

Housing and Ageing: Linking strategy to future delivery for Scotland, Wales and England 2030





From left to right:

Dr Vikki McCall; Kevin Stewart, Minister for Local Government and Housing (Scottish Government); Rebecca Evans, Minister for Housing and Regeneration (Welsh Government); Professor Judith Phillips

In May 2018, we held a series of events with practitioners, older adults and policy makers from diverse areas of Scotland, England and Wales that share similar housing and ageing issues.

Our goal was to create a set of co-designed recommendations for the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments, which would identify specific priorities and recommendations for the housing and ageing agenda – as a driver to get housing ready for the increasing future generations of older people. We must act now if we are going to meet the housing needs of future generations by 2030.

The programme shared possible practice between Scotland, England and Wales, and recommendations that were developed by advisory groups within each jurisdiction. Event participants shared their knowledge, analysed policy challenges and priorities, sought to understand how policy is experienced by older people, and discussed what we can do to prepare for 2030. They also played a Serious Game, where they explored the potential long-term impacts of different policies, to help examine the issues we face and decide what to do about them.

Headline Recommendations

Over 200 people from Scotland, England and Wales were involved in gathering these insights and co-creating the recommendations. The unequivocal focus and conclusion of the Housing and Ageing programme was the recommendation to:

‘Place housing at the heart of service integration’

Housing must be an integrated element within an ageing society, where we start with a person- and family-centred approach, involving inclusive communities and holistic thinking. Housing should be at the centre of attempts to support older adults, not on the edges, which is how the current situation is often perceived within health and social care integration.

Secondary linked recommendations from the Housing and Ageing programme were:

- ▶ Invest in early intervention and prevention within the home and community
- ▶ Achieve meaningful coproduction/co-working and consultation with older people
- ▶ Focus on accessible information and advice for older people living in urban and rural communities
- ▶ Build new suitable housing, such as intergenerational and lifetime homes that are adaptable, flexible, inclusive and affordable across all tenures

These were proposals that participants would like to be considered by the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments. Overwhelmingly, these recommendations point to a proposal to support people ageing in the right place, with clear elements of learning from services, organisations and older people across the UK. Ageing in place has been a key theoretical and policy driver in recent years (Sixsmith and Sixsmith, 2008; Sixsmith, et al., 2017). This stipulates that the preferred environment in which to age is at home and in the community. In achieving this, housing supports are needed that encourage older adults to live independently, co-located in a community of choice and surrounded by services and amenities that meet the often complex and changing requirements of old age (Woolrych and Sixsmith, 2017; Greasley-Adams, et al., 2017).

This report proposes the creation of a Commissioner for Ageing in England and Scotland, similar to the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales, and to create a platform to prepare the housing sector for ageing and ensure cross-national working, knowledge exchange and change across the UK.



Bringing together Scotland, England and Wales to exchange knowledge on Housing and Ageing

A key question addressed by the Housing and Ageing programme was: what progress is being made on the implementation of policy strategies for older people and by whom?

Judith Phillips, Deputy Principal (Research) and Professor of Gerontology at the University of Stirling outlined the imperative to implement recommendations from the reports on housing and older people in England (HAPPI 3), Scotland (Age, Home and Community) and Wales (Our Housing AGenda: meeting the aspirations of older people in Wales).

The shared policy challenges we face across the UK are:

- ▶ Meeting the housing needs and expectations of current and future generations of older people, particularly within the context of intergenerational equity
- ▶ The challenge of ensuring an integrated policy response with health and social care, environment and the economy
- ▶ The economic imperative to tackle fuel poverty and energy efficiency through innovative housing design for older people, and the opportunity for housing to address social issues such as loneliness and isolation

A shared priority of the three administrations is to provide inclusive housing that enables older people to live interdependently and age in the right place. Some of the key things to consider in this area are: the use of innovative technologies, including artificial intelligence and robotics; smart housing and community design that incorporates older people's sense of home and identity beyond just 'bricks and mortar'; and the importance of putting older people at the heart of coproduction within policy.

Professor Phillips noted that we need an intersectional, inter-professional and interdisciplinary perspective. No one sector can do this alone and we need to get smarter in how we collaborate – with communities, business and industry, planners and government – to take some of these ideas forward.

Insight into the current thinking around Housing and Ageing policy

As part of the Housing and Ageing programme, Kevin Stewart, Minister for Local Government and Housing in Scotland, and Rebecca Evans, Minister for Housing and Regeneration in Wales, addressed policy makers and influencers at one of the key events that brought experts on housing and ageing from Scotland, England and Wales together. This provided valuable insight into the current thinking around the future direction for housing and ageing.

Kevin Stewart pointed out that by 2030 there will be over 600,000 people aged 75 or over in Scotland, and that we will need to ensure there is suitable housing and services for individuals to continue living independently at home, maintaining their connections with people and place.

'When we first published Age, Home and Community in 2011,' said Kevin Stewart, 'we set out a vision to make housing and housing-related support work well for older people.' Progress has been made towards that vision, including: updating local planning regulations to better reflect the needs of older people; introducing a Help to Buy scheme for over-60s; supporting development of a dementia and housing design guide; and funding advice organisations. Kevin Stewart acknowledged that there is still more work to be done and further noted that not making any progress is detrimental to the health and wellbeing of older people, communities and societies:

'We need to think about the human cost of not doing this, and the cost to the public purse if it's not done.'

For Scotland, the emphasis was on the desire to not be bound by a national target, and instead to support local authorities and housing associations to use common sense to provide the housing needed. The future of older people's homes in Scotland will not just be about housing and adaptations, but will be connected to other Scottish Government strategies, and will take into consideration issues such as loneliness and social isolation. In summary:

'It's never too early to start thinking about where and how we will live as we grow older. We should all be leading by example and thinking about our future housing requirements early enough to plan rather than reacting to a crisis situation when there are fewer choices available.'

In the context of Wales, Rebecca Evans, Minister for Housing and Regeneration, said that 'responding imaginatively to the needs and interests of an ageing population is one of the most important challenges facing all our governments.' A core part of the Welsh Government's national strategy, *Prosperity for All*, is sharpening the role housing plays in improving wellbeing in the older population, which Rebecca Evans acknowledges cannot be done in isolation from the social care agenda.

A 2017 report, *Our Housing AGenda: meeting the housing aspirations of older people*, from the expert advisory group chaired by Professor Judith Phillips, detailed recommended actions in several areas, including:

- ▶ Improving understanding of the housing requirements of older people
- ▶ Widening housing choice
- ▶ Developing a planning system that prioritises our ageing population
- ▶ Making housing more affordable and incentivising change

A core message from the report was that services should be strengthened to support and enable older people to live independently in their homes for as long as possible. Influenced by this, the Welsh Government has introduced a new system, called *Enable*, for providing small-scale aids and adaptations. It is designed to simplify and speed up the process of supporting older people's health needs by determining the most efficient way to deliver aids and adaptations.

The Welsh Government is also supporting the health, social care and housing sectors to work more collaboratively through regional partnership boards, and is considering how best to develop a *Help to Stay* policy. It was noted that there was a move towards a more scalable, strategic program of capital investment with housing at its core – one that will prioritise accommodation-led solutions that are explicitly designed to lessen the demand on social care budgets.



The current position for Housing and Ageing

The *Future of an Ageing Population* report noted that a key theme is housing and neighbourhoods, which includes thinking ‘beyond the building’ (Harper, et al., 2016). While existing research has focused on the development and design of lifetime homes and neighbourhoods and associated physical-design guidelines, this has overlooked the notion of home within the context of community and the need to support a sense of place and belonging, i.e. creating psychological, social and environmental supports that provide a viable environment in which to age (Phillips, et al., 2011). This section gives a summary of points from the Housing and Ageing programme to give insight into the current situation.

Where are we in Wales?

- ▶ Diversity of location in relation to the ageing population with concentrations of older people in rural areas and the Valley communities in South Wales
- ▶ A high proportion of population provides intense unpaid care in the UK, particularly in post-industrial areas of South Wales
- ▶ Government has taken an ‘expert witness’ approach to determining priorities for older people’s housing
- ▶ Mission critical areas:
 - ▶ understanding the needs and preferences of older people
 - ▶ increasing choice in the housing market
 - ▶ using technology to be innovative in housing design
 - ▶ helping older people live with confidence and as part of the community
 - ▶ ensuring older people’s needs are prioritised in planning
 - ▶ making housing more affordable and incentivising change

Where are we in Scotland?

- ▶ Integrated joint boards, bringing health and social care together and pooling budgets
- ▶ Biggest challenge in rural areas not anticipating future needs, but having enough people of working age to provide the necessary services (e.g. planning to meet needs of ageing population by building care home in Kirkwall and units of housing with extra care)
- ▶ Scottish Government is seeking to develop more affordable retirement housing to offer different housing choices for the mid-market.
- ▶ Age Home and Community: A Strategy for Housing for Scotland’s Older People: 2012 – 21 launched the next phase in 2018.

Where are we in England?

- ▶ No strategy in place around housing and ageing since 2008 (with no current plans)
- ▶ Core theme around supporting people to maintain their existing home
- ▶ A split between social care and housing departments
- ▶ 83% of all ages want age-inclusive products, services and environments
- ▶ 83% of all ages want to mix with different ages and generations
- ▶ Recommendation to spend more on preventative adaptation to the home

There are shared challenges in Scotland, England and Wales, and good practice to learn from all areas. This is in the context of increasing policy integration between housing, health and social care (McCall, et al., 2017), which impacts older people more than any other age category (Griffiths and McCall, 2015). The next section now looks to the future and outlines the key approach and themes.

Looking to the future: Key themes from the Housing and Ageing programme

Knowledge exchange priorities for the programme focused on the importance of a sense of place and belonging, which is articulated through supports for active living, social participation and meaningful involvement in the community. Preserving autonomy, independence, empowerment and accessibility in terms of the provision of home are the key goals of the Housing and Ageing programme.



This approach set out the context for multiple insights, which are summarised below.

Ageing in place – looking at housing from a more holistic perspective

Professor Judith Sixsmith, Chair in Health Related Research at the University of Dundee

When building housing for older people, we need to think about more than the bricks and mortar. Firstly, a home is more than four walls – the physical, psychological and social aspects of ‘home’ all come together, and if you change one, you impact the others. Secondly, housing and community are integrally interconnected. We need to think about changing communities to be more age-friendly and intergenerational. We need to view older people not as a burden to be segregated, but as people who can actively contribute to the life of the community. Not dependent, not independent, but interdependent. Thirdly, we need to think about housing in terms of the changing dynamics of the person and the environment. People grow older and their requirements for living at home change. Getting the appropriate housing adaptations in place when required can mean the difference between ‘staying put’ or enforced relocation. Similarly, the physical and social environments of home and community are constantly changing, creating environments which may no longer ‘fit’ the person’s social, health and wellbeing requirements for a good quality of life.



Taken together, this means we also need to consider that ageing in place may not always be the right decision for people. Sometimes it is better that older people move on to new accommodations as their health and social circumstances change. We must challenge this notion of ageing in place as a uniquely positive force in an older person’s life and focus instead on ageing in the right place.



Age-friendly communities

Professor Judith Sixsmith, Chair in Health Related Research at the University of Dundee and Dr Ryan Woolrych, Associate Professor in Urban Studies at Heriot-Watt University

Housing an ageing population needs to incorporate a holistic, age-friendly neighbourhood approach. Age-friendly neighbourhoods are communities where policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to enable older people to ‘age actively’ – to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society. Homes and housing are central to this. Housing supports located in a neighbourhood of choice, with accessible outdoor spaces, opportunities for social participation and civic engagement, and next to transport networks and other assets are a desirable environment in which to age. Homes located in communities without these supports will fail to support older adults in sustaining a high quality of life in old age. The regeneration of town centres and urban areas should put older adults’ housing front and centre in redevelopment attempts.

Rethink attitudes and values in older people’s housing development

Dr Friedrike Ziegler, Researcher in Urban Planning and Ageing for the Dwell Project

Findings from a co-designed project with older people in Sheffield highlighted the importance of working with developers to explore options for older people’s housing. Speaking to the local older population, many people wanted to downsize into the city centre, but this often contrasted with some developer assumptions around it being ‘the right time’, who tended to base their building decisions on housing needs assessments.

Other developers, however, took a more proactive, innovative approach, and focused on understanding not just what older people needed – but what they wanted. They understood that diverse housing is needed – there’s no one-size-fits-all. Because older people are not an abstract, stereotypical group – they are us, in the future. A good starting point for development is: Would I want to live there?

The importance of evidence in policy & ageing

Jeremy Porteus, Managing Director of Housing LIN

Most older people’s accommodation is within the social sector in Scotland, with only limited provision provided by the private sector. Jeremy Porteus stressed the importance of understanding what people need and referred to the Strategic Housing for Older People (SHOP) initiative prepared by Housing LIN.

Jeremy Porteus highlighted that the shortage of older people’s purpose-built housing has brought about similar circumstances as those witnessed in hospital with delayed transfer of care and people often stuck in unsuitable, under-occupied housing in the absence of any alternative accommodation choices.

According to the Local Government Associations review on Housing and Ageing Population (2017) there is a shortfall of some 400,000 dwellings in England. Holistic solutions between developers, planners, central and local government must be explored (<https://www.local.gov.uk/housing-our-ageingpopulation>)

Summing up, ‘CollaborAGE’, as a baby-boomer led coproduction that shapes markets, promotes interdependence and creates inviting communities. (<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/blogs/Baby-boomers-can-lead-us-from-new-age-to-CollaborAGE/>).

Many thanks to Steven Tolson for his contribution to this summary.

Focus on delivery mechanisms to link strategy to future delivery

Zhan McIntyre, Policy lead, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations

The housing sector is up to the challenge of meeting the housing needs of an ageing population but we need to address the challenges now so we’re ready for the future.

Shifting from reacting to poor health to proactively promoting good health and wellbeing is at the heart of the Scottish Government’s aim. Often our health and social care partners will spend money to deal with the consequences of poor health. We’re spending that money anyway – isn’t it better to see how we can prevent the problems from happening in the first place?

McIntyre urged health and social care partners to speak to people in the social housing sector: ‘We can be your change agents. We have the community infrastructure that you can only dream of. We can bring the added value for every pound you give us, we will maximise it.’

Putting community researchers at the heart of research

Dr Jane Robertson, Lecturer in Dementia Studies at the University of Stirling

The *A Good Life* project, coproduced with 30 older volunteer community researchers, was designed to uncover the essence of a good quality of life in later years in Scotland, how to achieve it, and how this differs if a person develops a long-term condition such as dementia.

Gathering data from around 1000 older people across Scotland, the research showed that housing was intrinsically linked to multiple themes, including security, community, transport, mobility, and good health care as people developed long-term conditions. Findings demonstrated that most people who took part in the research were satisfied with their housing, but they were less satisfied if they had a health issue, memory problem or identified as a carer. There were also concerns about the cost of heating, safety and security, and the importance of living independently at home for as long as possible. Many respondents were concerned that there weren't many options for downsizing to different types of accommodation. Keeping socially connected through appropriate housing was an important theme connected with maintaining quality of life.

Community researcher Rog Harrison concluded by saying, 'Sometimes what academics thought we wanted wasn't what I wanted', which highlights the needs to consult and coproduce with older people about their housing needs and wishes for the future.



The importance of collaboration

Jim Eadie, Age Scotland

Jim Eadie emphasised the Ageing challenge facing all developed societies, which in Scotland means that by 2037 there will be over half a million more people aged 65 and over. He said that by listening to the voices of older people, reflecting that in policy and practice and by working collaboratively across different sectors we can achieve the shared ambition of allowing older people to live at home independently for as long as possible.

By way of background the Monitoring and Advisory Group includes COSLA, the Scottish Older People's Assembly, ALACHO, housing associations, third sector housing, disability and carers organisations, tenants' representatives, private house builders and landlords. According to the refresh of the strategy published in 2018 "This group has helped guide and influence the First Five Years report, as well as helping to define the content and purpose of the next phase." (Link to Strategy: <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00539786.pdf>)

A rights-based approach to housing

Justine Bradd, Housing Rights Development Worker at Edinburgh Tenants Federation

Following on from themes of coproduction, the Housing Rights in Practice project, which was aimed at helping tenants realise their rights to adequate housing – security of tenures, habitability, and accessibility – highlighted the opportunities of taking a human rights-based approach to housing.

Several tenants in Leith, who were experiencing inequalities and potential housing-standard issues, gathered evidence about their living conditions with benchmarks they developed using international human-rights frameworks. Research including face-to-face interviews, surveys of homes, and storytelling was also conducted.

Key issues identified included waste, substandard heating, dampness, and lack of transparency in billing. Communication strategies were developed and residents successfully engaged with local-authority officers and negotiated action plans. A £3m investment for improvement works was undertaken, including new kitchens, bathrooms, heating, windows and ventilation, and outlooks for the tenants are now decidedly better.



Putting democracy at the heart of building for the ageing population

Rose Gilroy, Professor of Ageing, Planning and Policy at Newcastle University

Developers may tend to view housing needs as: young professionals who want city-centre apartments, families who want houses with a garden for the kids – and older people, who want cookie-cutter sheltered housing.

Academics, local authorities, businesspeople and community workers were brought together to figure out how to co-create meaningful structural changes to solve this issue. By the end of their first meeting the group had decided they wanted to build affordable, sustainable housing that works for everybody, that responds to change, and in which people can grow older.

The team then brought together health professionals, architects, older people, parents and children to examine cooking, dining, socialising, bathing and sleeping spaces, plus access and mobility – and sought to find a balance that would work for everyone. The group is now negotiating land values in central Newcastle, where they are excited to start building their first 48 units.

Summary

The themes and talking points from the programme emphasised that:

- ▶ Talks, decisions and change must start with and include older people
- ▶ We must start thinking of housing as a much wider, holistic concept that takes into consideration place and belonging
- ▶ Integration in the housing sector is wider than we imagine and includes security, community, transport, mobility, and good health and social care, but challenges and barriers remain
- ▶ The housing sector has the most potential in the preventative agenda
- ▶ It is not just about ageing, but ageing well

In the next section, we'll see how these issues were discussed and played out in the Serious Game.



Welcome to Hometown: a fictional place devised for our 'Serious Game' about housing and ageing.

This strategy game was used to collect evidence through a creative, participatory process that stimulated discussion and focused on the future. It allowed participants to think creatively about micro, macro, internal and external concerns that can impact strategic and policy environments, and to negotiate potential obstacles for delivering housing and ageing strategies by 2030.

Bringing together stakeholders from the housing, health and social care sectors, the game was designed to mobilise a diverse team of researchers and knowledge users to think beyond common boundaries. This transdisciplinary approach helped generate different ideas for delivering key policy outcomes across Scotland and the UK.

The game was played on a board depicting Hometown: the people who lived there, the different districts, available housing, environmental quality, transport links and more. It was set across twelve years, with a fresh budget introduced every four years.

Across three days (1st, 18th and 24th May 2018), we invited three groups of people to play – practitioners, stakeholders (mainly older adults) and policy makers. Facilitators were integrated into each team for support and to gather data.

Players were split into four teams:

Policy Makers

- ▶ In charge of allocating budget, which could be used to:
 - > subsidise sheltered living, residential living and nursing care
 - > subsidise new housing developments
 - > support the Service Provider team
 - > support charities
- ▶ Concerned with public approval ratings

Developers

- ▶ In charge of building new developments
- ▶ Needed planning permission from Policy Makers
- ▶ Could add housing or care capacity in any district
- ▶ Could upgrade houses to Lifetime Standard for an extra investment
- ▶ Aimed to maximise their return on investment



Service Providers

- ▶ In charge of providing effective support to and mitigating decline of Older People
- ▶ Could provide peripatetic and fixed services, community transport, and housing adaptations
- ▶ Needed funding from Policy Makers

Older People

- ▶ Represented the interests of all Older People on the board
- ▶ Needed to keep track of people's health, wellbeing and income
- ▶ Could move people or request subsidy/housing adaptations if any of the above declined

These events went beyond multidisciplinary working, towards a more comprehensive transdisciplinary development. Although 'multi-, inter-, and trans- reflect increasing levels of shared understanding, language, involvement, and knowledge ... interdisciplinary collaborations are more interactional and characterised by bi-directional knowledge transfer, where team members not only contribute knowledge to the project, but gain new perspectives through the team's joint efforts,' enhancing the ability to tackle real world problems (Boger, et al., 2016).

The events intended to combine different approaches to knowledge from academia, policy, practice and lived experiences of home, housing and ageing to cross-cut boundaries. We took a transdisciplinary approach because this is about 'the cooperative creation of a consensus' (Boger, et al., 2016) to build a set of recommendations to support policy and practice in Housing and Ageing for 2030.

In the face of budget cuts, an increasing older population, and decreasing health, wellbeing and income across the board, our teams had to work hard to appropriately house the ageing population. Let's see how they fared...

Game 1: Integrating services to improve wellbeing

Equipped with their budget for the next four years, the Policy Makers discussed how to spend it. A Big Lottery plan for one of Hoptown's poorest districts? They'd regenerate the area, with input from the people. Meanwhile, the Developers, Service Providers and Older People had their own ideas.

The Developers wanted to build lifetime homes, mostly in wealthier areas so they could get a better return and have more money to invest in the future. The Service Providers wanted to implement peripatetic services, a public information campaign, and transport links throughout town.

The Older People's main concern was having a choice in where they lived. Their incomes had dropped and they could no longer afford to stay in their current homes. Without subsidy, they'd be forced to move to a cheaper location.

During negotiations with all parties, the Policy Makers were confronted with reality: there was too much to do. The regeneration plan evaporated and 40% of the budget was put towards improving the environmental quality in the east.

The Policy Makers gave some of the budget directly to the Older People, which they used to subsidise those who could no longer afford to stay in their homes. The Developers built haphazardly, with little direction, and nobody could afford to move into their new-builds in the west.

Four years later...

Budget cuts. Deteriorating health and wellbeing. More Older People needing to be homed in suitable housing. If this budget wasn't allocated appropriately, people were going to end up homeless – ten were already at risk.

Discussions leaned heavily towards whether it was better to subsidise people in the wealthier areas or move them to more affordable ones and risk damaging their health and wellbeing. Subsidies would mean less money for future sustainability – or anything else.

The Policy Makers again devolved a portion of the budget to the Older People – a third of which was used to subsidise a single person in the west. Many still had to move to less affluent parts of town. Approval ratings did go up, however.

The Policy Makers were reluctant to give much budget to the Developers, because previously they only spent it in high-return areas, which hadn't helped the now-emerging homelessness crisis. Participants that included

representatives from service such as the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service noted that prevention and wider integration was key to tackling this.

The Developers talked to the Older People to find out what they wanted: the decision to develop the east side of town was unanimous, and only five Older People remained living in the west after this. 'A bit of a mixed town would be better, wouldn't it?' said one Older Person.

The Service Providers focused on mitigating the damage to the wellbeing of those who moved. They would have preferred to adapt people's homes and introduce more services to allow them to stay where they were, but it wasn't financially viable.

Another four years pass...

Another budget cut, further deteriorating health, and even more Older People needing new homes.

When they realised 60% of the previous budget had been used to subsidise people in wealthy areas, the Policy Makers changed their approach. They decided to focus on building lifetime homes to stem the flow of people moving.

But plans were scuppered: the Older People said they needed the entire budget – and so did the Service Providers. 'If we don't get it, people will be homeless,' said one Older Person. 'Our Service Providers are keeping us afloat,' said another. The Older People wanted to subsidise homes, and the Service Providers wanted to increase wellbeing with better services. Rent control, legislature constraint, and equity release were all discussed.

In the end, they gave the budget to the Older People to share with the Service Providers, who used it to further improve the environmental quality of the east, where most Older People now lived.

The Developers were vexed to learn that after they had built residential housing in East Hoptown, as requested, few had moved in and they'd gotten little return on their investment – again. Learning from their mistakes, they decided to offer a range of viable options to the Older People and let them choose. 'Older people still need space standards – you can't make assumptions about what they want,' said one Developer.

By 2030, there was a clear tension between meeting the immediate needs of the people and investing in properties for the future, and one question was on everyone's lips: 'How do you plan for the future while also addressing immediate chaos?'



Reflections & Key Themes

- ▶ Integrating services was one of the most effective means to improve wellbeing.
- ▶ It became easy for developers when they had a clear idea of what the policy makers and older people wanted.
- ▶ There was a need for mid-market rent for older people and a need to help people move.
- ▶ Negotiation was necessary for long-term change.
- ▶ Developing a strong collective voice was important.
- ▶ Starting with an intervention approach and trying not to make people move was challenging.
- ▶ Assumptions about older people's priorities were challenged.
- ▶ There was lots of guessing about what's best for older people.
- ▶ Working through problems like this in real life would be a dream.
- ▶ Frustration that there was no vision in development – people wanted to maintain the status quo.
- ▶ Most successful was a mix of policy makers and local people working with service providers and developers.
- ▶ Essential that we work outside of existing structures and silos to achieve new outcomes for older people.
- ▶ The powerful nature of collaboration came across very strongly.
- ▶ It's a challenge to be the change agent and think beyond the micro.
- ▶ Communication barriers meant people didn't know what other groups were trying to achieve.
- ▶ Communication needs to be better across all agencies.
- ▶ Trying to encourage older people to give ideas that would prove positive for viable communities was a barrier.
- ▶ Things greatly improved when everyone worked together and realised there were many goals but the important one was improving health and wellbeing.
- ▶ More time was needed to explain a long-term sustainability plan to engage other third-sector providers to take on some of the preventative early intervention empowerment agenda.
- ▶ There was a tendency to think in traditional terms and not be imaginative or ambitious.
- ▶ Sometimes things can appear difficult at the beginning, but working through barriers piece by piece can produce an achievable outcome.
- ▶ We need to ensure the voice of the older people is heard by decision makers.
- ▶ There are so many different needs which need to be met on limited funds.

Game 2: Balancing the factions

Despite having the next four years' budget to hand, the Policy Makers didn't want to make any decisions about what to do with it before speaking to the Older People, nor did they want to build housing for its own sake. Their mission was keeping people in their own homes for as long as possible.

Meanwhile, the Developers were consulting with the Older People to find out what type of housing they wanted. Unfortunately, they didn't get a clear message. The Policy Makers had the same issue when they finally spoke to the Older People, so the Policy Makers and the Developers talked amongst themselves.

The Developers wanted to build flats in the town centre, where they could potentially make a good profit, but had difficulty getting planning permission from the Policy Makers. They eventually got it, after making a vague commitment to develop low-cost housing in a less desirable area in the future.

With the budget allocated to them, the Service Providers implemented a public information campaign to help prevent decline, and installed a community care centre in the east, where it would be accessible to residents of the poorer parts of town. They also added a bus service between the town centre and the run-down Anakin Estate. The Older People's wellbeing increased as a result of these interventions.

Four years later...

A new, lower budget. An increased ageing population. Lower health, wellbeing and income all round. The Developers, having made a profit from the flats they built, debated short-term profitability vs longer-term investment, and considered strategic placement of nursing homes for the longer term. However, the Policy Makers gave little steer on this, instead focusing their efforts on helping people remain in their homes.

The two teams reached an agreement: the Developers could build more potentially profitable housing, as long as they built the affordable housing previously discussed, which they were given a small subsidy for. The Developers attempted to find out what sort of housing the Older People wanted, but received conflicting feedback. The Developers chose to build bungalows in the Anakin Estate, but most of them remained empty and the Developers made a loss.

Budget cuts meant the public information campaign was shut down, however a lottery grant meant community transport could keep running. The Older People requested peripatetic services in the Anakin Estate, but noticing a steeper decline in the people's wellbeing in Sunny Fields, another run-down area, the Service Providers decided to implement the services there instead. This again increased wellbeing in the area.

The Older People requested subsidies from the Policy Makers to help keep the people with the lowest incomes in their own homes, which they were granted.

Another four years pass...

More budget cuts. More older people. More decline in wellbeing. The Policy Makers decided to allocate more money to services and community-based support, as they realised they were in danger of prioritising housing-led change, which conflicted with their original aim. 'Who wants to live in a home disconnected from the community?' said one Policy Maker.

The Service Providers discussed among themselves which services to cut if they didn't get the budget they needed, but found that this wasn't necessary when they spoke to the Policy Makers. The teams worked together to keep the fixed and peripatetic services running in the poorer areas, to prevent the wellbeing of those living there from dropping any further.

The Developers, meanwhile, concluded that reported demand wasn't a good guide to actual need, and wondered how to fill the empty housing they'd built. They discussed dropping rents, subsidising services and influencing the Older People with advertising and persuasion.

The Older People felt they had not communicated their needs effectively to anybody, and found it difficult to deal with the rate at which their health, wellbeing and income were declining. By 2030, most people were homed in places they could afford, although many had been displaced from their communities which could affect their social networks.



Reflections & Key Themes

- ▶ It was difficult to balance the budget between the various factions.
- ▶ Trying to understand and negotiate with other sectors and to take on board their perspectives and different needs was hard.
- ▶ With goodwill all round, anything can be achieved.
- ▶ It is difficult to please everyone.
- ▶ People did not really know what they wanted.
- ▶ It was difficult to get agreement in what the old people really wanted.
- ▶ It turned out to be much more complicated than expected.
- ▶ We were a for-profit developer – clearly some of the challenges faced by older adults were probably best met by registered social providers.
- ▶ There's a knock-on effect of all money spent and prioritisation is so important.
- ▶ It's not easy to fund services and meet demands. Resources are limited.
- ▶ It was hard to keep up with the older people who wanted to stay in their own home.
- ▶ The complexity of the problem is enormous!
- ▶ The more joined up approach and having all parties round the table to think to the future worked best.
- ▶ Housing issues are more complicated than a novice can imagine.

Game 3: Realising positive change happens when you all work together

With a fresh budget to hand, the Policy Makers set the tone for the next four years: 'Our priorities are the community's priorities.' However, the only people they told this to were the Developers. Neither the Service Providers nor the Older People came to speak to them.

The Developers' strategy was to build a mix of high-, mid- and low-value developments. They proposed building flats in the Old Town and Market, and lifetime bungalows in two other areas, which was their perception of what people wanted. However, when they spoke to the Older People about their ideas, they were rejected. The Older People instead requested residential living in the most expensive part of town, which the Developers duly built – and nobody moved in.

The Service Providers wanted to set up an advice centre in town and community transport to help people access it, and the Policy Makers agreed and gave them the budget for both. However, some of the Older People complained and said they didn't want an advice centre because they had internet at home; the Service Providers told them it had a web portal. Some of the budget was also used to improve low-quality environments.

The Policy Makers paid for home adaptations and subsidised some people so they could stay in their homes, including people in sheltered housing in an affluent area. The Older People were most concerned with future-proofing, and a lot of money was directed to a single, wealthy person.

Four years later...

Budget cuts, an increased ageing population, and decreased health, wellbeing and income. The Policy Makers discussed the need to subsidise people in the town centre and build different types of housing to give people a wider choice.

After speaking to the Older People, the Developers decided it would be a good idea to introduce residential living to East Hopetown, a relatively low-value area, to protect against people's incomes dropping. The Policy Makers agreed and gave them a subsidy to help fund it, though the Developers often felt the Policy Makers were abdicating responsibility by 'insisting the Older People knew best'. The Developers got a low return this time.

The Service Providers, after getting feedback from the Older People, proposed scrapping the advice centre and turning it into a holistic community hub, offering hot meals, social activities, 'day care with a difference', and more. They said it would be a cheaper provision than sheltered/community living. The Policy Makers agreed, as long as it would be accessible to people with dementia. The Service Providers said it would.

Many Older People had to move home during this period, because of either a decline in health or income. Some were able to stay in their local communities, but others had to move to a different, less affluent part of town. One woman couldn't afford to stay where she was, but couldn't afford to move either, and her wellbeing went down because of debt and stress. Public approval still increased, though.

Another four years pass...

Lower budgets, decreased wellbeing, and more Older People to cater for. The Policy Makers began this term on the defensive: allocating budget to target interventions that subsidise those who could no longer afford their homes.

The Service Providers were quick on the draw, immediately coming to find out how much budget they had, as opposed to previous years when they waited to be told how much they had. When they were told they had the same as they'd had previously, they were surprised. They used the money to keep the community hub open and transport running, though some transport links were shut down (in affluent areas where nobody lived any more) and another was started up in an isolated area out of town.

The Developers reiterated their proposal from several years ago: to build flats in the Old Town and Market. The Policy Makers now gave them permission for this, and the Developers felt quite frustrated that this plan had been overlooked the first time. Overall the Developers had a sense that they weren't trusted or respected, which was damaging to morale.

When three Older People could no longer afford their homes, they put forward the idea of a homeshare, which the Policy Makers readily agreed to. Fortunately, most Older People were able to stay in their homes without subsidy.




Reflections & Key Themes

- ▶ Negotiation with developers regarding location of housing (need) versus best place for them to build (profit) was a barrier.
- ▶ Community voice can be mixed and diverse.
- ▶ Groups often didn't allocate all the money and often looked at social motivations and impact.
- ▶ It's difficult to keep people where they want to be in the face of reducing budgets, reducing personal income and having to move people outwith their communities when suitable accommodation is not available. Highlighted having to balance needs of community with need for profit of developers.
- ▶ Older people weren't clear on what they wanted.
- ▶ Lack of time to engage community/gain consensus. No clear policy i.e. do we really want to build nursing homes?
- ▶ Lack of understanding and recognition of conflicting challenges – losing sight of person-centredness.
- ▶ There was confusion from Policy Makers when presented with an idea/solution that wasn't in their rulebook.
- ▶ Developers and service providers could work together on proposals – link between development and services/infrastructure.
- ▶ We need to be quite careful in relation to housing development and how views are sought. Traditional consultation with community groups and representative groups is probably much less effective than proper market research.
- ▶ Lack of affordable choices tended to push people into sheltered/residential living before their health warranted it.
- ▶ Each change that was made to a person's home/living situation greatly affected service users.
- ▶ The views of the community are very powerful when harnessed and vocalised.
- ▶ Voice of older people not heard as much as it should be; Policy Makers and Service Providers dominated – consultation with older people was a bit tokenistic.
- ▶ Balancing limited resources with Older People's preferences was challenging.
- ▶ Collaboration worked better over time.
- ▶ Developers often put investment in but were out of pocket for many years before getting a return.
- ▶ Difficult to plan too far ahead because you don't know people's needs.
- ▶ Required more talk about individual needs rather than community because so many were low on income. This was reflective of real situations where individuals are given priority and not seen as a larger community issue.
- ▶ Developers need to speak to the community to know what they want and need.
- ▶ It really highlighted power dynamics, the importance of collaboration efforts, and who really has the money.

Following the game, participants used what they'd learned to make key recommendations, which are detailed in the next section.

Recommendations for the UK, Scottish & Welsh Governments

In a final, fourth event – a conference – 80 people cast their votes on the recommendations that emerged from the preceding three events. Attendees were split into groups, each of which cast one star  and 5 votes (*). This forced people to pick one central recommendation. As you'll see below, putting housing at the heart of service integration was a central ambition around taking housing and ageing forward.

'Place housing at the heart of service integration'



- Housing should be at the centre, not the edges, as is the current situation with health and social care integration *****

Communicate, Collaborate & Coproduce



Increase consultation and promote partnership and collaboration with meaningful coproduction and co-working with older people

- Listen to older people. Work in an integrated way across sectors ***
- Ensure any consultations are listened to and not just paper exercises *
- Speak to end users as much as possible as they are experts on their wants and needs *
- Meaningful and real coproduction needs to be a priority ***
- Use a rights-based approach to making decisions and planning for the future **



Focus on information and advice

- Need to fund public information campaign to get people to plan ahead and think about their housing options before a crisis ***

Choices & Communities



Ensure people can Age-in-place

- Keep older people in the environments they are familiar with and provide every necessary facility that can improve their living **
- Invest in and support the development of community-focused services that foster genuine social connections, e.g. shared lives and home structure **



Create mixed communities and housing that supports intergenerational exchange

- Older people and those with dementia are best cared for in a varied community where they are known by a mixed group of people **
- Build agile and adaptable places for people (irrespective of age – intergenerational) **

Be innovative & ambitious



Communities, local authorities and housing associations should work more closely with building developers/planners to find innovative practice *****



Invest in support services and look for imaginative solutions including learning from existing successful models *****

- Capitalise with care and repair – need to adapt existing properties to enable people to remain in their own homes **
- Focus on upgrading current housing stock for varying needs across all tenures **
- Invest in services to support people at home – housing with care, community transport, adaptations, care & repair services **

Look to the future



Build suitable accessible housing, including lifetime homes, and listen to the people who are going to use it, across all tenures ***

- Keep building social housing, focused on local needs **
- More opportunities for downsizing **
- Increase housing choices for all older people *****



Plan for the longer term and invest in early intervention and prevention

- Focus on what is needed for long-term sustainability, not reactive quick fixes **
- Look at future needs, not just immediate, and make appropriate plans and resources available **
- Reduce the need for adaptations by making housing accessible in the first place; use occupational therapy in strategy **
- Focus on early intervention and keeping people well (which saves money in the longer term) *****

Conclusion

The UK is still woefully underprepared for ageing, but the evidence also shows routes for positive change. Throughout this project, we saw evidence of real support and political buy-in for ongoing and future solutions. Our key finding was the importance of enabling people to 'age in the right place'.

The Serious Game offered a dynamic, creative way to break down barriers and help understand how we can work together to prepare the UK's housing sector for ageing. It gave insight into how negotiation and communication can enable services to support people in their homes and to increase their wellbeing. The best results for older people happened when all the groups were around the table together, negotiating and making collective decisions.

We believe an area- and housing-based approach to ageing can open avenues for service integration. The most important step to making that happen would be breaking down the barriers we saw between policy makers, service providers, developers and people living in communities.

A unifying focus on ageing that can work across silos and boundaries could support more integration, partnership, collaboration and inclusion, bringing everyone together for the essential work of preparing for ageing, and seeing house and home nested within communities.

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