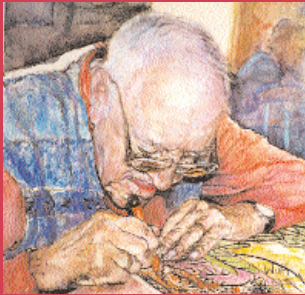


Serious backstage work **reliable**

datacollection

EAC takes information seriously, and has devoted years of painstaking effort to collecting and compiling data about housing options and care/support services. Why? Two examples of situations presented by clients - our clients, your clients - illustrate the reason:

Image from EAC Art Awards

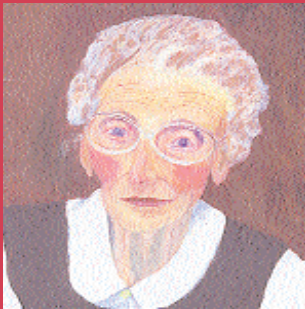


John: "I'm beginning to find living at home difficult . . . the stairs, isolation, the garden, and worries about security."

Appropriate responses may be piecemeal - a chair lift or downstairs bathroom; information about local activities, day centres or clubs; a register of vetted gardeners or volunteers; advice on

security measures; or financing/arranging a move to a safer neighbourhood. Or may be comprehensive - for example to move into sheltered housing, designed for mobility, sociable, secure. An Abbeyfield setting, where John's meals and cleaning would be taken care of, might appeal particularly.

Image from EAC Art Awards



Sarah: "Following a stroke, I need regular care. The hospital, social services and my family all say I'd be better off in a care home. But I'd give up if I did."

The care Sarah needs can be delivered in several ways; a rota of visiting carers; a mix of family care and paid care, perhaps within a supportive but independent environment, such as 'extra

care' sheltered housing. If a move is necessary, maybe there are positive benefits to explore. Some homes or supported housing environments will almost certainly suit her far more than others; may encourage and support her spiritual or cultural needs, enable her to participate and help others, provide outings that she finds difficult to manage now.

To respond adequately to clients like these means being able to offer accurate, detailed information about specific services or products they may like to consider. How should John set about installing a stair lift, or a downstairs bathroom? Where can he find a reliable gardener, or details of sheltered housing in his area? How would Sarah pay for the care she needs? Is there yet an 'extra care' development near her - and would she, as a home owner, be eligible for a rented scheme if this were her preferred or only option?

Although there is still more we plan to do, EAC's databases are already unique sources of detailed UK-wide information, providing our own advisors and those in other services with ready information to place before our clients.

NATIONAL DATABASE of housing for older people



The range of housing now provided specifically for older people is bewildering. Clear information is essential if intelligent choices are to be made between the various models available.

The National Database seeks to provide this. 2,000 housing providers have supplied information on 24,500 developments designed for older people.

The variety is enormous - as well as 13,000 traditional sheltered schemes we have 600

Abbeyfield houses and 650 groups of almshouses; we have extra care, continuing care, very sheltered, close care, assisted living and dementia care schemes; not to mention humble elderly persons' dwellings and remote bungalows visited by travelling wardens.

The National Database aims to avoid jargon, and describe in straightforward language what each of these settings has to offer, how they differ and what kind of organisation owns or manages them.



Sue Gardner
EAC Data
Manager



Sophie Stennet
Data Input

HOOP

Image from
EAC ArtAwards



"Varinder and Ratnami live in a pretty bungalow. They love their garden but it's too big for them now. Keeping their home clean and tidy is becoming harder. They are wary of getting someone to help, yet reluctant to move. They had looked forward to spending more time enjoying their retirement together.

Jack and Dorothy are generally realistic about life. They talk often about their situation, but so far have not been able to settle on a way forward."

The HOOP (Housing Options for Older People) tool might appeal to Varinder and Ratnami.

It is based on a questionnaire designed to help clarify feelings about their present situation and identify the information needed to tackle the main problem areas.

It is more difficult for people to make housing choices in later life because of the uncertainties around personal circumstances and the availability of support. Decisions may be made in response to a crisis and without adequate information or time to reflect. Locating trustworthy and affordable tradespeople to undertake repairs or improvements can be daunting. For some people it is also physically difficult to find or go to



Volunteer Dushy Large is working at incorporating the HOOP tool into Housing Options Online

Care Homes database

The Care Options project (see page 9) will add new dimensions to EAC's existing database of care home provision for older people. But much information is already available. The database includes details of 20,000 homes providing personal or nursing care throughout the UK. It documents the kinds of care homes provide, the facilities they offer, their ownership and their costs. For many it identifies minority languages spoken, dietary requirements catered for and distances to outside focal points such as churches, post offices and pubs.

Specialist resources

Moving gradually onto our database is EAC's collection of information about care/support services, regulatory authorities, specialist advice and information agencies and independent financial advisors. We are also working with the Association of Charity Officers to help rationalise information about grant-giving charities, and with Counsel & Care and others to tackle homecare agencies. We have made a start on home improvement agencies and community alarm providers.

visit possible options, and they may have to depend on someone else to help them. The sort of property they require may not exist or be affordable. Finally, there is the key issue of whether a move would solve their problems or turn out to be a mistake.

The HOOP tool was developed as a response to this analysis by Frances Heywood (SPS, Bristol) & Robin Means (UWE), in conjunction with EAC.



It is a technique for appraising options, and incorporates 2 main elements:

- a holistic assessment of the current housing situation
- identification of any lack of information about possible solutions or alternatives

HOOP is designed for use either by older people themselves, or by advisors and professionals who work with them. It takes the form of a questionnaire, focusing in turn on different aspects of the home situation - size, condition, comfort, location, costs, how they are managing at home etc.

HOOP very effectively flags up any need for information, advice, support or advocacy, and has shown itself to be of great help to people like Varinder and Ratnami who are thinking about moving,

but not at all sure this is what they really want to do. For advisors, using HOOP is extremely challenging as it empowers clients to raise questions and ask for information that may not be immediately available. We as advice agencies need to be prepared for this, and ready to pool our resources in order to deliver satisfactory responses.

