February 2020

**Housing to 2040**

**Scottish Government Consultation**

# **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Housing at the centre of Health and Social Care Integration** – Scotland’s population is ageing, and security, warmth, affordability and accessibility is key to enabling people to live well in their own home and to not place undue stress on the health and social care system. As the home is where people spend most of their time, a holistic, person centred approach that allows health and social care services to work seamlessly and effectively with the housing sector and older people in their homes is imperative.

**Age friendly and dementia friendly housing design -** There is a need to promote understanding and information regarding dementia- and age-friendly features, both in the home and in the environment. There has been a substantial amount of academic research undertaken into dementia-friendly and age-friendly designs. Now is the point that the Scottish Government could really help the development of this sector through regulations on the number of these properties which should be built, requiring outdoor green space design as part of the planning permission or through financial incentives for developers to adopt these designs.

**Dementia** – Designing homes and communities with dementia in mind can enable many people to live well independently for much longer. As the numbers of people who live with dementia increase, it will become ever more important that society supports both people living with dementia and their carers to live well.

**Information and Advice** – People should have greater clarity about how to access the range of support and information services available to them. Over half a million older people do not use the internet and so traditional methods of communication also need to be used to ensure that no one is digitally excluded.

**Adaptations** – Adaptations to the home and built environment are known to be one of key areas that support people to live at home for longer. There is a need to think of more cohesive support and processes for adaptations in the home and environment (including within the planning system for the outside environment). The Scottish Government could consider the need for targets related to the amount of time someone has to wait to get adaptations installed. Additionally, Care and Repair services should be available in all 32 local authorities and should be adequately funded to allow as many older people as possible to benefit from their services.

**Care provision –** Higher numbers of older people live alone and with the Scottish Government’s commitment to people living at home or in a homely setting, there is a need for real investment in social care staff. This is in terms of wages, conditions and career progression and development. Carers should also receive the support they are entitled to under the Carers (Scotland) Act.

**Preventative Support –** There is a need to address the fact that preventative measures may be hindered by confusion over cost, eligibility and a cultural reluctance or stigma to apply for help, whether this be for home insulation measures or adaptations to the home. Availability of services, such as Care and Repair and handyperson services, should be consistent across council areas to help mitigate this.

**Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency** - Fuel poverty and energy efficiency have been demonstrated to be key areas of anxiety and worry for older people, Age Scotland has highlighted this in our housing surveys: two national surveys (2018 and 2020) and an island-specific survey in Orkney (2019). Information and advice on these issues should be clearer and support schemes will need to be longer in duration, especially if the Scottish Government introduces requirements for homeowners to raise the energy rating of their home to EPC Band C by 2040.

**The concept of ‘home’ –** When designing housing for older people it should be remembered that people are expected to live there. While safety and design that means people can live well and independently are paramount, the fact that this should be a home should not be forgotten. Housing for older people needs to include access to community and outdoor spaces and the opportunity for social group interaction.

**Building homes where older people want to live –** Retirement communities or specialist homes are often built on the outskirts of town and become isolated housing. Older people benefit far more from being able to live close to a full range of amenities, where they are able to easily leave their homes and interact with the local community. Brownfield site redevelopment could be an opportunity for housing designed for older people to be built in areas that are not too remote from the centre of town or the high street.

**Introduction**

**Housing to 2040 needs to have a significant focus on how to deliver housing that will be suitable for older people. With an ageing population and a commitment to older people living at home or in a homely setting,** **a focus on resilient communities where older people can live independently is essential**. It is estimated that 80% of the housing already built now will still be in use in 2050.[[1]](#footnote-1)So retrofitting and renovating existing property, and not relying on new build properties to enable people to live independently, will be essential. Another core element of the Housing to 2040 strategy will need to focus on the provision of health and social care and the investments that are needed to grow the workforce in order to enable older people to live independently for longer.

The majority of older people live in owner-occupied housing, although there is still a significant number living in social housing: households whose principle earner is over 60 fall into the following categories: 66% owned outright, 22% social rent, 7% buying with the help or a loan or mortgage and 4% in private rent.[[2]](#footnote-2) Of those who live in social housing, a total of 20% of the social rented sector is single pensioner households.[[3]](#footnote-3) This group of people is set to grow significantly and they are likely to need more social care as they age.

It is well known that Scotland’s population is ageing and is doing so at a faster rate than the rest of the UK. By 2041 there will be a growth of 17% in the 65 – 74 age bracket and a significant growth of 79% in the over 75 age bracket. In total there will be around 1.4 million people aged over 65 by 2041, out of a total population of 5.69 million.[[4]](#footnote-4) At the same time there will be a decrease in the numbers of people in all age brackets under 65.[[5]](#footnote-5) This significant demographic shift will see more of a reliance on the state for health and social care provision, at the same time that tax revenues and the workforce size are expected to fall. This situation will inevitably mean that unpaid carers will need to make up the shortfall, which will likely see people keeping their unpaid care duty well into their own older age.

Another significant change in the Scottish housing landscape is that more people are living alone, and this is also true for older people, whether this is by choice or following the death of a partner. There is a higher proportion of women in single older households: more than a quarter of women aged 65 – 69 live on their own, and this number rises to 61% of over 90s.[[6]](#footnote-6) Fewer men live on their own, yet the numbers remain significant with 21% of men 65 – 69 living alone and 43% of men over 90 living alone.[[7]](#footnote-7) This trend should be taken into account when planning housing for the future, as older people will be able to stay living on their own into later life if they are well supported and live in housing that enables them to live independently.

Ageing at home, in the community or in a homely setting is an express aim of the Scottish Government as stated in Age, Home and Community (2011 and 2018). Housing to 2040 presents an opportunity to support this vision by enhancing its implementation, especially in areas Age Scotland consider particularly important such as the need to ‘review whether current building and design standards meet the needs of older people’ and ‘encourage development of new models of housing care and support in all tenures.’[[8]](#footnote-8)

**Co-production**

Co-producing evidence with older people means being able to use their experience, knowledge and skills to develop plans and strategies that align with people’s actual needs and wants, rather than presuming to know what these are. It’s important to be inclusive in this process, to ensure all voices are heard, and to ensure that those who are not digitally connected do not miss out on the opportunity to be involved in shaping their community.

**Veterans**

All public services should identify whether a person is a veteran or a dependent of someone with military experience, as there are additional housing support options open to this group of people. Age Scotland has a housing options guide for veterans and it is important for frontline housing staff in Local Authorities, as well as those referring older people to various support schemes, to be aware of the importance of asking if someone has been involved in the military.[[9]](#footnote-9)

**Affordability of housing in the future**

The Scottish Government has already pledged to build 50,000 new homes during this parliamentary term, with 35,000 of these intended for social rent. While this aim is certainly laudable, the issue is that most homes are still built to standards which make them unsuitable for older people or disabled people. **Issues that are still being overlooked in this area that impact affordability include lack of wardens, lack of choice in rural locations, and lack of targets for age-friendly properties in planned new-builds.**

Age Scotland would recommend that regulations increasing the minimum building requirements should be considered, to incorporate larger rooms and more homes that occupy a single floor, whether on the ground floor or in flats with lifts, for this to better suit our ageing population. Developers are currently building housing that we know will not suit a significant proportion of our population, and the amount of accessible accommodation being built is too limited.

There needs to be appropriate infrastructure built within new housing developments, as often these are built without consideration for the extra infrastructure and public services that should accompany new homes, such as bus and footpath routes, new GP surgeries or community parks. Developments should not be given planning permission that cannot demonstrate how they will enhance the existing community.

There is certainly room for opportunity in the redevelopment of Brownfield redevelopment sites, as these areas tend to be more centrally located in urban areas than building on undeveloped land. A focus on building homes suitable for older people and disabled people in and around town centres would be beneficial to enabling people to ‘downsize’ or ‘rightsize’ and to still live within their community and somewhere that is well-connected to the amenities that they need and want to access.

It is useful that the Government set a target for the number of new homes to be built, however this does not mean that they are being built all around the country: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Fife, Highland and South Lanarkshire accounted for 41% of Scotland’s new housing supply in 2019.[[10]](#footnote-10) This means that along with the lack of accessible new-build housing, there is also a limited number of rurally located new builds. The Scottish Government could consider whether Local Authorities should have to specify the numbers of new build housing they need and whether targets should be created for housing that is appropriate for adaptations.

The Scottish Household Survey counts houses and bungalows as the same type of accommodation when it categorises what types of homes people live in. However it could be beneficial to separate these two categories as a large number of older people wish to live in a single-storey dwelling, with Age Scotland’s Housing Survey demonstrating that for many people a bungalow would be their preferred home.

**Accessibility and functionality**

It is well recognised that there is not sufficient availability of housing that is designed for older people, or for people affected by dementia, to live in independently.

The availability of accommodation where there is a warden service is becoming rarer and research and interviews conducted by Age Scotland in 2017 has found that many older people and their families wish there was more availability. Assisted living allows people to continue living independently, but with the knowledge that should they need help then it won’t be far away. This also brings a great deal of comfort to families who may not be available immediately for relatives. Age Scotland would recommend that the Government consider ways they could encourage the increase in wardens supporting people in assisted and sheltered accommodation. Anecdotally, Age Scotland has heard from older people that in areas where the warden service has been withdrawn that other residents (who are older and often frail themselves) feel responsible to support their neighbours and as such fulfil an unpaid carer role that they should not feel that they have to do.

The Scottish Government has stated that the new affordable supply of homes are built to Housing for Varying needs standards, with 91% of houses built by housing associations and councils in 2016-17 achieving this level.[[11]](#footnote-11) While these figures are impressive, private developers are facing no incentives to build adaptable housing and continue to build properties that will not suit our ageing population. Older people make up the majority of owner-occupiers in Scotland, which means that we need to see a focus on accessibility standards in the whole housing market.

Age Scotland believes that the Scottish Government has the right approach when it comes to housing and the needs of older people, yet we would argue that greater regulation is required to ensure these design guides are put into place. The housing for varying needs standards should be applied to private developers too. There is a clear need for more regulation and perhaps financial incentives to encourage the adoption of housing design that suits older people, such as dementia friendly design standards and to ensure that accessible outside space is an integral part of developments.

**Access to information**

There is too much variation in the support that people can access across different Local Authorities. **The integration of Health and Social Care is an ongoing process, but an explicit review in the variation of entitlements and support for older people would be of great benefit.** The current provision of services for older people varies across Scotland and creates a system where some services are available in one area and not in the neighbouring area.

Age Scotland has found that many older people are confused about the housing options and related support services available to them, and there is even more confusion over regional variations.[[12]](#footnote-12) Age Scotland’s research in 2017 found that older people were often unsure where to get information and advice, and can be very cautious regarding the reliability of the information.[[13]](#footnote-13) Age Scotland provides a dedicated Helpline for older people and produces numerous information guides to help signpost those seeking help, nevertheless the variation in provision of services remains significant and difficult for our advisors to navigate.

Many older people still rely on traditional means of getting support and information. Internet use among older people is increasing, but **only 37% of those aged 75 and over use the internet.[[14]](#footnote-14) Indeed, there are 500,000 over 60s in Scotland who do not use the internet. This needs to be taken into account as older people often require more traditional means of communication and consideration for the role of community organisations and public libraries will be essential.**

Age Scotland produces information leaflets for older people on a range of subjects, including housing guides. Age Scotland does put information online, but our leaflets are also available for request by calling our Helpline and through our network of member groups. In this way we ensure that people have different methods through which to access information.

**Proposals that would improve the quality, standards and state of repair of existing and new housing**

In addition to the accessibility of housing not quite being where it needs to be, the poor condition of many houses makes them hazardous for some older residents. The Scottish House Condition Survey has statistics on how many older people live in housing with some level of disrepair, and with those living with critical disrepair. In the Scottish House Condition Survey 2012- 2014, which has breakdowns for Local Authorities, it was found that 74% of older people are living in housing with some level of disrepair and 54% were living in housing with critical elements of disrepair.[[15]](#footnote-15) In addition to this, the levels of disrepair in Scotland’s housing has increased, according to the latest Housing Conditions Survey: 75% of all dwellings have some level of disrepair (up 7 percentage points) and 57% have critical elements of disrepair (also up 7 percentage points).[[16]](#footnote-16)

Support for organisations such as Care and Repair are essential for older people to be able to access trusted services designed to help with adaptations to their home. Yet it is also important that the Scottish Government consider the importance of an accessible built environment around people’s homes. Adaptations can enable people to live better within their home, but a lack of accessibility outside the home and lack of amenities such as benches or public toilets, can keep older people unable to confidently leave their homes.

It is possible that the rates of homelessness among older people are under-reported. Shelter defines homelessness as ‘not having a home. You don't have to be living on the street to be homeless - even if you have a roof over your head you can still be without a home. This may be because you don't have any rights to stay where you live or your home is unsuitable for you.’[[17]](#footnote-17) For some older people, living with mobility issues may prevent them from using the stairs in their home, which can legally render them homeless.[[18]](#footnote-18) Adequate housing is recognised by the UN as a human right and housing may be considered not adequate for issues such as accessibility and habitability.[[19]](#footnote-19)

There is a measure of confusion across different providers and those who can ensure adaptations take place, Zhou (2017) states that the reason there are different bodies in charge of adaptations across different tenures is due to the legacy of unclear legislation.[[20]](#footnote-20) This is consistent with Age Scotland’s findings that older people are often very unclear on who they can contact for help with adaptations and repairs.

Organisations like Care and Repair Scotland provide access to essential repair works for Scotland’s older people and are a trusted resource that can be relied upon to help. Many older people are wary of scams and rely on trusted referrals for trades people. Age Scotland research and interviews with member groups in 2017 found that a lack of trust and wariness of scams meant that many older struggled with asking for help when home adaptations and repairs were needed.

**Dementia**

There are approximately 90,000 people living with dementia in Scotland, with 87,000 of these being over the age of 65.[[21]](#footnote-21) It is well known that there is a higher prevalence of dementia among women, which is partly accounted for due to the fact that women live for longer. It’s expected that the number of people living with dementia will increase to over 160,000 by the mid-2030s.[[22]](#footnote-22) This has very significant implications for how we enable people to live well independently, especially as there are growing rates of single occupancy older households.

The Scottish Government has acknowledged the importance of designing housing for people living with dementia - in Age, Home and Community: the Next Phase (2018) the Government listed some of the actions taken, such as supporting the development of a dementia and housing design guide. There is a lack of implementation of recommendations on housing design and it would be beneficial if the Government supported Local Authorities to implement good practice around this area through the adoption of a preferred guide or regulations around the provision of ‘dementia friendly’ housing.

In the National Dementia Strategy 2017 – 2020, the Scottish Government recognises the importance of flexibility, timely and person-centred support for people living with dementia and their carers.[[23]](#footnote-23) For this to become the reality, the Government will need to increase the funding and support available to Local Authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships, as levels of post-diagnostic support, information provision and the availability of home adaptations will certainly need to improve as more older people start living with dementia.

It should be recognised that housing associations are very successful in their approaches to supporting people with dementia to live well, and so there should be consideration for how best practice can be shared.[[24]](#footnote-24) Housing associations have higher requirements than private landlords for their living and support standards, the Government could consider how tax incentives or regulations could be used to encourage the private sector to follow the better practice of the social housing sector. Consideration should also be given to supporting the good practice already in evidence from housing associations that could be harnessed by local health and social care partnerships to the benefit of those in private accommodation, with examples such as Queens Cross Housing in Glasgow already in existence.[[25]](#footnote-25) In addition to this, Local Authorities should ensure that all of their frontline staff who work in housing and social care have been trained to support people living with dementia.

There needs to be a more consistent approach across Scotland in how people living with dementia are supported once they have received their diagnosis. Local Authorities have reported that they do not have a clear way to share best practice and so this keeps their progress siloed and adds to the regional variation in support available.[[26]](#footnote-26) Early intervention is key to enabling people living with dementia to live independently and well for as long as possible. Early intervention support should be prioritised for people living with dementia, including home adaptations so that those living with dementia and their carers can live as well as possible.[[27]](#footnote-27) This should include training for staff in how to support people with a dementia diagnosis, and to identify and address adaptations to the home. Given the high proportion of over 65’s living alone and in owner occupied accommodation, this should also include the provision of adaptations and interventions to address living standards in privately owned or rented housing and not just social housing. This can have significant benefits for people with dementia and support a preventative agenda as demonstrated by the Dementia Enablement projects (2020), which are due to be published soon.

Home adaptations should address cognitive and psychological needs of people living with dementia, as well as their physical needs. A higher degree of support and funding for adaptations for people living with dementia should be given, as those living with dementia and their unpaid carers could be less likely to be able to access support before they reach crisis point.

Funding home adaptations of existing housing should be a priority area for the Scottish Government, as the overwhelming majority of people living with dementia and their carers live in housing that has already been built. In addition to this, the Government should consider that this group of people are more likely to need support in order to have access to the appropriate adaptations and to ensure that they and their unpaid carers are in receipt of the benefits they are entitled to. The research points to people living with dementia having high levels of unmet needs when it comes to practical support and in relation to personal safety and the opportunity to engage in meaningful activity.[[28]](#footnote-28) Work should be done to expand entitlements to ensure that home owners are not automatically prohibited from financial support with adaptations, safety and security.

**Care homes**

While care home provision falls under health and social care rather than housing, it is clearly an important option for many older people that will keep them as safe and well as they can be.

Care homes places are provided on a residential basis, which means that care home residents have fewer rights than tenants. The provision of care home places is now mostly supplied by the private sector with some Local Authority provision still being available. Between 2007 – 2017, there were significant increases in the number of long-term care residents over 85. Of those age 85 – 94 there was a 5% increase and those over 95 increased by 19%.[[29]](#footnote-29) This trend is set to continue as we know that the age group with the most dramatic increase will be among those over 75.

As people get older, they often need some support with regular tasks in order to continue living independently. This is one of the clearest ways to demonstrate the intrinsic link between housing and health and social care, as the pressure on care at home provision can have a very stark impact on older peoples’ ability to live well at home.

The provision of free personal and nursing care in Scotland for those who qualify is a very welcome support that enables many older people to live well. Nevertheless, the significant strain that many families and individuals face is the lack of social care staff available in the health and social care field in Scotland. There are significant numbers of vacancies, with care at home services reporting 66% unfilled post vacancy rate, care homes for older people at 58% and housing support services at 58%. Edinburgh and Aberdeen had the highest proportion of vacancies that were hard to fill.[[30]](#footnote-30) If such high levels of vacancies continue to be the norm in services that help older people with daily tasks then they will increasingly be reliant on acute hospital services, as older people and their unpaid carers are unable to cope.

Almost a third of the total expenditure (£1.6bn) within the NHS for people aged 65 and over is a result of unplanned admissions to hospital.[[31]](#footnote-31) Of the total health and social care expenditure, 40% (£5.4bn) was on delivering services to people aged 65 and over, who account for 19% of the population.[[32]](#footnote-32) To help with future planning and to enable targeted prevention work, these statistics should be disaggregated to enable research on pathways for people with dementia and enable their housing needs to be better understood. With the number of people over 65 set to rise to 25% of the population before 2040, there is an acute need to hire more people to work in the health and social care sector. It is very likely that the impact of Brexit will be detrimental to the workforce in this sector.

The lack of suitable housing for older people and issues with the availability and provision of care packages has huge implications for the well-being of older people. When it comes to issues such as falls and frailty, in 2018/19, 6 out of every 10 falls was someone aged over 65 and there was a strong correlation between age and likelihood of a fall, those aged over 65 are 7 times more likely to have an emergency admission to hospital than those aged under 65.[[33]](#footnote-33) The Government has previously acknowledged the self-limiting impact of the fear of falls, which can cause older people to become isolated, in addition to the physical and psychological harm that it causes.[[34]](#footnote-34)

There are a significant number of delayed discharges from hospital because people have nowhere safe to go home to if their local authority is unable to set them up with a care package. The statistics around delayed discharge are very concerning, in December 2019, 1,379 people had their discharge from hospital delayed at the December 2019 census point, a 12% increase from December 2018 (1,236). Of those, 747 were people over the age of 75.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Age Scotland conducted some research into how long Scotland’s older people were waiting to receive the care they were entitled to. The report found that in 2018, 43% of older people assessed as having critical or substantial needs **did not** receive the services they required withing the six week period outlined in the National Eligibility Criteria.[[36]](#footnote-36)

It should be kept in mind that the vast majority of older people are owner-occupiers living in homes that they would like to stay in as they age. A significant focus for the Scottish Government should be on enabling people to age well in place, with a focus on the social care and community building that will enable this to happen.

**Proposals on increasing the energy efficiency and warmth and lowering the carbon emissions of existing and new housing**

Older people are more likely to live in fuel poverty with 36% of older households living in fuel poverty, compared to 25% for the population as a whole.[[37]](#footnote-37) Older people are also twice as likely to live in extreme fuel poverty than families, with 13% of older households experiencing extreme fuel poverty. 150,000 pensioners live in poverty and large numbers have low and fixed incomes that makes it hard for them to afford home adaptations to improve energy efficiency.

Fuel poverty and cold, poorly insulated homes can lead to numerous health issues for older people. It is seen as a particularly acute problem for older people because they live on relatively fixed incomes that make it harder to absorb rising fuel costs, or because they’re less able to leave their homes and need the heating on more – or because they’re unaware of the energy-efficiency measures they may be eligible for and how to apply for them. This is particularly important for people living with dementia for whom a stable warm temperature is an important part of self-management.[[38]](#footnote-38)

The new target for fuel poverty is that the rates should be no higher than 5% by 2040. It is known that older households are more likely to be in fuel poverty and that those on fixed incomes have less resilience to fluctuating energy prices. Groups such as the Existing Homes Alliance have published findings that the Government will need to contribute more than double the amount of money that it has pledged to help fund the improvement of energy efficiency: current figures are around £119m a year, whereas they estimate that at least £240m will be required.[[39]](#footnote-39)

We would call on the Scottish Government to keep older people in mind as they change requirements for owner occupiers to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, in terms of the substantial information campaign that will be required to go alongside this. It is generally thought that people will need more support to take up energy efficiency measures, especially those who are in fuel poverty (CAS, 2019).

There are approximately 1.42 million properties in Scotland that are EPC Band D or below – the amount of funding needed to improve this is likely to be substantial.[[40]](#footnote-40) When you consider that out of Scotland’s older population, over 60% live in owner-occupied housing, then it is likely that a significant number of them live in properties which are EPC Band D or below.

The Scottish Household Condition Survey reports that detached houses are more likely to be energy inefficient than flats and that there are a higher proportion of houses in island and rural locations. In general, island and rural local authorities have more energy inefficient properties: for example, Na h-Eileanan Siar (22%), Orkney (21%), and Shetland (17%) had comparatively more energy inefficient stock than the Scottish average of 4% in the 2015-2017 period. They also had fewer properties in the highest energy efficiency bands.[[41]](#footnote-41) However there were other local authorities with high levels of energy inefficiency, such as Argyll and Bute (15%), Highland (15%), Dumfries and Galloway (15%), Scottish Borders (12%), Aberdeenshire (11%), Moray (10%) and East Lothian (8%).[[42]](#footnote-42) This is clearly a Scotland-wide issue that will take considerable investment to improve.

**Space around our homes and promote connected places and communities**

From the academic research, **the accessibility of the space around someone’s home and within their community will affect how much they leave their home and engage with others, this is regardless of how accessible or adapted their home may be.[[43]](#footnote-43)** So, while it is very important to make sure people are safe and comfortable within their home, this intervention on its own will not be sufficient to ensure a good quality of life for an older person.

NHS Health Scotland developed the Place Principle, which is an internationally recognised tool to understand what is important in a local community for residents.[[44]](#footnote-44) In addition to this, the academic and co-produced literature on developing communities to support all local residents is extensive. Reports such as the Good Life in Later Years Report[[45]](#footnote-45) and Ageing in Place[[46]](#footnote-46) have covered a lot of the theory and the practice, but what is still lacking is the implementation. The Scottish Government should adopt the suggestions from reports such as these and focus on implementation and enabling these practices to take place.

Connected places and communities are extremely important for the wellbeing of those who live in that area. If there is poor public transport provision, people are much more likely to be housebound. If the pavements are in a poor state of repair or there aren’t enough street lights, or there are hills and steps, then older people are much more likely to be isolated. As mentioned before, the Place Principle can be used to help understand what is important to people for their local area and co-production is an important tool when considering how to rebuild or redesign an area.

Enabling meaningful placemaking and connections to community will improve how people of all ages enjoy where they live. It is well recognised in the academic literature that older people should be involved in ‘placemaking’ to help keep them active and to combat loneliness and isolation.[[47]](#footnote-47) As well as older people being involved, there should be explicit focus on involving people living with dementia and their carers in place-making and the co-production of decisions that relate to them. It is also important not to assume that older people will all have the same expectations and desires of their housing, this group of people is as diverse as any other.

**Planning (Scotland) Act 2019**

Age Scotland would be happy to support the Housing to 2040 team and the Planning and Architecture team in the Scottish Government in engaging with older people and with older people’s groups across Scotland, as well as with people affected by dementia through the About Dementia project.

The Planning Act has the potential to enable the participation of the public in the planning and development of their communities. It will be important to communicate with the public the different parts of the planning policy sphere so that people do have the opportunity to be involved in making decisions that will impact their local communities. As there are many changes brought in with the updated Act, the complexity of the planning sphere may prove a barrier to community groups, and so the Government should take this into account. Age Scotland is also keen to see greater community involvement across Scotland in the creation of Local Development Plans.

The National Planning Framework 4 is the next iteration of the planning framework and the new Planning (Scotland) Act has created some obligations related to targets for specialist housing, including housing that suits older and disabled people. The Planning Act will require ministers to report every two years on how the planning system is operating in a way that ensures the housing needs of older people are being met and on the interactions that have taken place with community groups to take their needs on board.[[48]](#footnote-48) Age Scotland would encourage the Government to design Housing to 2040 with the Planning Act and the NPF4 explicitly in mind, and with a view to ensuring that compliance with these targets are strongly incentivised.

**Acknowledgement**

**We were assisted in the section referring to Dementia by About Dementia. About Dementia: Shaping Our Worlds Together** is a national forum for policy and practice that believes that people living with dementia and their unpaid carers are in the best position to say what is and isn’t working and to explain how things could be improved for them.

About Dementia will work on 15 different thematic areas, with housing among the first to be addressed, project officers hold community-based meetings bringing together people affected by dementia (people with dementia and unpaid carers of people with dementia), practitioners, third sector professionals and other stakeholders where these topics are discussed in in-depth. It is a five-year long project, hosted by Age Scotland and funded by the Life Changes Trust.

**Want to find out more?**

As Scotland’s national charity supporting people over the age of 50, Age Scotland works to improve older people’s lives and promote their rights and interests. We aim to help people love later life, whatever their circumstances. We want Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow older.

Our Policy, Communications and Campaigns team research, analyse and comment on a wide range of public policy issues affecting older people in Scotland.

Our work is guided by the views and needs of older people themselves.

**Further information**

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