

Bringing it all together in

A range of organisations that provide services to older people assisted us in 2002 as we sought to clarify how best EAC could contribute to improving advice and information services to older people.

Forty members of staff made available an hour or more to be interviewed by consultants Pat Potter and Peter Fletcher of Peter Fletcher Associates.

The views of 200 older people

developing a range of HOOP tools to meet different needs and purposes, using online technology also to speed up the creation of a much expanded information base, and finally, involving older people in all aspects of its development.

The ambitions of *Housing Options Online* are shared by all major funders of EAC, and in June 2002 the Housing Corporation made available a specific grant to begin developing the IT

infrastructure needed, and to establish the direction for further work on HOOP.

Work is already underway to begin shaping EAC's existing website www.HousingCare.org into *Housing Options Online*. The site includes progress reports, a forum for discussion on content, and most importantly, an invitation to all agencies that work in the field of housing or care provision, or advice, to join with us in this exciting partnership venture.



STOP PRESS

Housing Options Online is being built on the foundation of www.HousingCare.org. Several new features enhance the sheltered housing database:

- DIY updating by housing providers
- online vacancies
- customisable search available to other websites

Discussion & feedback forums will involve all users in the site's development, and there are separate content and news domains for:

- advice & information agencies
- housing providers
- care home managers.

Coming shortly are:

- mini-HOOP online
- the new Care Options database.



who had used EAC's advice service were also canvassed through a written questionnaire survey, as were hundreds of users of other EAC products and services - printed Guides, National Database CD, HOOP tool or website vacancy service.

This extensive consultation helped enormously to sharpen our ideas and distil the challenge for EAC. The resulting independent report advocated that EAC should "take a lead role in working with a range of partners to improve housing options for all older people, with a particular focus on developing and making available accessible on-line services."

It crystallised the concept of *Housing Options For Older People Online*, delivering content to a range of outlets used by older people, coupling this with training and back-up support to agencies and outlets,

EAC HousingCare

Housing Options Online

IT development

Developing the technology to deliver *Housing Options Online* will be a major part of EAC's work during 2002 and 2003.

The systems we have in place now continue to serve us well internally. They feed weekly updates to the website www.HousingCare.org, and they also deliver information to many subscribers to our National Database CD, print our County Guides to Housing & Care, and produce analyses, maps and a range of commissioned outputs for various customers. However the specification for *Housing Options Online* requires an ability to handle 2-way information flows to and from large numbers of participants and subscribers, to access remote data



sources maintained by others, and to make data available to kiosks and other outlets as well as desktop PCs.

IT development for *Housing Options Online* is led by John Galvin for EAC and John Dillon of Mission Systems, supported by John Corby (in house system & databases), John Wigley (networking & communications), Alex Billeter (HOOP online) and Phil Prasad (website promotion).



Alex Billeter



John Corby

EAC intends to continue consulting with and involving older people in the development of its services, through:

- detailed questionnaire surveys of its own telephone callers
- further focus group work in refining the Care Options methodology
- structured dialogue and feedback within the evolving *Housing Options Online* website
- specific research with minority community elders
- partnerships with older people's groups to refine HOOP as an empowering housing options appraisal tool

involving older people

POSITIVE IMAGES



our disposal, and have taken two paths towards this:

1. A 'Positive Images of Older People' competition, which encourages younger photography students to engage with older people in their coursework.
2. Inviting our own longstanding designer Bryan Marshall to seek out professional images that he felt communicated something of the range of different environments older people want to live in.



We intend to make widespread use of both new themes over the coming year, along with Art Awards works by older people themselves, featuring them on the HousingCare.org website as well as our more traditional printed material.



Portrait paintings entered for EAC's annual Art Awards for the Over 60s competition have provided a ready source of images to help communicate EAC's aims. They have appeared on a range of publications, and always provoke enthusiastic comment.

We decided however to broaden the range of images at

