

## **Briefing note on the Adult Social Care Reform White Paper: “People at the Heart of Care” in relation to the provision of appropriate accommodation and care.**

1.1 On December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the UK Government published its vision for the future of Social Care entitled “People at the Heart of Care: Adult Social Care Reform White Paper”. Whilst much attention in the media and public debate has focused on issues around the proposed arrangements for a “cap” to the care costs an individual might meet from their own resources the White Paper covers many other issues related to the provision of care. Of particular interest is the prominence given to the interface between social care and appropriate housing; Section Four of the White Paper deals with a range of issues related to this area, including the role of specialised accommodation.

1.2 The pivotal role of accommodation is set out in an early paragraph of Section Four:

“Ensuring that people receive the right care and support all begins with where they live, and the people they live with. ....For older people, having a home that sustains safe, independent living can help prevent ill-health, reduce the amount of care and support they need, and delay or avoid altogether the need for residential care.” (Para 4.5)

1.3 Whilst the aspiration for the majority of those who need care to receive it in their existing home is endorsed there is recognition too that this is not always practicable:

“Wherever possible, that care and support should be in a person’s own home and personalised in line with their specific needs, although recognising that not everyone has a home of their own, and sometimes specific needs are best met in a supported living or care home setting.” (para 4.1)

1.4 The limitations to the suitability of some people’s existing accommodation to provide an appropriate context for the delivery of care is explicitly recognised:

“However, at present, there are too many people with care and support needs living in homes that are not enabling them to live well or safely. Many homes are poorly designed for accommodating changing care and support needs, or older age, and there are some people who do not have a home to call their own. People who are thinking about the future for themselves – or for their loved ones – often do not feel like they have options. A lack of suitable housing options results in too many people staying in hospital unnecessarily or moving to residential care prematurely even if that is not what they want, instead of recovering at their own home.” (Para 4.6)

1.5 The ambitions of government to improve the access of older people and others to appropriate accommodation to meet their current and potential future need for care is articulated in terms of facilitating choice:

“Our ambition is to give more people the choice to live independently and healthily in their own homes for longer. This means adults of all ages being able

to access or remain in the home of their choice – whether that be their home of today or one they might move into – which forms part of a community they have chosen to call home.” (Para 4.7)

1.6 The White Paper recognises that needs are both diverse and dynamic and provision of specialised accommodation with care offers the opportunity for a flexible model that will tailor the level of care to changing needs:

“Care and support needs are dynamic, so we should not only be trying to meet a person’s needs in the here and now, but also planning for changing needs. Supporting people to plan for the future – for themselves and their loved ones – includes preventing and reducing future care needs.” (Para 4.3)

1.7 In addition to the other benefits of such accommodation it is seen to be more cost effective than traditional institutional models of care:

“For some of us, the nature of our care and support needs will mean we need a home that is specifically designed to support independent, healthy living. These homes are generally known as supported housing. There is evidence that for both working age adults and older adults, supported housing can be the best model of care to provide better health, greater independence, as well as closer connection with our friends, family and community. In addition, supported housing can be better value than institutional care (e.g. residential care) which is often more intensive, and so there is the potential to reduce costs to the health and social care system” (4.12)

1.8 The White Paper proposes direct intervention to support market shaping and by offering financial support to specialised accommodation provided in the social sector:

“We also need to actively shape the specialist housing market – to establish and consolidate local strategic leadership, and create the right incentives for local areas and housing providers to invest, including in new and innovative models of provision. We will therefore invest at least £300 million for the period 2022–23 to 2025–26. This new investment will allow local authorities to deliver the vision set out in this white paper by integrating housing into local health and care strategies, with a focus on boosting the supply of specialist housing and funding improved services for residents. This in turn will drive increased confidence in the social supported housing market, stimulating a positive cycle of further innovation and private investment.” (Para 4.9)

1.9 The White Paper notes that current provision of specialised accommodation of the kind it wishes to encourage in the United Kingdom is at a much lower level than that found in more developed markets such as the United States, New Zealand and Australia. The stated intention of Government is to increase the current supply of both grant-funded and private provision:

“The UK has a far smaller proportion of people living in these types of accommodation, compare with other countries – around 0.6% compared to around 6% in the United States, 5.5% in New Zealand and 5% in Australia. An

important priority for the government in achieving our 10-year vision is therefore to grow investment in both grant-funded and private supported housing to incentivise their supply.” (Para 4.13)

1.10 The aspirations of Government in relation to increasing the provision of accommodation-based models for the delivery of are summarised toward the end of the section:

“We want to support the growth of a thriving older peoples’ housing sector, that builds enough homes to match growing need, gives certainty to developers and investors, and empowers consumers with choice from a diverse range of housing options to suit their needs. In order to achieve this vision, we need to draw on the expertise of the sector to help us find solutions and consider where the government can best intervene. That’s why we remain committed to working closely with stakeholders from across both private and social sectors to inform future cross-government action that will help stimulate a specialist housing market that delivers effectively for both consumers and providers across the country.” (Para 4.27)

Comment: the whole approach adopted in the White Paper accords with the fundamental argument advanced by the Appellant in relation to the need for the accommodation proposed. Current supply is inadequate, this is the preferred model, this proposal contributes toward fulfilling the aspirations of Government for this aspect of the future of social care.

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