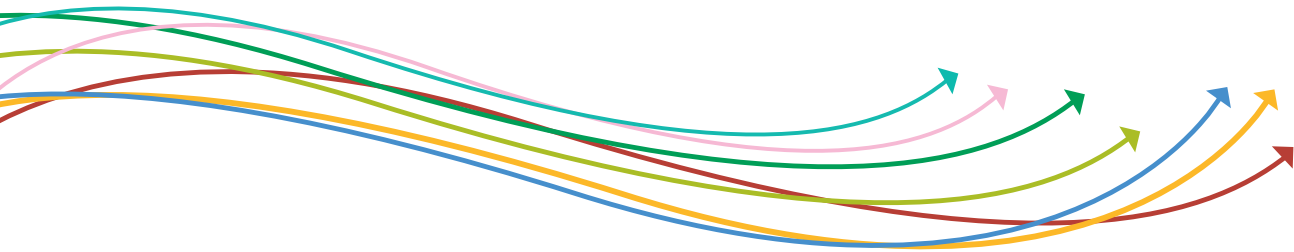


Housing for Independent Living Strategy



Introduction

The Housing for Independent Living Strategy sets out our plans to address the housing and related support needs of the increasing ageing population living within Bolton.

It confirms the commitment of the Bolton Health and Well-Being Board, to work in partnership, to support the aims of the Strategy and take action to ensure that homes meet the needs and aspirations of older people.

The projected increase in the ageing population, often living with long term conditions and disabilities, at a time of serious financial constraints is a significant challenge for health and social care services. As services are redesigned to provide home and community based care and early interventions, the 'home' becomes a vital component in developing successful integrated services.

People want to be supported to stay in their existing home or to move to more suitable accommodation when they choose. The challenge is for health, social care and the housing sector, to work together to reduce the barriers that can prevent this and to do it in a cost effective way.

Small investments in housing services can have an immediate and significant effect on health and wellbeing. To make the most positive contribution possible, the housing sector will need to provide homes that are safe, warm and accessible, that people want to live in and that allows them to have a high quality of life and contribute to their community. This will require new ways of thinking to get the best out of assets, pool resources, engage with local communities and to co-ordinate, commission and provide housing with flexible care and support services.

The strategy sets out our intention to continue to actively work in partnership, supporting the work of those commissioning health and care services, providing advice and community services, and maintaining and developing homes, all of which are fundamental to achieving the goal of communities fit for an ageing population. We will also ensure that older people themselves are able to influence the development of services and new homes in the borough.

The strategy recognises the limitations of the current climate, and focuses on finding viable, practical and if possible, simple solutions to ensure that we can collectively achieve our ambitions to improve the quality of life for older residents.

Our ambition and priorities

Our ambition is; 'To provide warm, safe homes that enable people to live independent and healthy lives.'

This strategy sets a clear vision of how we will achieve this for older residents in Bolton, supporting them to live independently in the right home for as long as they wish to do so. Delivering the priorities set out through this strategy will enable us to do this. They will also support us to make informed commissioning decisions and improve on our current service delivery.

Our priorities have been developed from a strong evidence base and understanding of the older population in Bolton. We have used our local knowledge and data, combined with engagement with our partners, key stakeholders and older people. This has ensured that our strategy takes account of all future needs and aspirations in regard to older people's housing and that our priorities have been truly co-produced.

Partnership working is emphasised throughout the strategy, as it will only be delivered by close working with the service providers, commissioners and customers that have helped us to write it.

Priority 1:

To improve and co-ordinate information, advice and access to housing and support services

What we know:

Many older people and their families rely on advice, information and guidance to make informed decisions about their future housing options.

As services move towards digitalisation of information and advice, it is important to recognise that older people may not have access to IT or the ability to use it or simply prefer to speak to someone who can spend time explaining the options.

Housing is complicated and involves a range of tenures, providers and services. Current structures and procedures are not always supportive of older people's needs and housing services for older people require greater publicity and improved pathways that are clear and accessible.

There is a need to make sure that when older people want to explore issues like downsizing, moving to supported housing or equity release, they can easily access help and advice.

What we will do:

- We will work with health and social care colleagues to ensure the provision of housing advice and preventative services at the point of social care assessment or diagnosis of health condition.
- We will develop an Older Persons housing 'offer' for Bolton, including a clear menu of options for both customers and professionals.
- Our housing offer will be marketed universally, as well as to key groups including owner occupiers, self-funders, carers, Staying Well clients and Integrated Neighbourhood Teams.
- Our older residents will get the support they need when applying for and accessing the Choice Based Lettings system.
- Ensure housing information, advice and training is integral to Health and Social Care Integration and Care Act implementation.
- Enhance the monitoring and quality assurance of front end housing advice for Access Bolton services.

Priority 2: To increase the capacity of preventative services and the role of the community

What we know:

The Care Act 2014 aims to improve people's quality of life, delay and reduce the need for care, ensure positive care experiences and safeguard adults from harm. It calls for a shared vision and culture of cooperation and coordination and also for services that will address the wider determinants of health e.g. housing.

The vast majority of older people in Bolton are owner occupiers and will continue to live in their current homes. In order to remain healthy and achieve a good standard of living in their existing homes, older people may need assistance to keep them in good repair, make adaptations and to improve their warmth.

For those whose income is low the upkeep of the home presents a significant issue, which can be life limiting or cause anxiety and stress. Bolton must continue its unique position of being able to provide grant assistance to older and vulnerable customers to ensure that their homes are safe, warm and dry.

At some point, many older people may need to have adaptations made to their home to allow them to access or get around the home or to make it safer and easier to live in. Adaptations can have a significant impact in preventing falls and admission to hospital or residential care, as well as improving the quality of life of the customer and carers. Some people will qualify for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) which is means tested. However there is a gap in the provision of assistance to people who do not need to access a DFG and also for people who need practical support to arrange large non-disability related repairs to their home.

Bolton has a number of housing led services already in place. Care and Repair, is the Council's Home Improvement Agency and Careline is a well-established community alarm service that operates in both the public and private sector. Telecare and the provision of equipment also help to keep older people living independently at home. However, there is scope to

develop these services in line with the wider needs of older people and the preventative agenda and a much wider range of assistive technologies could be developed to provide an alternative to care.

The older community in Bolton has a vital role in developing services and providing peer support. Developing innovative community approaches can help individuals to find non-service solutions and develop community connections and support, with the aim of reduced demand for care and health interventions.

Within the over 65 population in Bolton, 43% are unable to manage at least one domestic task, 35% are unable to manage at least one self-care activity and 57% have a long-term limiting illness. This has implications on service provision within housing, health and social care (PANSI 2014).

The Dementia Partnership's Dementia Prevalence Calculator indicates there are currently 2,012 people aged 65+ living in the community with dementia in Bolton and 869 living in residential accommodation.

What we will do:

- Develop and enhance our preventative housing services (including Care and Repair and interventions for self-funders) to support integration and the delivery of care provision in the home.
- Embed housing and related support interventions into all out health and social care services especially Staying Well, Complex lifestyles, Early Intervention and Prevention and Integrated Neighbourhood Teams.
- The Dementia Strategy and Partnership will be refreshed and include involvement from housing.
- We will develop a Technology Enabled Care Strategy and explore opportunities for these technologies to provide flexible, at home, care services, including a market shaping exercise.
- Develop a broad menu of flexible and cross tenure home care options in line with emerging evidence and policy.
- Build capacity for community led peer to peer support and engagement with older people to ensure they help co-produce future services.

Priority 3: To develop a wider choice of housing options that will support improved health and well-being

What we know:

Bolton has a high percentage of housing for older people however it isn't necessarily fit for the future and is limited largely to social housing provision.

Some Extra Care accommodation was never intended as such, there has been limited investment in the buildings and it is heavily reliant on revenue funding. Sheltered accommodation is unpopular in some locations, whereas in others there continues to be high demand and active resident participation.

The wish of many people is to remain in their existing community and to live independently for as long as possible, this means a 'one size fits all' approach will not be successful. It is important that any new housing schemes are tailored to the local community and at the heart of our neighbourhoods.

Bolton needs to develop a better housing offer for older people that is, mixed tenure, attractive and designed for later life. This means the provision of housing that is 'care ready', appropriately designed to adapt to changing needs and so that care can be received in place when necessary.

Bolton has traditionally been a low wage economy, pension levels in many areas are not at the level identified in some other parts of the country, and property prices are significantly lower than the national and regional levels (in 2014 it was £92,000, compared to the national and regional averages of £172,000 and £110,000). Further divergence in the housing market is likely between older people depending on the size of their capital assets and also their spending power. The provision of a range of housing, with increased choice and options of services, will be essential in meeting the extremes of need in the future.

For those older people who have higher care and support needs, there is a particular requirement to ensure suitable accommodation provision. Most people would prefer to live independently as long as possible rather than living in the communal setting of a Care or Nursing Home. Factors that make accommodation fit for the future are design, desirability and use of technology.

The development of an up to date evidence base specific to older people will be of great benefit to assisting the development of the right types of home to meet older persons' aspirations and needs. Planning policy needs to be adapted to take account of the ageing population and opportunities to promote health and well-being should be encompassed.

The recent "Memorandum of Understanding to Support Joint Action on Improving Health Through the Home", (2014) recognises that the home environment is essential to health and well-being and that good quality homes can prevent, reduce and delay the need for primary care and social care interventions.

What we will do:

- Continue our work further understanding the older persons housing market via ongoing audits of existing stock and schemes across tenures.
- Ensure Planning policy takes into consideration the need and demand for older person's housing and design principles to assist independent living by ensuring the Age Friendly Agenda is adopted across the Council.
- Review the allocations process for extra care schemes and implement a consistent approach.
- Explore opportunities to develop lease management products for older people.
- Develop a Market Position Statement for housing with partners, including Registered Providers, Planning and the Homes and Communities Agency to inform development opportunities.
- Work with older residents to develop 'fit for the future' design standards of the refurbishment and development of older person's housing.
- Identify opportunities for self build, in particular with the BME community.

Priority 4:

To build on the strength of existing partnership arrangements to ensure housing's role is one of leadership and influence.

What we know:

The integration agenda for health and social care, along with new commissioning arrangements provide a challenge and an opportunity for the housing sector. There is an opportunity for housing to influence and support as the new governance structures and models of service delivery develop.

The Care Act 2014 asks for a shared vision and culture of cooperation and coordination across health, social care and local authority roles e.g. as housing commissioners, working closely with public, voluntary and private sector providers to improve services.

The community ethic, support networks and partnership opportunities within Bolton are strong and there is a real commitment to achieve shared goals.

However, there is a need to raise the profile of housing and the role it can play in maintaining independent living. Housing for older people needs champions at all levels of the decision making process to deliver new and innovative solutions and greater links are required with the Health and Wellbeing Board, health and social care integration and other cross cutting strategic groups.

What we will do:

- Ensure there is shared ownership and leadership for delivery of this strategy and its outcomes between Adults, Health and Housing.
- Establish formalised routes and governance arrangements into health and social care strategic groups.
- Engage with the Greater Manchester led health and housing agenda including links to emerging priorities from 'Devo Manc' health work streams.
- Demonstrate the role housing can play in the prevention agenda to support the integration of services.
- Establish key contacts in health and social care to raise awareness of the housing responsibilities and potential solutions identified under the Care Act 2014.

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