

We know that good quality homes and services play a key role in building communities, improving health and wellbeing and supporting people to reach their full potential. In this new series of briefings linked to CIH Scotland's Housing Festival themes we will take a more in depth look at how good quality homes are at the heart of everything we are trying to achieve as a country from reducing inequalities to supporting our ageing population and tackling climate change.

This edition of Homes not Houses focuses on:

Housing and Ageing

Introduction

Scotland has an ageing population. While Scotland has the lowest life expectancy of the UK, we are also living longer. Over the last 35 years the average life expectancy has increased by 7.9 years for men and 5.8 years for women¹.

As the population ages, people may need more support to ensure they can continue to live safely and independently for as long as possible or move home if they need to. Conditions such as dementia which become more prevalent with age will increase demand for accessible homes and support services. It is estimated that 90,000 people in Scotland are living with dementia, with around 3,000 under the age of 65. This means the majority of those with dementia are over the age of 65.

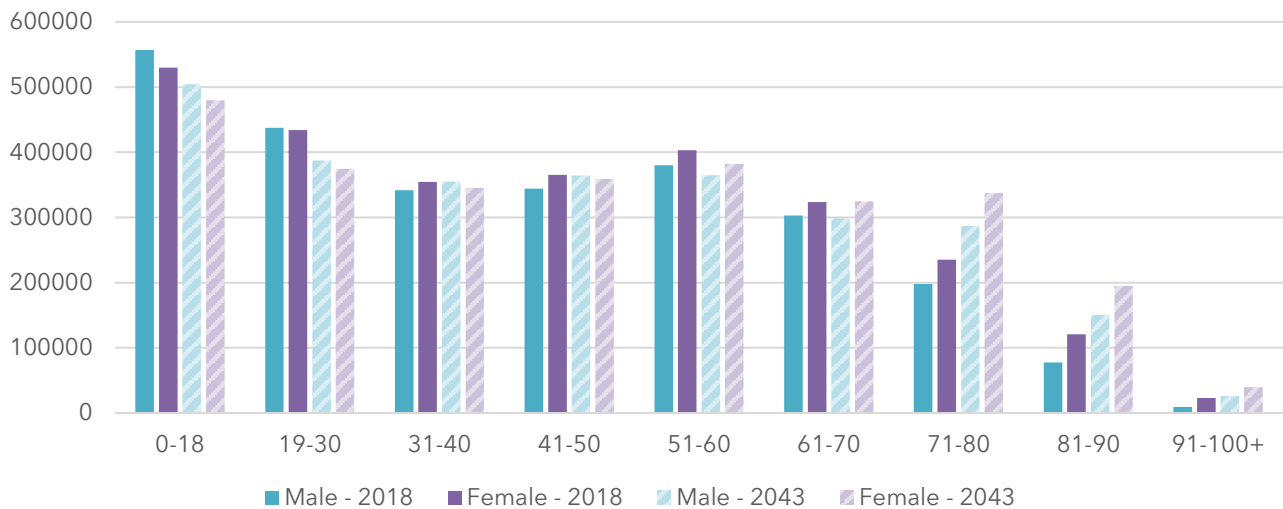
As seen in Graph 1, it is projected that the number of people aged over 70 will sharply increase by 2043, while those aged up to 30 will decrease. This will create more demands on existing services, and has been recognised by the Scottish Government in their [Housing to 2040](#) draft vision as one of the main challenges the housing sector faces between now and 2040. Other challenges that have been documented are an increase in isolation and loneliness as we age, and this is increasingly being recognised as a public health concern².

Therefore, we need to consider the impact that the changing population will have on the housing sector, and how we can support people to live well as their needs change across the life course.

¹ <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/life-expectancy-15-17/nat-life-tabs-15-17-pub.pdf>

² <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Connecting-Communities-Housing-at-the-heart-of-integrated-health-and-social-care-in-Scotland.pdf>

Graph 1: Population of Scotland by age and sex, mid-2018 and mid-2043



Data: National Records of Scotland, 2018 - <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-projections/population-projections-scotland/2018-based>

What have we been doing?

National Strategies:

Scotland has numerous strategies which aim to address the needs of older people. For instance, we are currently in the third iteration of [Scotland's Dementia Strategy](#) which will run to 2020. The vision of this strategy is to make "timely, skilled and well-coordinated support from diagnosis to end of life" available to those who have dementia and those who care for them.

Scotland's current iteration of the Dementia Strategy has 21 commitments and provides a framework with which to realise the vision of the strategy. In regard to housing, a key outcome of this strategy is for people with dementia to be able to "live well and safely at home or in a homely setting for as long as they and their family live". Commitment 12 of the strategy is:

"We will work with national and local stakeholders to implement actions in the refreshed Age, Home and Community: A Strategy for Housing for Scotland's Older People: 2012 - 21 to support people to live safely and independently at home for as long as possible."

Concurrently, [Age, home and community: a strategy for housing for Scotland's older people 2012-2021](#) aims to support older people to live independently in their homes and recognises the importance of housing and housing-related support in delivering this aim. This strategy has undergone different iterations since 2011. Initially, in 2011 the following five goals for the strategy were set:



- Clear strategic leadership
- Information and advice
- Better use of existing housing
- Preventative support services
- New build housing

Under these goals 34 commitments were made. The main ways that the housing sector was stated to support the aims of the strategy and thus the reimagining of health and social care services, the promotion of independent living and the shifting of the "*balance of care*" was through:

- Ensuring that there was a range of housing across all tenures, sizes and types;
- Providing suitable specialist housing along with care and support and accommodation to facilitate early hospital discharge;
- Providing adaptations to housing and preventative property-related services such as housing support and small repairs to reduce the risk of accidents;
- Providing information and advice on housing and other support services;
- Building new housing that is adaptable and meets the needs of older people; and
- Supporting local communities e.g. through providing activities to strengthen community cohesion.

In 2017 a [progress report](#) was published, documenting to what extent these had been met. The results were positive, yet the progress report also announced a refresh of the strategy in light of changes within Scotland including the formation of 31 new Health and Social Care Partnerships. Subsequently, the [next phase](#) for the Age, Home and Community strategy was produced in 2018. To address the initial vision, the following three principles were identified:

- Right advice
- Right home
- Right support

22 commitments were created to address these three principles. Work is still being undertaken to meet these commitments.

The Scottish Government released its [Housing to 2040](#) vision earlier this year, detailing ambitious plans for housing over the next 20 years. Part of this vision focused on Scotland's ageing population, as this has been noted as a key challenge to the sector in this time period. Specifically, in relation to older people, the vision states that an older person who would like to move should be able to receive help to move to a home more suitable for their needs. Principle 1 of the vision also states that there should be an increase in the availability of affordable and accessible housing to support older people to live independently.

The Scottish Government is currently running a [consultation](#) until 28 February 2020 on how the vision for Housing to 2040 can be delivered and feedback on its aims, with the plan to use this information to help deliver a route map by summer 2020.



Local-level initiatives:

Moving away from national strategies, there is also a wide range of work taking place at the local level to meet the needs of Scotland's ageing population. For instance, Carbon Dynamic, Albyn Housing Society and NHS Highland in partnership with Highland residents and health and social care professionals have been involved in designing new types of housing that meet the needs of people as they age³. Fit Homes are smart homes with in-built technology to promote independent living and residents' health and wellbeing at all stages of the life course.

Housing also has a role in helping older people engage in their communities and reduce loneliness and isolation. This has become more pertinent in recent years as within Scotland people are increasingly living alone or in reduced households partially due to the population ageing⁴. Hanover Scotland recently published [Connecting Communities](#), an action research project designed to gain a better understanding of how the organisation, along with staff and residents, can work together with the local communities to enable people to live the lives they want to.

As part of this work, there were three stages to the action research:

- Stage 1 was about discovery and aimed to discover what mattered to the people living, visiting and working in the case study areas.
- Stage 2 took the data collected in Stage 1 and used it to co-create and test ways to build connectedness, increase wellbeing and address what mattered to residents. This involved the core team and selected staff members taking part in workshops and virtual coaching to develop and test changes in how they worked and created opportunities for them to network.
- Stage 3 took members of the core team, the directors at Hanover and board members and had them participate in a workshop to reflect on the findings from the work and the implications for the organisation.

Furthermore, in its report, Hanover Scotland documented several initiatives employed to increase the wellbeing of residents and reduce loneliness and isolation. The report links these initiatives to the five actions to improve personal wellbeing produced by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) and the Senses Framework including promoting a sense of security, belonging and fulfilment. A group of staff at Hanover were trained to adopt a personal outcomes approach and relationship centred care using the Sense Framework.

As part of this process "*Seven strides to Connecting Communities*" were identified:

- Listen to residents and enrich connections with local communities.
- Embed values-based recruitment and personal outcomes in policies and appraisals.
- Enable volunteering amongst staff and residents.
- Empower staff to share ideas and practice in promoting and supporting well-being.
- Learn about personalisation and well-being from other industries and partners.

³ <https://www.carbondynamic.com/fit-homes>

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-people-annual-report-results-2018-scottish-household-survey/>



- Engage and involve residents who may currently be excluded from community activities.
- Provide development managers with resources to enable local innovation.

Initiatives documented in Hanover Scotland's report included encouraging intergenerational networking by having a nursery and afterschool club do activities with residents, promoting group exercise challenges and creating knitting groups for charity.

It was from engaging with this approach that Hanover Scotland made the following conclusions:

- The home is fundamental to the well-being of people and the sustainability of communities. Housing is key to all efforts to integrate and improve health and well-being.
- Engagement with older people when shaping services must improve and consider the emotional motivations and needs of individuals to better understand the networks and support which exists within communities.
- Housing organisations are an untapped resource without which it will be more difficult for Integrated Joint Boards to achieve better health and social care outcomes as outlined by Audit Scotland.
- It is essential that housing organisations be offered the opportunity to be fully included in the ongoing integration of health and social care.

In regard to guidance, CIH Scotland in partnership with the Place, Home and Housing portfolio of Healthcare Improvement Scotland's Improvement Hub (ihub) and Alzheimer Scotland have produced a [housing and dementia framework](#) as a contribution to Scotland's Dementia Strategy. The housing and dementia framework was developed from a large scale project and involved speaking to people living with dementia and their family members and carers⁵.

When discussing housing, participants expressed that the housing practitioners they came into contact with did not understand dementia. There were also issues raised with the invisibility of dementia, as creating barriers since practitioners could not see that the tenants were ill and thus it was harder to get priority to move home:

"They don't understand dementia because you are not visibly ill. It is so hard trying to plan for the future. That's what we are trying to do like we've been told to do but we can't get a new house until things get really bad and then it will be too late and moving will be worse."

Accessibility and adaptations to housing was also an issue. For instance, one participant lived upstairs in a private rented flat and their mobility was decreasing, thereby creating a potentially dangerous situation since the landlord did not allow adaptations. There were also long waits for housing when people attempted to make a move, and a dearth of information around the realistic waiting times. Furthermore, participants reported not receiving advice around housing options after first being diagnosed with dementia.

What the participants discussed within this research demonstrates that there is a need for housing organisations and providers to become more aware of the issues and challenges faced by those living

⁵ <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Housing-and-Dementia-Framework.pdf>



with dementia. Therefore, from the issues identified within the research, the housing and dementia framework provides non-prescriptive guidance for housing providers around what they are doing well with in catering to the needs of people with dementia, and what they could improve on. It sets out five person-centred outcomes that people with dementia reported as being important to them and underpins these with 11 commitments - the actions that housing providers should be taking or working towards. Housing organisations are encouraged to engage with the framework and there are a variety of ways to do this.

What more needs to be done?

While there are a range of initiatives described above that are currently being undertaken to address the housing needs of older people, the housing sector, local and national government can do more.

People's needs will vary as they age, there is no 'one size fits all'. It is evident from both the strategies and the local developments that we need both new housing and existing housing that is adaptable and accessible to a range of needs across all tenures. We also need to provide support for older people to move home if they want or need to along with initiatives to keep people connected and prevent isolation as they get older. Below are four key areas in which CIH Scotland feels that more needs to be done to meet the needs of Scotland's ageing population.

Accessible homes

While there is an awareness of the need for accessible homes, there is still a dearth of them in Scotland. For instance, Horizon Housing's report [Still minding the step?](#) highlights that there are 17,226 wheelchair user households within Scotland that have their housing needs unmet. They project that by 2024 this number will rise to 31,007. Even though this research is in relation to wheelchairs, the report also highlights that the use of walking frames by people who are aged over 75 is set to increase, and that older and disabled people who use mobility equipment, such as using two sticks or a wheeled walking aid, can require more space than a wheelchair user. This means it is likely that there is a larger segment of the Scottish population who require mobility assistance who do not have their housing needs met. Subsequently, we need to focus on building new stock and adapting existing stock to be accessible for the varying needs of the Scottish population.

Adaptations

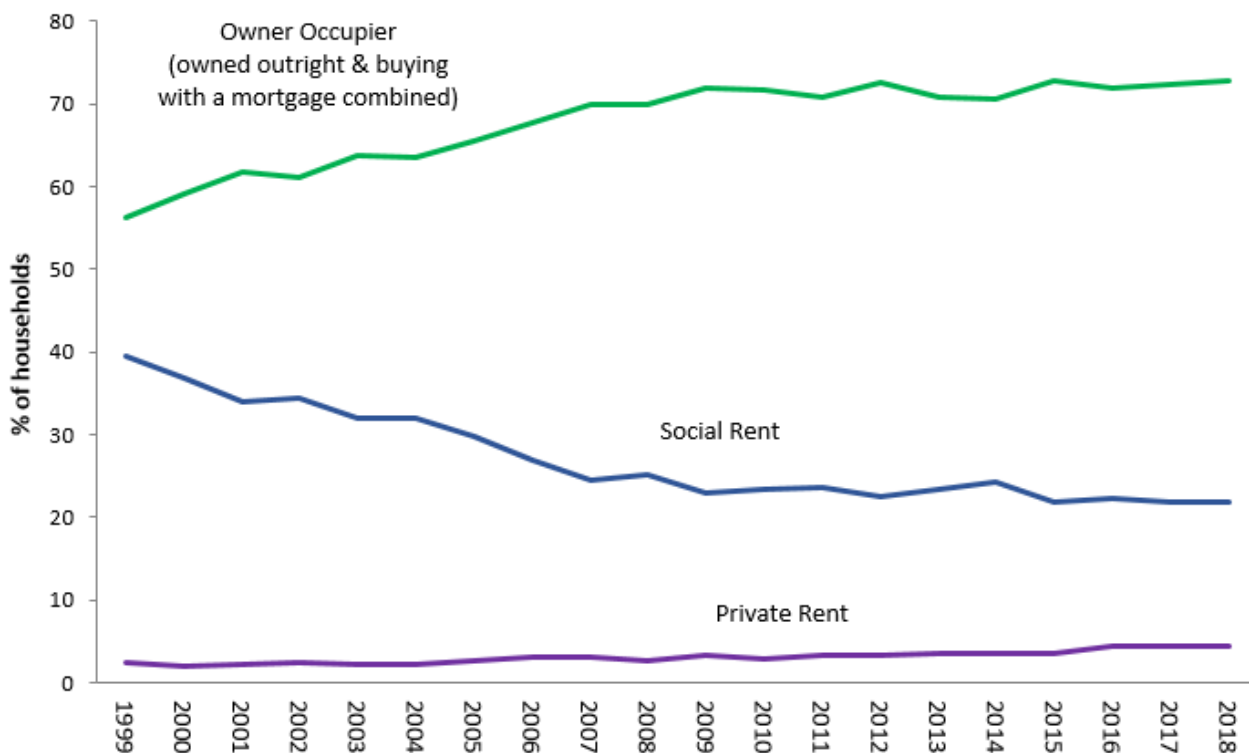
Tying into making homes accessible, we know that investing in adaptations can prevent accidents, hospital stays and the need for institutional care. The Scottish Government budget for adaptations has remained static at £10 million⁶ and needs to be increased. There are different routes of access and funding arrangements for different tenures to plan and implement adaptations. In 2016, a SPICe

⁶ Scottish Budget 2019 to 2020: Level 4 Data <https://www.gov.scot/budget/>

[briefing on adaptations](#) noted that while homeowners did not require permission for adaptations, private tenants, local authority tenants and housing associations did. There were also different requirements around the arrangement of the adaptations e.g. applying for planning permission and arranging the work. Regarding the personal circumstances of the person requiring the adaptations, e.g. if they were in receipt of welfare, there were different funding streams within tenures e.g. private tenant and home owner.

The Scottish Household Survey 2018⁷ indicates that households where the highest income holder (HIH) is over the age of 60 are increasingly residing in privately owned housing - both owned outright or with a mortgage (See Graph 2).

Graph 2: Tenure of households by year (HIH aged 60 plus) 1999-2018 data - Households (minimum base: 3,980)



Data: Scottish Household Survey 2018: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-people-annual-report-results-2018-scottish-household-survey/>

The complexity of this system outlined above, especially for homeowners and private renters, means that it can be difficult for older people living in the private sector to get the adaptations they need. Therefore, we need to have more advice and information around planning and implementing adaptations to housing that is easily accessible and applicable to each tenure. Regarding the wider

⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-people-annual-report-results-2018-scottish-household-survey/>



context in which this takes place, SPICe also highlights that there have been calls for tenure neutral approach to the funding of adaptations.

Better housing choices for older people

While the previous two suggestions are applicable for older people who want to stay in their existing home, some may decide to move closer to family, downsize, move to a more energy efficient home. Therefore, it is not enough to focus on making people's existing homes more accessible and suitable. Older people also need to be provided good and realistic advice about their housing options. This is especially important for homeowners who are looking to move, as they might not be as likely to have a relationship with their local authority or other advice agencies.

Furthermore, a [report](#) from HAPPI highlights that there are a lack of suitable options for people looking to move. Within their report, they give examples of varying housing initiatives across Europe and the United States. For instance, they outline a co-housing project in Denmark where the residents were able to oversee the design process and construction and live together. While co-housing projects have the ability to reduce loneliness and isolation as we age, and are present across Europe, they have not gained much traction within the UK. Therefore, we need to explore different types of housing that could be suitable for people as they age and could address the challenges highlighted in this briefing such as loneliness.

Reducing social isolation and loneliness

The Scottish Household Survey 2018 indicated that people are increasingly living alone or in reduced households in Scotland and that this could be partially attributed to the population ageing⁸. As highlighted in Hanover Scotland's [report](#), loneliness and isolation is increasingly become recognised as a public health concern due to the impact this can have on people's wellbeing. Therefore, where possible housing providers need to go one step further and provide a home and not just a house through employing initiatives to bring communities together - such as the examples given from Hanover Scotland.

⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-people-annual-report-results-2018-scottish-household-survey/>