



Written Evidence: A Submission by the Housing Learning and Improvement Network (LIN) to the APPG on Social Integration inquiry into intergenerational connection

7th September 2018

We are pleased to submit a response to this APPG's inquiry on intergenerational connection.

About the Housing LIN

The Housing LIN is a sophisticated peer-to-peer network bringing together housing, health and social care professionals to exemplify innovative housing solutions for an ageing population, and to meet the needs and aspirations of disabled people, of all ages. It is a signatory of the pioneering Health and Housing Memorandum of Understanding.

The Housing LIN is recognised by industry as the sector leading 'knowledge hub' on specialist housing. Its founder and managing director is also the author of several of the HAPPI reports referred to in our submission. Furthermore, the Housing LIN's online and regional networked activities:

- Connect people, ideas and resources to inform and improve the range of housing choices that enable older and disabled people to live independently
- Share thought-leadership, learning and intelligence on latest funding, research, policy and innovate developments to spread practice faster
- Engage with industry to raise the profile of specialist housing with developers, commissioners and providers to plan, design and deliver aspirational housing for an ageing population, and for people with physical and learning disabilities

For more information on the work of the Housing LIN, visit:

<https://www.housinglin.org.uk>

Consultation response

This submission specifically addresses question 6 in the APPG's Terms of Reference; namely, *how can housing and planning projects create opportunities for social mixing between people of different ages?*

In recent years, the UK has seen a decline in intergenerational interaction. Indeed United for all Ages goes so far as to say that '*Britain is one of the most age segregated societies in the world.*'¹ When we compare ourselves to the international stage it certainly does appear this way. '*In Japan, 65% of older people live in the same home as their children at present, compared to only 16% in the United Kingdom*'². Furthermore, in comparison to the USA and continental Europe we have few examples of intergenerational housing.

Some of the barriers in today's society preventing different generations sharing meaningful connections are:

- Geographical segregation - younger people tend to live in urban locations whilst older people in rural locations
- Decline in sites where different age groups would traditionally meet eg. Church, community halls
- Diverse/differing consumption of the media ie social and print media, digital and analogue
- Young people facing challenges due to lack of housing stock and the unequal way it is distributed across the generations
- Fragmentation of families; for example, due to relocating for work, mobility, relationship breakdown

The impact of age segregation can be detrimental. A lack of connection can foster mistrust and misunderstanding across the generations and social isolation is rife which can have a negative impact on our health and wellbeing. Silver Line, a UK helpline for older people, stated in recent research that 53% of their callers say they have no one to talk to.³

At the Housing LIN we recognise that generational divisions can be negated by the development of intergenerational housing and by building communities where people can look out for each other and form meaningful relationships. To encourage social interaction we promote the need for a more collaborative form of ageing focused on engagement with all ages. This is an approach Jeremy Porteus (Managing Director of the Housing LIN) has coined 'CollaborAGE'⁴ and has developed in the [HAPPI reports](#).

The Housing LIN also curates a dedicated [webpage](#) that shares just a selection of poignant examples of intergenerational housing from abroad and in the UK, of which there are many more. This document includes some of these examples to illustrate how housing can play a part in intergenerational engagement.

¹ <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Mixing-Matters-how-shared-sites-can-bring-older-and-younger-people-together-and-unite-Brexit-Britain.pdf>

² https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Viewpoints/HLI_N_Viewpoint74_Intergenerational.pdf

³ <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/blogs/Intergenerational-living-its-scope-and-potential/>

⁴ <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/blogs/Baby-boomers-can-lead-us-from-new-age-to-CollaborAGE/>

Making the most of the current housing supply

Below are some examples of the ways in which the existing housing supply has been retrofitted to encourage social mixing between different generations.

Students/younger people living in residential schemes

There are a variety of intergenerational schemes in the USA and Europe where students or younger people live alongside older residents in care homes, assisted living facilities or sheltered housing developments. Whilst the arrangements may vary this tends to comprise students/young people spending a set number of hours with their neighbours in return for free or low cost accommodation. As 'good neighbours' they provide companionship and a helping hand when needed.

At Humanitas in Deventer, Netherlands, 6 university students live alongside 160 care home residents. Humanitas provides free accommodation for students in return they commit to spending at least 30 hours of their time every month with their older co-residents.⁵ Similarly, Barcelona City Council and a number of universities experimented with housing students in older people's housing in 1996. This programme has now been implemented in 27 cities across Spain.⁶

The USA has also embraced intergenerational housing, one such example is the Housing Opportunities and Maintenance for the Elderly (H.O.M.E) project in Chicago. H.O.M.E. offers intergenerational housing in three safe, affordable buildings where seniors either live in private apartments or within 'Good Life Residences', which are aimed at older people who need some assistance. Here older people, young adults and families with children all live in the same building in a family like environment.⁷

Taking inspiration from the rest of the world the UK now has its first embryonic project of this kind. The Cambridge LinkAges project was launched in September 2017 between Cambridge Housing Society (CHS) housing association and Cambridge Hub. Postgraduate students are recruited by Cambridge Hub to be offered flats in a CHS sheltered housing scheme at intermediate market rents, in return for volunteering 30 hours per month with existing older residents. Students also receive training and mentoring from both partner organisations.⁸

Some of the benefits of this model are outlined by Emma Garland in her report *Learning from Intergenerational Housing Projects in the USA*:

⁵ <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/type/Intergenerational-Seniors-Residence-in-the-Netherlands/>

⁶ <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/blogs/Intergenerational-living-its-scope-and-potential/>

⁷ <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Garland-E-Report-2017-Final.pdf>

⁸ <https://blog.cambridgehub.org/the-uks-first-linkages-intergenerational-housing-project-d5cbb901828b>

- Students gain access to free or low cost accommodation, which helps to reduce the burden of University fees and debt;
- It can help prevent homelessness and help young people find their feet with reasonably priced accommodation;
- Students/young people get relevant experience to help their careers and studies
- Staff get some assistance in looking after older residents;
- Both groups gain a better understanding of what the other generation has to offer
- Meaningful relationships can develop between the generations, through which mutual support is given;
- By expanding their social network, older residents can feel less lonely and/or socially isolated which can result in positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

Homesharing

The Homeshare model also shares some of these benefits. Homeshare schemes match an older householder with a 'Homesharer' who can provide some support and companionship - often a student or public service worker in housing need. Homesharers, who may be single or a couple, usually live rent free but contribute to household bills and provide an agreed amount of hours of help each week; shopping, cooking, cleaning, laundry and gardening. They keep an eye on the older person, providing company, reassurance, support and, if necessary, liaison with relatives. Homesharers play a preventive role - improving nutrition, ensuring drugs are taken correctly, reducing risk of falls and use of emergency services, but they do not provide personal care, which is arranged separately. Increasing need for personal and/or nursing care by the older person often limits the duration of a match but Homesharing can shorten hospital stays and delay a move to residential care.

The homeshare model has been established in many countries around the world such as Canada, Germany, France, New Zealand and the USA. Whilst there are currently 13 homeshare agencies across the UK, a network that is co-ordinated centrally by SharedLives, it is fair to say that homeshare in the UK has not attracted the same level of attention that it has with our European neighbours.⁹ Nevertheless, June 2015 saw the UK's first homesharing initiative, developed by Lloyds Bank Foundation and Big Lottery Fund. The pilot schemes were run by Age UK Oxfordshire and Novus Homeshare. Age UK Oxfordshire received £172,000 to match members of the large student population and the high number of public sector workers in the city with an older population who may have spare rooms available. Novus Homeshare is the only charity currently operating Homeshare in greater London and received £183,200 to encourage its expansion.¹⁰ Room for Tea, a sociable housing network connects guests in need of short-term, affordable housing, with hosts who have a spare room in their homes. The Design Council CAFE

⁹ <http://www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk/homeshare-innovative-housing-and-support-options-in-london/>

¹⁰ <https://www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/publications/news/2015/06/15/homesharepilotlaunch/>

cite Room for Tea on their innovate UK supported programme as a useful example of homesharing.¹¹

'Retrofit Cohousing'

This is the final example of how the current housing supply can be adapted to suit intergenerational living. Retrofit cohousing is where an existing neighbourhood is transformed into a cohousing community, rather than building new properties fit for this purpose. It can be established either by individuals already in the neighbourhood creating a community, or cohousing seekers can purchase units in close proximity to one another.

Fairwater Connections in Cardiff is one example where a group has moved into existing housing within easy walking distance. They have set up a gardening group, they look after community spaces together and also have a joint meal every Thursday in each others homes.¹² N Street Cohousing in California is an example of an existing neighbourhood coming together to form a community. The community evolved during the 1980's from the starting point of four homes and by removing backyard fences. Two pioneers took the risk and purchased surrounding properties and there are now 19 households. It works on the philosophy of 'your house your yard' each household is collectively responsible for immediate space outside homes but there are agreed shared common areas of garden and the common house. There is a rich diversity of community members' income, gender, age and ethnicity.¹³

In a society that is becoming increasingly isolated this model creates organic relationships that are dedicated to building reciprocity, friendships and support between members of all ages within the community.

Purpose built/ New build housing design

As recognised in a recent RIBA publication on Age Friendly Housing, there are a number of design typologies that promote mixed communities. The publication includes an example of scheme, also a Housing LIN case study, that was designed to accommodate young families and other households who were desperate for affordable housing.

The following are some other examples of purpose built intergenerational housing that promote intergenerational connection through design.

Integration with Extra Care

The integration of intergenerational housing within an extra care housing setting is one such model.

The Housing LIN explored this in a further case study (126) on the redevelopment of the Aylesbury Estate, Walworth, South London. This was commissioned by Notting Hill Housing Trust (NHHT– now Notting Hill Genesis) in collaboration with Southwark commissioners. The concept of

¹¹ <https://www.roomfortea.com/>

¹² <https://cohousingcardiff.weebly.com/>

¹³ https://cohousing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/usa_coho_conf_retrofitting_workshop.pdf

intergenerational inclusion was driven by visits to a number of existing NHHT run extra care housing developments across London. The most successful and vibrant schemes encouraged the residents to interact with children and younger adults.

This scheme comprises 50 extra care units, a community facility and general needs housing around a shared enclosed courtyard which is open to the south. Design features that aim to encourage interaction between the generations include:

- Generous and well-overlooked entrance onto a new public space, a vibrant place is created and neighbourhood-wide social interaction encouraged.
- Communal circulation routes are at least 1.5m wide with regular spaces at least 1.8m wide for two wheelchairs to pass.
- Along the main galleries, front doors are paired into 'belvederes' to create a sheltered space outside the individual flat entrances for a neighbourly level of interaction.
- Seats built into the belvederes provide opportunities for social interaction and a year round view into the shared courtyard.¹⁴

Keepmoat's The Croppings, Lightmoor¹⁵ and in Dinnington development¹⁶ were not designed to be 'intergenerational'. However, whilst a significant proportion of the site is ordinary general needs housing, it is co-located with a range of older people's housing. All homes meet the Lifetime Homes, and 'Building for Life' standards; 25% affordable; and the site also includes extra care facilities, and in the case of Lightmoor, a park / green space, children's play area and primary school. It could be argued that this approach is a truly naturally occurring intergenerational community.

Multi-generational Living

Young adults living at home for longer and the increasing pressure of care for our older relatives has resulted in an increase of multigenerational households. Research by the NHBC Foundation found that whilst not suitable option for everyone, those who had chosen to live in a multigenerational home were positive about the benefits. Advantages of this living arrangement include: all generations being able to enjoy family time together, social contact and support, flexible provision of childcare and sharing of chores. Whilst not a substitute for formal care, it may enhance the resilience and extend independence for older people and enable greater social interaction and cohesion between the generations. In order to experience these advantages it was important to consider the size of the multigenerational households. They found that the degree to which each person had their own privacy and

¹⁴ https://www.housinglin.org.uk/_assets/Resources/Housing/Practice_examples/Housing_LIN_case_studies/HLIN_CaseStudy_126_Aylesbury.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.keepmoatcorporate.com/inside-keepmoat/projects/the-croppings-lightmoor>

¹⁶ <https://www.keepmoatcorporate.com/news/diverse-dinnington-development-proving-popular>

independence as well as communal space impacted on the success of the living arrangement.¹⁷

The NHBC report suggests that there is an opportunity for house builders to utilise this niche. Indeed, PRP have already done so with what they call 'lifecycle housing' at Chobham Manor. This scheme consists of three-storey, three-bed homes each with a self-contained studio annexe. The flexibility of the layout allows for various arrangements – the annexe could be used for a grandparent or a returning child; it could be used as a home office; or it could be rented out.¹⁸

Community engagement

Lastly, we look at some examples of how existing older people's schemes can interact with the community to foster intergenerational connection.

Shared spaces

Increasingly older people's housing is sharing sites with other community groups with many positive benefits. Not only do the older residents experience more activities, less isolation and loneliness and better physical and mental health, the children also gain from enhanced early learning and social development. These benefits extend further to staff, parents and the wider community who can in turn share learning and mutual understanding. Some successful examples of this include:

Limelight, a brand new community health and wellbeing hub in Old Trafford, Manchester that is also comprised 81 Extra Care apartments built to HAPPI design principles. Their core services are open to the public and include a health hub, library, pharmacy, opticians, a hair and beauty hub, café and a nursery. Limelight is committed to developing an inclusive and varied activity programme for older people. The provision is focused upon delivering activities for Extra Care residents that are also open to and engage with people from the wider Old Trafford community. This approach to reducing social isolation locates Extra Care Housing residents as part of a wider community.¹⁹

At Lark Hill, an ExtraCare Charitable Trust Retirement Village in Nottingham residents and young people are also benefiting from a series of intergenerational activities. Children have put on performances for residents and residents have visited schools to help with reading and school work. This flagship scheme has also been chosen for the return of Channel 4's Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds this autumn. Previously filmed at St Monica Trust's scheme in Bristol, the TV show's success has created a lasting legacy with the promise of installing playgrounds at the Chocolate Factory in Keynsham. They are also keen to explore how to forge a social movement in the UK that champions intergenerational living.

¹⁷ <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Multigenerational-living-An-opportunity-for-UK-house-builders.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://www.ageofnoretirement.org/stories/themultigenhouse>

¹⁹ https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Events/2018-02/WhyLimelight_070218-.pdf

On a larger scale the NHS Healthy New Towns programme aims to facilitate intergenerational connection within its ten pilot sites. These sites intend to promote health and wellbeing and keep people in the community independent. Sarah Wigglesworth Architects (SWA) has been working with the Ebbsfeet Development Corporation on a number of projects focusing on Health and Wellbeing in the new Ebbsfeet Healthy Garden City (a project the Housing LIN has also been involved in). Central to the development is a vision of a new Health and Wellbeing Hub that incorporates Intergenerational Housing within the same block. Moreover, the intergenerational aspect will extend beyond housing into the fabric of the city by designing interactive and active spaces for all ages that encourages a healthy lifestyle.

Conclusion

To conclude, there is growing interest in intergenerational housing to address the housing market, partly around the lack of affordable housing choices for younger people and addressing the care and support needs of an ageing population.

To date, there are few examples of purpose-built intergenerational and multi-generational homes. Often these are by accident rather than by design. However, a common feature is that they are small in scale - a micro market.

Through our learning and improvement approach we need to showcase what works well and learn by examples. We are pleased to partner with St Monica Trust as they announce there will be a lasting legacy after the success of the Channel 4 show.²⁰

This submission was written on behalf of the Housing LIN by Lois Beech, Research and Engagement Officer at the Housing LIN, with additional input from the Housing LIN's Managing Director, Jeremy Porteus, and Strategic Lead for Influencing and Networks, Clare Skidmore.

²⁰ <https://www.stmonicastrust.org.uk/our-expertise/news/2017/trust-announces-legacy-for-hit-channel-4-show>