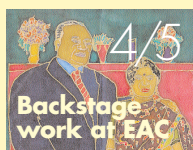




WINTER 2002 ● ELDERLY ACCOMMODATION COUNSEL

REVIEW

INSIDE



Encouraging prospects for housing advice services to older people

In our last Review we wrote that it was a good, if taxing time to be working in the field of housing and care for older people.

Findings and understandings gained in earlier years, particularly about the importance of information, advice and counselling services to older people, were beginning to be addressed in a new climate of co-operation between Government, voluntary and statutory sectors, researchers and companies.

We understood that no single model of housing advisory service would work for all, and were working together to see how we could meet the diverse needs we had identified.

Since then there has been much encouraging progress. Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing: A Strategic Framework, published jointly in 2000 by the Departments of Health and Housing (DTLR/ODPM) acknowledged information and advice as a key area to be addressed in improving housing services to older people. This led to the establishment of an external reference group, the Housing and Older People Development Group (HOPDEV), involving people from the statutory, voluntary and private sectors to add impetus to the search for practical solutions.

Several initiatives are already underway; some of them highlighted opposite.

Practical initiatives in progress

- Care Direct was launched in 2001 – a joint central / local Government programme of pilot services in South West England.
- In 2002, Care & Repair England began to set up 6 local housing options services, with support from Help the Aged, the Housing Corporation, Rank Foundation and others.
- Age Concern federations in England and Scotland are developing older people's housing services within existing settings.
- The Better Government for Older People movement continues to harness the creativity of older people to shape and deliver appropriate services in partnership with local authorities and others.

Their significance is enhanced because providers of housing and care services are increasingly signed up to them. They accept that good quality, well informed and independent information and advice needs to be available to all older people. More options may be open to those with higher income or capital, but the difficulty of assessing alternatives and making effective choices is shared by all.

Within this gathering momentum for change, EAC has sought to establish how best it can contribute to outcomes on the broad front, as well as continuing to deliver a good quality advice service to our clients.

This Review illustrates the approach we have adopted:

- a commitment to building **partnerships**
- extensive enhancements to our **database and tools**, and
- the creation of **Housing Options Online** to bring together all our resources in an accessible service to older people, their families and advisors.