



Chartered  
Institute of  
Housing

# What you need to know about the new national dementia strategy 2023-2033

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## Background

The previous [national dementia strategy](#) ran from 2017-2020. The pandemic prevented a full review of the strategy in 2020 but the Scottish Government did publish an interim [COVID-19 action plan](#) to ensure that people living with dementia continued to receive the care they needed.

Following a public consultation, the Scottish Government has now published a new ten-year national dementia strategy, [Dementia in Scotland: Everyone's Story](#).

## Housing and dementia

Around 90,000 people in Scotland are living with dementia and this number is expected to increase as our population ages. Around two thirds of those who receive a dementia diagnosis are living in mainstream housing, not in specialist housing or care homes, so the housing sector has a significant role to play in ensuring that homes are designed or adapted to meet needs, and that people can access information and advice about their current or future housing needs.

The previous strategy and interim action plan recognised the need to support people to live at home or within a homely setting. However, both lacked detail on the role of housing in supporting people living with dementia or the practicalities of improving housing outcomes.

CIH Scotland's Housing Pathways [research](#) and practitioner [guidance](#) set out clear recommendations on the role of housing in supporting people to live well with dementia. The [Housing and Dementia Framework](#) provides a practical self-assessment tool to help housing organisations identify the steps they can take to support tenants and residents.

While these projects represent willingness from the housing sector to improve outcomes for people living with dementia, we wanted stronger recognition from the Scottish Government about the positive role of housing,

and a commitment to support improvements in the housing sector.

The National Housing and Dementia Forum [report](#) published in 2022 made a number of recommendations on the actions required to improve housing outcomes for people living with dementia.

## What is in the new strategy?

CIH Scotland and others called for the role of housing to be more explicitly referenced throughout the new strategy and this has been achieved.

The 10-year strategy sets out the following vision:

*"Our vision is of a Scotland where people living with dementia have their strengths recognised, their rights upheld, and where they, their families and care partners/unpaid carers are supported to live an independent life, free from stigma and with person-centred treatment and care, when and where they need it."*

And it includes five priorities:

1. Dementia is recognised in public health and in practice as disease of the brain that affects a person's whole life and those close to them. Diagnosis can bring significant mental health and wellbeing challenges that need to be acknowledged and addressed to ensure a person's rights are upheld.
2. Policy makers, support and service providers, communities and society all have an understanding of dementia, including the importance of prevention and early detection, and are inclusive of people living with dementia, able to engage and respond confidently and appropriately, creating environments that enable people to live well with dementia.

3. People living with dementia and their care partners/unpaid carers have equity of access to high quality, information and advice, evidence-based treatment, care and support when and where they need it, including dementia-specific palliative care, and have access to practitioners with appropriate dementia care knowledge and skills.
4. The human rights of people living with dementia and their care partners are upheld throughout their dementia journey.
5. People are supported by a skilled and knowledgeable workforce that accesses the highest quality dementia specialist education and training and implements evidence-based, including trauma-informed, practice.

It makes several commitments in relation to housing:

- Homes should be designed or adapted to meet needs.
- People are able to remain in their own home for as long as they want to.
- People are able to make informed choices about their home, including staying at home with adaptations if needed, or to plan a move to a more suitable home.
- Arrangements for home adaptations are clear and accessible across housing tenures.
- Home adaptations should be proactive, preventing admission to hospital or helping a return from hospital.
- The need for dementia awareness and training for housing staff.

The strategy will be followed by a more detailed action plan setting out how the aims will be achieved and the resources that will be available to support delivery. We expect the action plan to be published before the end of the year and to be revised every two years.

## The CIH view

We welcome the new strategy and are pleased to see the role of housing more clearly articulated throughout the document. A national strategy can help to set the tone and drive priorities, but we need specific actions supported by resources to achieve real change.

We would like to see the following areas addressed in the action plan:

- Remove barriers to aids, adaptations and technology to help people remain in their home
- Ensure that people can access a home that meets their needs if they do need to move
- Improve access to advice and information for people living in different housing tenures
- Support dementia awareness and training for housing staff at all levels
- Encourage people to think about their housing needs by including housing conversations in post-diagnostic support

