to achieve the Council's housing priorities. Greater emphasis will be placed on ensuring that information and advice is available in a form that is useful to older people, families and carers. It is important that

we work with partners to increase the availability of housing options advice for older people across the spectrum of need.

### **Helping People to Stay Put and Remain Independent**

The Council will continue to work with partners to try and secure access to funding to help with repairs, and property improvements. Funding secured from external partners will be carefully used and matched with other funds to ensure that as many people as possible can be helped. Funding that is available will be targeted at those that need it most, especially where there is a clear health benefit. The Council has been particularly successful in developing relationships with certain GP practices which has seen a regular flow of referrals for housing related help, especially in accessing heating improvements and it is hoped that this can be developed further.

The following action plan sets out activities that will form the detailed delivery. The Plan provides a framework. The Housing Team business plan will have more specific actions to show how the Plan will be delivered. Monthly meetings are undertaken with the Cabinet Member to update on progress.

## Action Plan

Priority Area	Desired Outcomes	Activities
Future Housing Need	Older people will have access to a range of suitable housing in a location of their choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners to review the current evidence of future housing need and take action</li> <li>• Work with Planning colleagues to ensure that Planning policies are in place and acted upon to ensure that new developments include adequate provision for older people</li> <li>• Work with partners and registered providers to look at their own stock and plan for future needs including Extra Care</li> </ul>
Delivering Adaptations	Improved information and advice, access to housing options, quick adaptations for those that need them, access to housing advice/options for those that might not be eligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support the county wide Transformation of Access to Adapted Housing</li> <li>• Working with partners to deliver Amber Valley's contribution to the agreed action plan to include;</li> <li>• Improved information and advice about options to meet the needs of those requiring adapted housing</li> <li>• Improved housing options advice</li> <li>• Improved speed of delivery from start to finish</li> <li>• Improved recycling and better use of adapted homes</li> </ul>
Delivering Housing Advice	Housing advice setting out options is widely available, accessible and older people are exercising the choices offered Greater emphasis on the prevention agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with partners to improve the coordination and access to housing advice including improving referral mechanisms.</li> <li>• Continue to raise awareness of housing amongst social and health care professionals to increase the number of effective referrals</li> <li>• Work with partners to optimise advice for owner occupiers about planning ahead</li> </ul>
Helping People to Stay Put and Remain Independent	Reduced number of homes in disrepair and evidence of loans working effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to promote the services that enable residents to stay warm and safe in their own homes</li> <li>• Focus on tackling fuel poverty for older people and in doing so supporting the Derbyshire Anti-Poverty Strategy and the Council's own Affordable Warmth Strategy</li> <li>• Contribute to Falls Prevention activity</li> <li>• Support the delivery of Local Strategic Health Partnership priorities which includes Older people</li> </ul>