

Help the Aged

Housing advice for older people

A briefing paper for Help the Aged
by Jenny Pannell and Imogen Blood

Introduction

There is growing interest in the provision of housing advice for older people, both locally and nationally, which links to a number of government initiatives as discussed further below. This interest follows on from earlier work by a number of agencies including hact (the Housing Associations Charitable Trust), Age Concern England, Age Concern Scotland, the Housing Corporation, Help the Aged and the Older Homelessness Partnership Programme (hact, Help the Aged and Crisis).

Help the Aged is in the early stages of developing a programme to identify the best ways of delivering housing advice to older people. Over £220,000 has already been committed to projects with a special emphasis on older people who are vulnerable and marginalised (eg older homeless people, people from black and minority ethnic communities and people in rural areas).

There are three elements to the programme:

- Care and Repair England's 'Should I stay or should I go?' housing options strategy, which focuses on older owner-occupiers and private tenants;
- a general plan to fund housing advice agencies; and
- a scheme to fund infrastructure development to enable agencies to develop or support housing advice services for older people.

Help the Aged is keen to develop this work in partnership with national and local agencies with expertise and interest in this field. This briefing paper was originally prepared to inform an initial meeting in London on 22 May 2002.

The recommendations from that meeting are summarised in Appendix 1. The paper draws on the following sources:

- a short survey of national advice, housing and older people’s organisations, carried out in April 2002;
- a brief review of previous research reports on older people and housing advice; and
- a summary of current government and other initiatives relevant to older people and housing advice.

1. ‘Housing advice’ and ‘older people’: definitions and issues

1.1 Housing advice

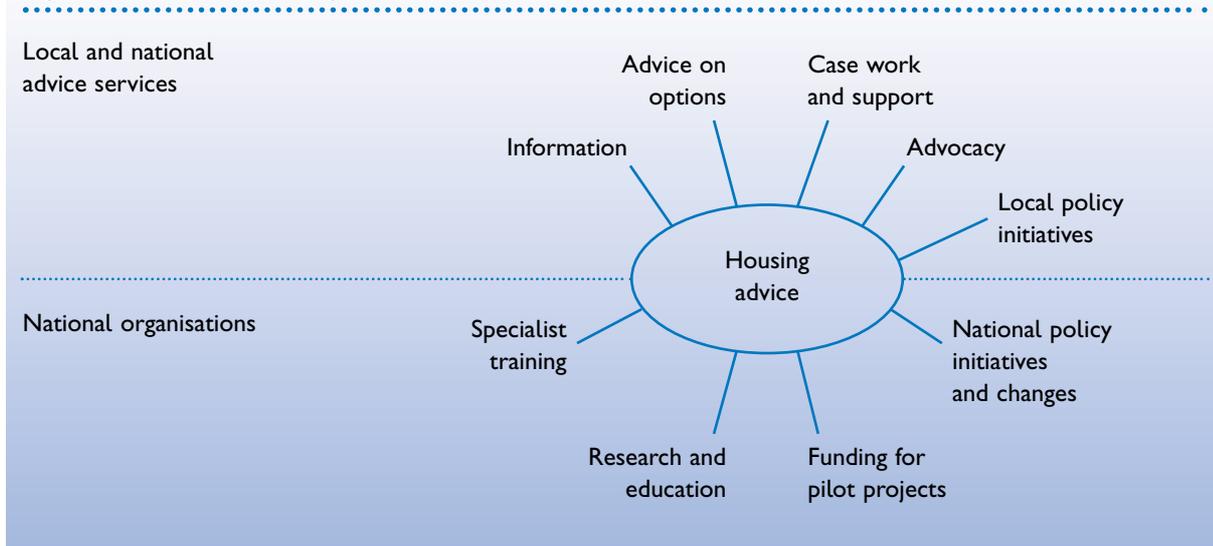
Housing advice for older people is provided by a range of statutory and voluntary organisations, as categorised in Figure 1. As well as local providers and national helplines offering a direct service to older people (and to their advocates, friends and relatives, carers and professionals), there are also federations of agencies and national organisations with links to local groups. These can play a key role in policy and service development, training and awareness raising. Housing advice can be defined narrowly (as in the 1996 Housing Act) or broadly (as in Grant, 1996). This paper follows the broad definition, as in Figure 2, which also summarises the different focuses of local and national organisations.

Figure 1: Types of agency providing direct housing advice services

	Generalist	Specialist	
		Housing	Other
Advice agencies	eg Citizens Advice Bureaux	eg Shelter and CHAS centres	eg Law Centres and disability advice services
Telephone helplines	eg SeniorLine (Help the Aged) Care Direct (pilots)	eg Elderly Accommodation Counsel Shelterline	
Social welfare organisations (whose work includes housing advice): statutory and voluntary	eg local authority social services and social work departments, and residents associations	eg local authority housing departments, housing associations, voluntary organisations (eg day centres)	eg Age Concern, Women’s Aid and minority ethnic community groups

Source: Based on Dean *et al* (1996 p.16) and Parry and Means (1999 p.5)

Figure 2: What is housing advice?



Source: Based on Grant (1996 p.18)

There is a problem in drawing the boundaries around 'housing' advice. If an older person has a housing problem to resolve, they are likely to need holistic advice covering issues wider than a narrow housing focus, extending to other related areas such as benefits and community care. This means that advice staff need a broad knowledge and the ability to refer clients to, and/or work in partnership with, staff in other statutory and voluntary agencies. It is likely to take some time to get to the bottom of the problem; the more vulnerable or marginalised the older person, the more time and skill is needed to develop their confidence and build a relationship. Gate-keeping staff (especially in statutory agencies, eg housing benefits) often lack the time, skill or knowledge to tease out the true nature of the problem. Older people, even if they approach agencies, are too often unable to access the services they need, as revealed in the fieldwork for recent studies by the University of the West of England (UWE) on older homeless people and older private tenants (Means *et al* 2002; Carlton *et al*, 2002).

Housing advice is relevant to older people in widely different housing situations, and the service they need is likely to vary significantly. There are three broad groups:

- **Homeless older people** (including those at risk of homelessness by landlord action, the hidden homeless and those in very insecure or poor-quality housing, ie 'homeless' as defined by legislation rather than merely 'roofless'). These range from rough sleepers and shelter and hostel residents, many of whom are in contact with street outreach workers or hostel and day centre staff, to those who are at risk of homelessness and who need help to challenge eviction proceedings, advocacy with homeless persons units and support to find more appropriate housing.
- **Housed older people who wish to stay in their existing housing and need help to do so.** This could include works to the property, contact with a home improvement agency (HIA), access to a Disabled Facility

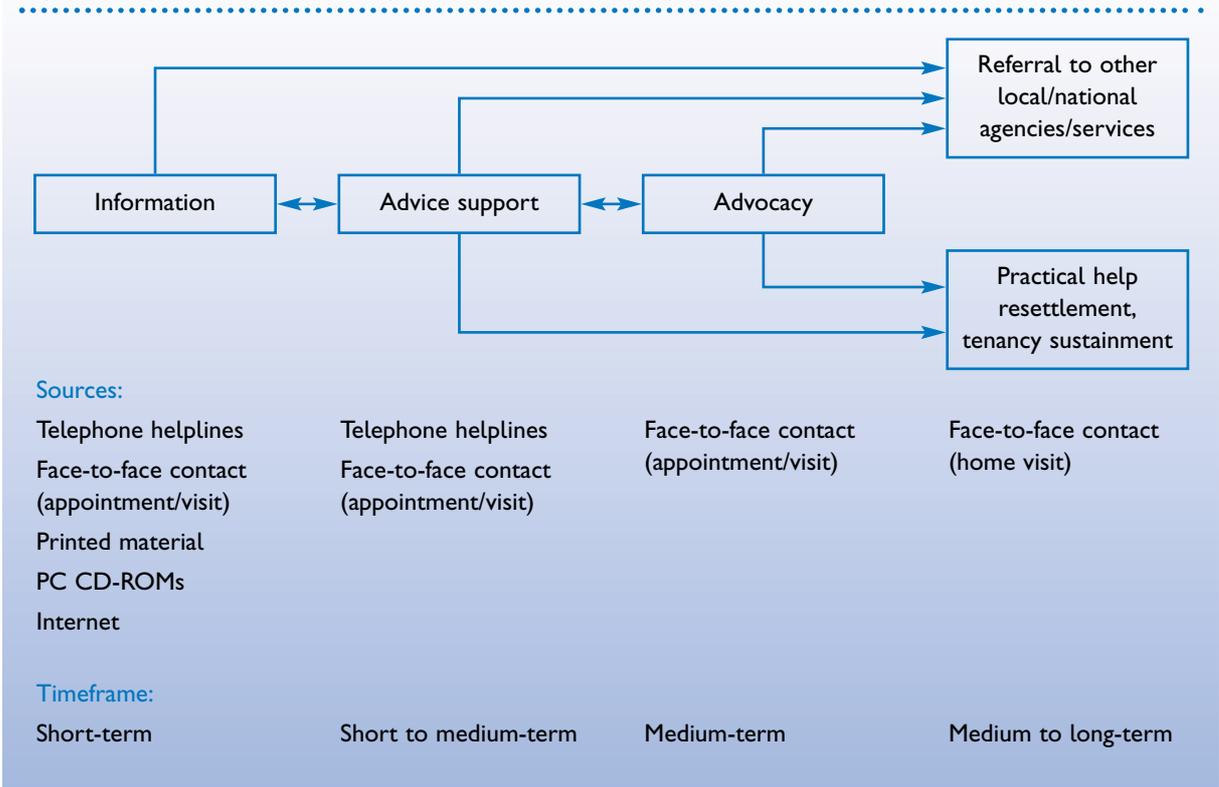
Grant (eg for a shower), better security (eg door and window locks, for which grants may be available) and improved heating and insulation (perhaps through the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme), as well as benefits and community care issues such as access to home care or meals.

- **Housed older people who prefer, or accept the need for, a move** to more suitable accommodation, which could be alternative owner-occupied ordinary housing, mainstream social rented housing, sheltered housing (for sale, rent or part-ownership), an Abbeyfield or a care or nursing home. These people’s needs could include anything from the provision of information to advice, support and practical assistance.

Some older people will need minimal support from outside agencies. Given access to a helpline and using their existing support networks of family, friends and perhaps professionals, they will be able to resolve their housing issues successfully, using printed or web-based information and a self-help tool such as HOOP (Housing Options for Older People), which was developed by the Elderly Accommodation Counsel, UWE and the University of Bristol.

However, many more older people will need further advice, support and perhaps advocacy if they are to successfully resolve their housing-related problems. Figure 3 maps the different stages, sources and timescales of advice, help and support which may be needed.

Figure 3: Spectrum of housing advice for older people



1.2 Old age

There is no statutory definition of 'old age'. Entitlement to various benefits and services occurs at various points, and can also be influenced by ill-health and disability. In terms of housing, the homelessness legislation has never defined 'old age'. Although the Code of Guidance has recommended sympathetic consideration to those aged 60+ or approaching this age, local authority practices vary widely. Housing providers set different lower age limits for sheltered and other supported housing for older people (usually 50, 55 or 60) and sometimes other conditions (eg not accepting people who are still working).

Statistics on age, where collected, use a variety of age bands so it is difficult to compare information from different agencies even if age data is collected (and it is often not, even when other data, eg gender and ethnicity, is kept). This lack of data adversely affects the planning of services aimed at older people, including housing advice.

Although the state pension age is being equalised for men and women at 65, most agencies recognise people aged 60+ as 'older', and this is the lower age limit used by most older people's organisations. Homelessness agencies and researchers argue that older homeless people age more quickly than the general population, and that a lower age limit of 50+ is therefore more appropriate (Crane, 1999). Research shows that, even if they are not homeless, people in their 50s with housing problems can experience particular difficulties in accessing services and accommodation because they fall between provision for younger people and for those aged 60/65+ (Heywood *et al*, 2001; Means *et al*, 2002; agency responses to questionnaire for this paper, April 2002).

For the purposes of its recent older homelessness funding, Help the Aged accepted 50+ as 'older', and some agencies were working with a few people younger than this. For the housing advice programme, a decision needs to be taken on whether to set the lower age limit at 50+ or 60+, or to take a more flexible approach. It is suggested that some degree of flexibility would be appropriate, given the focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Mainstream agencies are likely to focus on those aged 60+ but some projects (eg those working with older homeless people) are likely to be providing services for those aged 50+ or even 35/40+. In smaller towns and rural areas there is also the question of 'critical mass': it may be more effective in terms of staffing resources and attracting funding to run a service for a wider client group that benefits older people among others. For example, some of the Community Legal Service Partnership (CLSP) initiatives described below cover a broader age band.

2. The national policy context: differences across the UK

There are important differences in many aspects of legislation and administrative arrangements across the UK. This paper can only summarise the main differences, primarily concerning housing and homelessness legislation.

2.1 England

The 1996 Housing Act (which applied to England and Wales) built on and amended previous homelessness legislation and imposed a new duty on local authorities

(in Part VII, section 79) to ensure that advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness was available to everyone.

This has now been developed by the Homelessness Act 2002, which covers England and Wales. However, at the time of writing the Act is only just beginning to be implemented. There is to be both a national homelessness strategy and a requirement for local authorities to produce local homelessness strategies. The new Act is especially relevant because the strategies require the active involvement of social services and voluntary agencies working in partnership with housing departments. There is an emphasis on the importance of preventative measures, including advice services, and the need to link the homelessness strategy to other strategies (eg the housing strategy and plans for the provision of community care services). The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has produced guidance on developing local homelessness strategies (Randall and Brown, 2002). The guidance accepts that although local authorities (in England and Wales) have had a duty to provide advice (Housing Act 1996), in practice this has varied widely.

The guidance observes that everyone at risk of homelessness should be offered a full advice interview, whereas current practice in some cases is merely to provide a list of B&B addresses. The guidance also takes a broad view of housing advice, including tenancy rights, access to county court representation and tenancy sustainment services. It acknowledges that services need to extend beyond simple advice into detailed casework, and that there is a 'strong case' for local authorities to 'enable and possibly fund' independent housing advice, especially where independence is necessary (eg when challenging decisions). It also refers to

the recent good practice guide produced for Scotland by HomePoint (2001), and to Shelter's work on quality audits. There are short sections on particular groups including older people, and black and minority ethnic groups (including reference to the needs of ethnic elders).

2.2 Wales

In Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government is responsible for all aspects of Welsh housing policy other than matters governed by primary legislation (such as the 2002 Homelessness Act). The Welsh Assembly has recently commissioned an audit of Welsh housing advice services, which was completed in 2002 (DTLR, 2002:9). The audit evaluated housing advice services that local authorities provide or support in fulfilment of their duties under the 1996 Act, in order to map current provision and develop standards for future housing advice services.

The First Minister commented in March 2002 that Welsh housing problems differ from those found elsewhere in the UK in a number of ways, and this paper notes that these impact especially on older people's need for holistic housing advice. The key differences include a high percentage of people dependent on manual work and benefits, a high proportion of retired people (many on low incomes), a high proportion of pre-1914 terraced housing and a high number of older owner-occupiers, many of whom have low equity and properties in need of repair and improvement (*Housing*, 2002:9; CIH Cymru, 2002).

2.3 Scotland

Scottish housing (and other) law has always been separate from that of England and Wales, so the 1996 Housing Act did not apply to Scotland, and neither does the 2002 Homelessness Act. Since devolution, the Scottish Executive has been responsible for housing policy.

The 1988 Housing (Scotland) Act established Scottish Homes as the National Housing Agency for Scotland, with a wide range of powers and responsibilities. Following the introduction of the Tenants' Charter published by the Scottish Office in 1991, responsibility was added for the development and co-ordination of both the provision and quality of housing information and advice services in Scotland. In 1993 Scottish Homes set up HomePoint, a new agency to work with other providers in the public, private and voluntary sectors (Bell *et al.*, 1995).

Grant (1996) points out that Scottish local authorities have general powers under section 88 of the 1994 Local Government (Scotland) Act to give advice, either directly or through other bodies, on matters relating to local government services. In addition, section 14 of the Act extends section 88 to give Scottish local authorities powers to assist voluntary organisations to provide services for individuals, including advice, information and advocacy. These powers passed to the new unitary authorities in 1996.

In June 2002, Scotland's First Minister committed his administration to passing new homelessness legislation by April 2003, a move welcomed by Scottish housing bodies. However, Shelter Scotland emphasised the need for early publication of a draft bill to meet this

deadline, and CIH Scotland criticised the lack of any action to address poor housing conditions and disrepair (*Inside Housing*, 7 June 2002:8).

2.4 Northern Ireland

Similarly, the provisions in the 1996 Housing Act and 2002 Homelessness Act do not apply to Northern Ireland. Homelessness responsibilities are discharged through the 1988 Housing (Northern Ireland) Order and are broadly akin to provisions in the 1985 Housing Act (Grant, 1996). This legislation also includes an article giving the Northern Ireland Housing Executive power to provide financial or other assistance to voluntary organisations concerned with homelessness or matters relating to homelessness.

Other relevant legislation includes the 1981 Housing (Northern Ireland) Order, under which the Housing Executive has the power to establish housing information and advisory services. Also relevant is the 1983 Housing (Northern Ireland) Order, which enables the Department for Social Development (Northern Ireland) to give financial assistance to voluntary organisations for the purpose of providing training or advice, including housing advice, or other similar purposes related to housing. However, it is generally agreed that housing advice for older people is at a low level of development in Northern Ireland compared with other parts of the UK.

3. The policy context: current initiatives

A number of current initiatives are relevant to the development of housing advice services for older people. This means that this is a good time for Help the Aged to launch its new programme.

However, before the current raft of initiatives is considered, it should be recognised that although a lot is happening, not all of it is positive. In fact the extent of change is in itself problematic, in that agency staff (especially frontline staff in contact with older people) find it difficult to keep up, and older people and their informal support networks are left bewildered by the pace of change. The plethora of acronyms is also confusing to both the general public and to professionals outside their own 'comfort zone'.

For example, both the general public and many non-legal professionals are confused about changes to the legal aid system and the new names given to the organisations involved – Legal Services Commission, and Community Legal Service (CLS). The Legal Services Commission itself comments that 'one challenge for those of us involved in the CLS is combating the misconception that legal aid is no longer available' (Max, 2002).

Finally, at present there is more emphasis on strategies than on implementation. Whilst the focus on joint working is welcome, and there are some interesting local initiatives under way (for example, the CLS partnerships described in 3.8), it remains to be seen to what extent the strategies will be translated into grass-roots practice, with secure funding attached,

so that innovative work (such as that funded by hact and Help the Aged) can become mainstream.

3.1 Overarching government initiatives and legislation concerning older people, housing and support

Space precludes more than a brief mention of the most relevant initiatives and it is assumed that readers are familiar with them; comments from research and the questionnaire survey are included where appropriate.

3.1.1 Better Government for Older People

The Better Government for Older People (BGOP) initiative commits the government to listening to older people's views as a means of improving public services. There are currently a number of BGOP/Benefits Agency and BGOP/ICL pilots relating to advice and information services. A recent search of the BGOP website revealed 28 advice-related initiatives in Scotland, Wales and England, including:

- one-stop services run by local authorities and/or Age Concern (Bolton, Hartlepool, Wolverhampton);
- a range of IT initiatives in 13 localities including rural areas;
- video-conferencing and telephone advice (Newcastle, Stirling);
- using volunteers for visits and roadshows (Mid-Devon, Stirling);
- training Benefits Agency visiting officers on wider public service advice (Middlesborough, Newcastle) and outposting them to local authority offices (Rhondda Cynon Taff);

- providing information and advice to current and potential care and nursing home residents (East Devon); and
- improving services at the time of bereavement (Wolverhampton).

3.1.2 The National Service Framework for Older People

The framework aims to combat ageism in the NHS and social care, and supports a social (rather than a medical) model of ageing. It also refers to the interrelated roles of health, housing and social services.

3.1.3 Better Care, Higher Standards

The Better Care, Higher Standards (BCHS) initiative aims to improve the quality of care services in both residential and domestic settings. It encourages local authorities to make links between services (especially housing, health and social services) so that whatever the older person's initial point of contact, they can access information and advice about all relevant services. BCHS sets standards across housing, health and social services care provision. BCHS also asks local councils to provide details of local organisations providing independent advice and advocacy.

3.1.4 Benefits

Current proposals suggest overhauling some aspects of the Housing Benefit system, as well as making changes to and streamlining other aspects of benefits administration (eg the Minimum Income Guarantee; claiming Retirement Pension). Benefits issues form a major part of the work of housing advice agencies, and older people are known to have a low take-up of means-tested benefits and to have particular problems with Housing Benefit. A number of survey respondents commented on the increasing number of older people falling foul of Housing Benefit investigations and accusations of

fraud (whereas most cases appear to be misunderstandings), and problems with the verification framework; the UWE research revealed the same problems.

3.1.4(i) The creation of the Department for Work and Pensions, Jobcentre Plus and the Pension Service

Major changes to social security benefits administration are taking place, following the creation of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which replaced the Department of Social Security in June 2001. After 1 April 2002, the DWP created two new businesses: the Pension Service (for people of pension age) and Jobcentre Plus (for people of working age). From that date, the Benefits Service and the Employment Service ceased to exist.

For people under pension age, both benefits administration and help with seeking employment were combined in the new Jobcentre Plus offices: these are gradually being introduced across Britain, following a number of local pilots. For older people, the Pensions Service will:

. . . deliver services to pensioners through a network of 26 pension centres. These will deal primarily with customers over the phone . . . A local service, delivered in the community, will provide face-to-face contact for those pensioners who need it. The local service will also work in partnership with local authorities and voluntary organisations to ensure the delivery of a joined-up service . . . The Pensions Service will be rolled out over England, Scotland and Wales over the next few years. (DWP, 2002:1)

In theory, the new arrangements could provide certain advantages to older people who are over pension age. Steps are already being taken, and there are more in the pipeline, to improve links between different benefits: this applies not only to social security benefits but also to Housing Benefit. Using different life events (eg reaching retirement age) as 'triggers' should also improve the take-up of various benefits.

However, the emphasis the new Pensions Service places on telephone contact also has its disadvantages. It means that more vulnerable older people (eg those who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, from minority ethnic groups, with poor English or isolated in private tenancies) may lose out if local service providers do not seek them out. Voluntary organisations already working with these groups need to be aware of the changes, and to make sure that vulnerable older people's needs are taken into account in the development of the new service.

The other dangers concern the clear split of services between those for people over pension age and those for people of working age (ie up to 60/65). First, older people in their 50s or early 60s may lose out because the new initiatives and partnerships described above will only benefit people over pension age. Second, the emphasis placed by the new Jobcentre Plus on getting people into work could cause difficulties for older people under pension age with disabilities or in poor health. This is likely to be a particular problem for those with certain conditions (eg mental health problems, learning difficulties or substance abuse issues).

Fieldwork for the UWE study of older homelessness (for Help the Aged, Hact and Crisis) has already revealed problems for older, formerly homeless people in their 50s who were removed

from Incapacity Benefit and put back on to Job Seeker's Allowance. Advisers reported Housing Benefit problems that arose when people were moved off Incapacity Benefit on to Job Seeker's Allowance, as this often created delays and breaks in claims for Housing Benefit leading to arrears and even the risk of homelessness.

These problems occurred due to the lack of liaison between offices and because older people did not understand that they needed to actively manage their claim, assuming that their details would automatically be passed between offices.

3.1.5 Supporting People

Created within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Supporting People is a programme offering vulnerable people opportunities to improve their quality of life. This initiative will change the funding of housing and support services, including sheltered housing, from April 2003. Advisers and providers are concerned about how this will work in practice, and that some providers (especially small ones) will not be properly prepared.

The change from Housing Benefit to Supporting People to fund warden and other support services for older people, and the need for a social services assessment and a contract with the provider based on the needs of each individual, could lead to a high demand for information and advice services from older people unfamiliar with the new system. In theory, this need will be met by the providing organisation but, in practice, not all providers perform well in other aspects of housing management and advice agencies are left to compensate for their shortcomings.

3.1.6 Care Direct

Care Direct aims to provide a new, single gateway to information for older people and people with disabilities. There are currently six pilots in the south-west of England, five run by local authorities and one by a voluntary agency, Help and Care, under contract from Bournemouth Social Services (which took part in the survey for this paper). The pilots provide a telephone helpline, local walk-in help desks and outreach home visit facilities. The aim is to provide access to information and advice on housing, care and support services and social security benefits. At a national level, the Department of Health has formed partnerships for older people's housing advice within the Care Direct pilots with Shelter, Citizens Advice Bureaux and housing departments.

Whilst the Care Direct initiative appears to offer a robust first point of access, concern has been expressed by some voluntary advice agencies that it is too heavily focused on benefits (rather than being holistic). There are also worries that it is being used by some local authorities as a justification for rationalising services and perhaps even cutting funding from independent advice agencies. UWE fieldwork with older homeless people and older private tenants indicates that statutory agencies sometimes prevent older people from successfully accessing benefits, housing and other services. There are a number of reasons for this, including poorly trained or temporary staff, privatised benefits administration, lack of housing or other resources, and older people's willingness to accept refusal owing to language issues, unassertiveness, ignorance or frailty. Without an independent agency to challenge and advocate on their behalf (and at times to provide emotional support), there is a danger that older people, especially those who are vulnerable, will not benefit fully from the Care Direct model.

3.1.7 Housing and Older People Development Group

Housing and Older People Development Group (HOPDEV) was formed in 2001 to develop the strategic framework set out in *Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing* (DH/DETR, 2001). Help the Aged is represented on HOPDEV and a number of HOPDEV members attended the meeting on 22 May. One of the five key areas is 'Information and advice – ensuring that information and advice are accessible to both professionals and older people themselves on the variety of housing and support options available'. 'Quality and choice' refers to local authorities' existing duty (in England and Wales) to make housing advice services available, especially to prevent homelessness (now strengthened by the 2002 Homelessness Act). It also refers to the Care Direct pilots, and to the different advice needs of owners, renters and minority groups. However, the emphasis appears to be on the information rather than the advocacy end of the spectrum of advice services (see Figure 3).

HOPDEV has three working groups, one of which is on housing advice for older people. Suggestions for action from the housing advice group include:

- a network of contacts and enhanced use of websites;
- promoting examples of projects which have successfully reached older people in rural areas and black and minority ethnic communities;
- capacity building and support for small organisations;
- guidance on good practice, an accreditation system and a charter for quality;
- links with Best Value networks and BGOP; and
- a conference.

Two meetings (in October 2001 and June 2002) identified a number of issues and difficulties. These included the problems of income generation and sustainability for voluntary sector advice services, a question as to how the private sector might be more engaged, and a realistic assessment of the problems of avoiding duplication of services and organisational conflicts, linked to the need to develop partnerships. The June meeting discussed an earlier version of this briefing paper. The group emphasised the need to reach isolated older people, including the homeless, those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, and those who are housebound, as well as older home-owners and private renters. The importance of the role of family, GPs and post offices was also stressed.

DTLR and the Department of Health (DH) are also exploring the possibility of establishing a national website on housing, care and support options for older people, and this proposal has been discussed by HOPDEV.

3.1.8 Community Legal Service initiatives

The CLS is:

. . . a vision or concept, not an organisation in itself. It brings together a range of agencies (funders as well as advice providers) . . . As it is community-led, the CLS may look very different in different areas – but the underlying values are the same. (Max, 2002)

The CLS Quality Mark has three levels of service provision (specialist help, generally for agencies with solicitors; general help, for non-specialist advice agencies; and information, for organisations which offer information but not advice, such as libraries). The intention is to kitemark advice agencies

and help assure funders of the quality of service provision. Eight organisations surveyed use the CLS Quality Mark, and of those organisations which name their quality control systems it is the most commonly cited (see Tables 1 and 2).

The Legal Services Commission has a strategic partnership with BGOP and has facilitated the formation of 201 Community Legal Service Partnerships (CLSPs) involving 375 local authorities (from the beginning of 2002). Older people's legal advice needs have already been prioritised in at least 16 CLSPs in England and Wales. A briefing on 'The CLS and older people' (CLS, 2001) gave some examples where CLSPs have involved and consulted older people in order to meet their advice needs. In London, the Black Minority Ethnic Working Group (pan-London) has identified the need to research data on and approaches to the consultation of black elders, as have groups in Brighton and Hove.

A number of CLSPs, including Dorset, Salford, North East Lincolnshire and Liverpool, have formed partnerships (some with Partnership Innovation Bid (PIB) funding) to provide advice on welfare benefits and/or community care advocacy. The Liverpool project is particularly interesting because it provides holistic advice via GP surgeries and health workers. Evaluation of the pilot suggests that it:

. . . reaches a different type of older person than the mainstream Age Concern services ie more socially isolated and in worse health, etc. The involvement of health staff, who are trusted by the older patients, plays a big role in persuading the older person to accept the offer of advice. (CLS, 2001)

Two noteworthy rural projects are based in Flintshire and Powys, Wales. Both are aimed at older people and others who find it difficult to access mainstream services:

. . . as a result of accessibility problems, or for fear of being seen as needing to seek advice (a cultural issue which is reported to be particularly strongly felt by older people in rural areas). By linking services very closely to primary care settings . . . issues of both accessibility and perceived stigma will be reduced. (CLS, 2001)

Age Concern Durham County and the Legal Services Commission conducted a joint survey of older people (aged 57–87). Key findings included:

- awareness of the problems or circumstances for which people could usefully access independent advice and redress varied widely;
- knowledge of independent advice providers differed considerably;
- the main barriers to accessing services were low self-esteem and confidence;
- awareness of charging for advice services was mixed; and
- there was little interest in using new technology – most people would prefer to access future advice through an office appointment or home visit.

3.1.9 National Homelessness Advice Service

The National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS) provides secondary support services and training free of charge (mainly through Shelter fieldworkers) to over 500 organisations providing housing advice, including 120 Citizens Advice Bureaux, 90 Federation of Independent Advice Centres (FIAC) members, 30 Age Concern branches and a further 260 smaller organisations such as small community groups that refer clients on to other agencies for more specialised housing advice.

3.1.10 Community initiatives

Government initiatives to strengthen and develop communities are also of relevance to housing advice services for older people and may provide sources of funding. For example, neighbourhood renewal and community safety strategies will especially affect older tenants and owner-occupiers, such as those trapped in low-demand or derelict areas. Rural initiatives will be relevant for older tenants and owner-occupiers who are isolated and do not have access to transport and services, and the Countryside Agency is jointly funding some initiatives.

Table 1: Questionnaire responses: housing/advice organisations and federations

Organisation	Policy?	Monitor?				Older people 60+	
		Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Disability	No.	%
Citizens Advice Scotland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		16% 18% 18.6%
Shelter	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1,902	3%
						2,456	3%
						2,218	3%
Shelterline	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		1.2%
CHAS (Westminster)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	71	6%
						105	10%
						146	15%
						(65+)	
Housing Rights Service, Belfast, Northern Ireland	No	Yes	Yes		Yes	c.600	c.25%
FIAC	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		
FIAC members	Don't know						
DIAL UK	No	No	No	No	No		
DIAL members	Don't know						
Devon Law Centre	No	No	No	No	No		
Central London Law Centre	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	* 69	10.8%
						† 22	3.4%
Newcastle Law Centre	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Saltley & Nechells Law Centre, Birmingham	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		c.25%

Notes: * 50 – 64 1/1/2000–31/3/02
 † 65+ 1/1/2000–31/3/02

Older people enquiries are for most recent three years: either: 1999–2001
 or: 1998–9; 1999–2000; 2000–1

Partner/ signposting?	Outreach?	Staff development?	Quality control accreditation	Policy issues raised?
Local agencies	Surgeries Home visits	No	CAB membership/audit	Yes
HCA Seniorline Local Shelter services	Home visits (local Shelter services)	No	CLS for most local Shelter services	Yes
Local/national specialists	Shelter services or local authorities	No	CLS telephone helplines	No – % too small
Local agencies incl. Age Concern, Carers Network and Bangladeshi Society	Surgeries, home visits	Skills sharing	CLS CHAS Quality Standards Handbook FIAC	No
Help the Aged and others	Home visits	Training	Internal quality audit	Yes
No	No	No	Minimum criteria for FIAC membership; some members also use other accreditation	Yes
Don't know	Don't know	Don't know		
No	No	No	CLS DIAL UK Quality Mark	No
Don't know	Don't know			
No	No	No	CLS	No
Local Age Concern	No	No	CLS	No
Local Age Concern	No	No	CLS	No
No	No	No	CLS	No

Table 2: Questionnaire responses: national older people's organisations/services

Organisation	Policy?	Monitor?					†Older people 60+	
		Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Disability	Type	No.	%
Age Concern Scotland	Yes							
Age Concern Northern Ireland	No	Yes* No	No	No	No	Yes	649	20%
Care and Repair England	No	No	No	No	No	No		
Seniorline (Help the Aged)	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	7,024 7,990 4,635	10% 8% 6%
Elderly Accommodation Counsel	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	10,000 10,000 10,000	100% 100% 100%
Help and Care Bournemouth Care Direct Pilot	Pilot: No specific strategy for housing at present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not available (pilot started 1/11/01)	Not available (pilot started 1/11/01)

* **Age Concern Northern Ireland**

Local branches do not monitor age. Information Line Service does monitor age. Statistics are for Information Line 2001.

† **Housing only**

Partner/ signposting?	Outreach?	Staff development?	Quality control accreditation	Policy issues raised?
No	Home visits	Skills sharing Training		Yes
Informal, to Housing Rights Belfast	Roadshows	Skills sharing Training	AIAC Telephone helplines	Yes
Yes. Local HIAs	Via HIAs	Training		Yes
No	No	Training	CLS telephone helplines FIAC	No
Yes 'many!'	Via local agencies esp. Age Concern groups	Training	'Working Towards'	Via HOPDEV
Yes	Via Benefits Agency staff	Induction training	Evaluation/quality control by PSSRU/ University of Kent	Not yet, but will in future. 'Major aim of Care Direct'

4. Previous research on older people and housing advice

There are a number of reports and studies on general housing advice, and a handful on older people, homelessness and housing, and older people's needs for information and advice. However, there are few that focus specifically on housing advice for older people.

The Housing Corporation provided funding to Age Concern England and hact to investigate housing advice for older people and to make recommendations for improving provision. The work, which led to the publication of *Where can I go? Housing advice for older people* (Age Concern England/hact, 1999), included:

- two surveys of housing advice agencies and Age Concern groups providing information and advice;
- a review of existing specialist provision and of related Housing Corporation Innovation and Good Practice projects;
- a review of existing research;
- a series of focus groups involving older people; and
- a seminar discussing issues with people working in advice services and/or with older people.

In parallel, UWE carried out an evaluation of five projects funded by hact in Northern Ireland (Ballymena CAB), Scotland (Disabled Persons Housing Service, Edinburgh) and England (Chesterfield Law Centre; Age Concern Hackney, London; Threshold Housing Advice, South London). The evaluation produced a 30-page report, *Getting through the maze* (Parry and Means,

1999). It includes useful summaries of the policy background and different legislative context in different parts of the UK. A brief overview of the development of housing advice services contrasts the climate in the 1960s and early 1970s (campaigning, rights and community development) when there was a growth of volunteer bureaux, consumer aid centres, law centres and welfare rights centres, with the 1980s and 1990s when:

The political climate . . . has been less supportive of these types of agencies which have in any case always suffered from very insecure funding. The emphasis on partnership and the contract culture has reduced the willingness of many local authorities to be criticised by those it funds and the emphasis has rather switched to performance measurement and the extent to which small local agencies are meeting the strategic objectives of the local authority. Many housing advice agencies have found it difficult to convince statutory funders that housing advice rather than the delivery of more 'concrete' housing services should be a priority for grant allocation. (Parry and Means, 1999:5)

The report also contains information on the five case studies and a very useful chapter covering performance measurement and quality issues, campaigning and policy development issues, staffing (including training and the use of volunteers), partnerships and referrals, and insecurity of funding. Both the Age Concern England and the UWE reports conclude with a list of recommendations for housing advice for older people, which are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Main recommendations from Age Concern England and UWE reports

A = Age Concern England/hact, 1999 **P** = Parry and Means, 1999

To housing advice agencies	A	P	To older people's agencies	A	P
Strategy to address housing advice needs of older people	✓	✓	Strategy to address housing advice needs of older people		✓
Records on age	✓	✓	Records on age		✓
Publicity/information especially where older people go, target relevant professions, minority languages	✓ ✓	✓	Publicity/information especially where older people go, target relevant professions, minority languages	✓ ✓	✓
Outreach services, eg surgeries, roadshows and home visits	✓	✓	Outreach services, eg surgeries, roadshows and home visits	✓	✓
Staff secondment, skills sharing, specialist training	✓	✓	Staff secondment, skills sharing, specialist training	✓	✓
Quality standards	✓		Quality standards	✓	
Raising policy issues from casework	✓		Raising policy issues from casework	✓	

To central government	A	P	To charitable and statutory funders	A	P
New Code of Guidance promoting information, advice and advocacy for older people especially appropriate cultural provision	✓	✓ ✓	Clear performance measures and objectives for housing advice services		✓
National strategy and emphasis on local authority role	✓	✓	Secure long-term funding	✓	✓
Secure and sustainable funding for housing advice for older people	✓	✓	Collaboration between funders		✓
			Encourage use of trained volunteers/ older people for peer support		✓

To local government	A	P
Local authorities lead enabling role, collaborative working, strategy	✓	✓
Local authority funding for pilot projects especially partnerships between housing advice and older people's agencies	✓	

Age Concern England had previously carried out an internal review of information and advice provision in the Age Concern movement and produced a background paper (Russell, 1998). Age Concern Scotland published the report *Housing advice and information for older people in 1998* (Age Concern Scotland, 1998) and recommended greater provision of housing advice for older people in a separate report on older homeless people (Wilson, 1997).

In 2000, Anchor and the Housing Corporation produced a report called *Preventive Approaches in Housing: an exploration of good practice* (Parkinson and Pierpoint, 2000). In the section on information and advice, they found that older people receiving preventive services had usually found out about them through a combination of word of mouth and serendipity: however, the 'serendipity' did include active outreach such as a leaflet drop, information from post office counter staff and a domiciliary hairdresser. Owner-occupiers reported receiving little advice on 'staying put' options from their local housing authority: all that was usually offered was the chance to go on the housing waiting list or a handful of leaflets. Providers of housing and care services recognised the tensions inherent in offering advice. Many were providing information in order to market their services so were sometimes reluctant to publicise competing services or alternative options. There was insufficient awareness of national agencies such as the Elderly Accommodation Counsel.

Shelter surveyed 700 cases dealt with by its own housing advice centres in 1999. Forty-six out of the 1,285 people in the cases sampled were over 60 (4 per cent) and 11 of the 117 case studies featured concerned older people. The 11 cases covered a wide range of complex

housing problems involving owner-occupiers and both private and social housing tenants. In over half of these cases problems had arisen where statutory agencies (benefits, housing, homelessness) had not acted to help the older person until Shelter intervened.

Care and Repair England (2000) based its report on the outcomes of five discussion groups, including one made up of Asian elders. The report's title admirably sums up its central message: *Learning to Listen: involving service users in the development and delivery of home improvement agencies and related services*. Participants were critical of the low profile of home improvement agency (HIA) services locally and nationally – even those who had used them were unclear about the range of help they could provide. There was generally felt to be a lack of reliable sources of advice and information for older people. The grant system was felt to be extremely complex, and loans were of little use to those with low incomes and/or low equity homes.

Care and Repair's report recommends greater consultation and involvement of older people in the planning of HIAs and housing-related services by local authorities and HIAs (in partnership with community groups). The recommendations do not really tackle the general lack of housing advice and information and are very much focused on HIA provision and consultation matters. However, they do recommend that national voluntary organisations working with older people disseminate information about help available on housing matters (eg from HIAs) and that they work jointly with the HIA movement to tackle housing problems in the owner-occupied and private rented sectors.

The discussion groups made the following specific points about housing advice and information:

- Almost all participants had been forced to make significant decisions about housing in recent years, often as a result of a crisis such as ill health, enforced early retirement or bereavement. It was generally agreed that good, impartial, individual advice had been very difficult to come by. Although there were exceptions, the absence of a reliable source of advice and information was in many cases a key factor in putting off decisions. The provision of one-stop shops or special advisers for people when they retire or at other crisis points was mooted.
- Although the absence of advice was keenly felt, it was the lack of information that was seen as the real barrier to getting help when it was most needed. The general feeling was that, although information was available, they would not have found it unless, for example, there was a crisis and they ended up in hospital or they happened to come across a knowledgeable and caring person.
- Age Concern and Citizens Advice Bureaux were the organisations most looked to for information but experience of these varied from area to area. Many participants felt that local authorities should be responsible for disseminating information as they were in contact with most of the population. One idea that came up at all the meetings was that a list of useful phone numbers should be included in community charge notices (Care and Repair England, 2000).

4.1 Key outcomes of the research

The key point emerging from all these reports is that general housing-related advice services (both statutory and voluntary) are underused by older people. There appear to be a number of reasons for this (which are also confirmed by recent UWE studies of older private tenants and older homeless people, and by a separate study of older people and general advice services (Tinker *et al*, 1993):

- Older people rely mainly on informal support and advice, sometimes from their peers but most often from family members. However, family members are not necessarily well-informed and there may also be emotional or financial considerations that prevent them from giving impartial advice.
- Where older people seek advice from professionals, it is likely to be from people they are already in contact with, eg home care staff, sheltered housing wardens or day centre organisers. Again, these people may not be aware of the range of options, issues and services available, or of other sources for referral, and a service provider such as a housing association will not necessarily give independent advice.
- Older people have limited awareness of advice agencies and usually think of all-age services such as Shelter, Citizens Advice Bureaux and law centres as being for younger people. This is particularly so in the case of housing issues, due to the emphasis placed by the media on young homeless people.
- Older people are less likely to attend office appointments or use telephone helplines, preferring home visits or contact through existing links such as

community groups (although attitudes to phone or web-based services may well change in the future).

- There is a reluctance to use local authority-based services, particularly where people have already experienced problems (eg with Housing Benefit claims). People from vulnerable or minority groups are especially likely to fear prejudice and misconceptions from mainstream services.
- There is a widespread need for emotional support and sometimes advocacy, and for older people to develop a trusting relationship with advisers. This requires time and sensitivity, and may also prevent advisers referring their clients on or involving volunteers.
- Some older people need practical help in the short term (eg at the time of a move), while others require ongoing support (eg tenancy sustainment). Many do not have family members or friends to call on; and even those who do may not ask for help, through pride and the desire to safeguard their independence.

Both Parry and Means (1999) and the UWE evaluation of the Older Homelessness Partnership Programme confirm that funding specialist older people's housing advice services does increase uptake and improve service delivery. Threshold Housing Advice, which features in both evaluations, is a case in point: before hact funding started, only 1 per cent of its caseload was made up of older people, even though older people accounted for 10 per cent of the borough's population. Three years later, the figure had risen to 8 per cent.

One of Threshold's advisers is Asian: in the first year of operation (1996–7), 54 per cent of his caseload were Asian and 26 per cent black. The Partnership-funded adviser also has a mixed client group, including 36 per cent black and 7 per cent Asian. She has developed particular expertise in advising older private tenants (especially those with pre-1989 protected/regulated tenancies), of whom there is a higher than average number in this part of South London. This is a complex area of law where mainstream advice agencies often struggle, not least because they come across so few cases.

Research on older homeless people is also relevant in that it identifies why older people may need housing advice. Maureen Crane's work on older homeless people concentrated on rough sleepers and older people in shelters and hostels and using homeless day centres. These people are often alienated from statutory services and may need specialist help from homelessness agencies, in many cases over a long period. However, the factors which contributed to their homelessness are not dissimilar to those which result in housing problems for many older people. Hawes (1999) identified two main groups of factors from his own study of older people who presented to local authorities as homeless in England (Hawes, 1997), and from an examination of other data from Wales and Scotland:

- Sixty-five per cent were linked to various kinds of relationship breakdown, sometimes also involving emotional, physical or financial abuse between partners and within families, including long-established marriages, second or subsequent relationships which failed, and other arrangements, eg living with adult children, siblings or other relatives.

- Thirty-two per cent followed serious financial crisis, resulting in rent or mortgage arrears (including under Right to Buy) and eviction or repossession.

Both Crane's work and the UWE homelessness evaluation confirm that these are significant causes of homelessness. Financial difficulties included benefits problems and loss of employment in later life, and arrears frequently caused older people to abandon their homes rather than wait for repossession. Triggers for housing problems (and, *in extremis*, homelessness) appear to include various life changes including retirement, bereavement (partner or spouse for couples; parent for single people living at home) and ill-health (especially mental ill-health of the older person or family members). The UWE research has revealed a small but significant number of people with mild to moderate learning difficulties who appear never to have been in touch with services and who have become homeless following the death of parents.

In terms of the housed older population, the need for housing advice is most acute when people are thinking about whether or not to move. A recent book, *Housing and Home in Later Life* (Heywood et al, 2002), provides a comprehensive exploration of older people's housing and care issues and includes a detailed chapter entitled 'To move or not to move: housing decisions in later life'. The chapter looks at the main reasons for moving in later life and how they differ from those behind moves made at an earlier age, emphasising the specialist nature and breadth of issues involved in housing advice for older people. It divides moves in later life into two main categories: anticipatory (ie in advance of problems occurring) and forced (ie when a problem has already arisen).

Factors which 'push' people to move include lower income and higher costs; loneliness (especially following bereavement); crime, fear of crime or concerns about a deteriorating area (affecting both renters and owner-occupiers); fear of falling due to unsuitable design; other practical issues such as managing the garden (a major issue) and deciding to give up the car (which was especially problematic in rural areas). 'Pull' factors included finding solutions to the problems outlined above (eg finding a home with no garden), being nearer relatives, being able to access care if needed, and, for some owner-occupiers, releasing equity. Other 'pull' factors encourage people to stay put: these include the hassle of moving, personal memories and history, and, overwhelmingly, a desire to remain independent rather than enter what is often perceived as an institutional environment (eg sheltered housing or a care home).

5. The survey

To prepare this briefing paper, we contacted 28 organisations during April 2002 (see Appendix 2). Most received a short questionnaire and, of these, 20 responded, representing a response rate of over 70 per cent. One membership organisation (the Law Centres Federation) e-mailed it on to its members, which resulted in responses from four law centres. Questions were based on the recommendations made by two of the studies referred to in section 3 above: Parry and Means (1999) and Age Concern England/hact (1999). Tables 1 and 2 summarise the responses of 17 organisations; a further six provided comments and information but are not included in the tables because of the nature of their work and/or a lack of data.

5.1 Survey findings

- Few organisations have a *specific policy or strategy* on housing advice for older people.
- Age is not always monitored and, where it is, mainstream housing advice agencies report relatively *low take-up* by older people (some very low).
- There is a variety of arrangements for *signposting* to other agencies but some respondents expressed concern as to how often older people actually followed up such signposting.
- There is limited availability of *home visits* and not much other outreach work.
- Most agencies use *quality control or accreditation systems*, with the CLS quality mark being the most widely used (and not just by law centres). Homeless Link uses PQASSO, a quality assurance system, and is planning to roll this out as a benefit to member organisations over the next year.
- There is a reasonable level of specialist training in housing advice for older people (although it is open to question how much specialist training is really available and whether this response rate is linked to the wording of the question, in that agencies are unlikely to indicate that they do not offer training). A number of respondents expressed concern about gaps in specialist training, especially links between housing and community care, and there were very few examples of staff exchanges/secondments or skills sharing.
- Many older people's organisations reported work on *policy issues* arising from their housing advice work with older people, but few generalist advice agencies did so (not least because of the low percentage of older people using their services). Policy matters raised included supporting people issues, delays in occupational therapy assessments for adaptations, issues concerning the right to buy, hospital discharge, renovation grants, equity release and service charges.

One organisation commented that the survey had prompted it to look more closely at its information systems and the issue of housing advice for older people. Another was prompted to suggest a policy initiative which it had not previously raised (the suggestion being to approach social housing providers to seek agreement not to instigate possession proceedings against people over, say, 65).

There were a number of helpful general comments in addition to the direct questionnaire responses. Some agencies also referred to specific initiatives targeted at older people. Shelterline had leafleted areas with a high proportion of older people living in poverty but the campaign generated hardly any response, although a similar campaign aimed at families was successful. Counsel and Care had worked in partnership with Arlington House with the aim of setting up a secondary helpline for workers advising people aged 50+ on housing and homelessness issues, but there was poor take-up.

5.2 Black and minority ethnic older people

Frontline provides intensive face-to-face housing casework advice to people from black and minority ethnic communities in London. It is aware from previous work with elders in these communities that there is undoubtedly an unmet need for housing advice provision, yet Frontline receives hardly any referrals from the over-60s. The organisation gets an average of 11 new clients each week but in the past year only one or two of these clients has been over 60.

As a result of this, Frontline is undertaking a research project looking at the housing and housing-related (eg Supporting People) advice needs of black and minority ethnic elders. These people do not seem to be taking up mainstream advice provision, eg Citizens Advice Bureaux and Age Concern (presumably due to issues of access, trust and awareness), and they are certainly not approaching Frontline. It is therefore likely that these older people are either not receiving any independent professional advice at all or that they are obtaining advice from black and minority ethnic community organisations with which they are already in touch. Very few of these organisations have sufficient resources to meet the need for specialist housing advice from their users.

The central aim of the research is to develop a London-wide strategy for housing advice provision for black and minority ethnic elders, focusing on the role of black and minority ethnic community organisations: looking at training, information and support for community workers; signposting arrangements; and outreach and publicity work. The research project

(to which Help the Aged contributes about £19,000 of the £49,000 funding required) aims to do the following:

- interview black and minority ethnic and mainstream organisations on issues of take-up, service development needs, casework issues, access, etc;
- review the available literature; and
- conduct more detailed research and development work exploring the roles that different organisations can play in the provision of housing advice to black and minority ethnic elders.

6. The researchers

This briefing paper was commissioned by Help the Aged from two freelance researchers, Jenny Pannell (who wrote the paper) and Imogen Blood (who carried out the survey).

Jenny Pannell is Visiting Research Fellow at UWE and has carried out evaluations and housing research for hact, Help the Aged, local authorities and registered social landlords.

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Imogen Blood was funded by hact and Help the Aged to undertake research in the north-west, and since June 2002 has been Senior Research and Evaluation Officer at NACRO.

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Appendix 1

Housing advice for older people.
Summary of recommendations from meeting, 22 May 2002.

1. Signposting

1.1. Develop information resources to help older people navigate and understand the range of housing advice and information services currently available.

1.2. Promote and publicise housing advice services to older people and investigate developing a brand or common identity across a range of services.

1.3. Develop information resources designed for generic housing advice workers.

2. Centralised information

2.1. An agreed central point or location for the collection and dissemination of information.

2.2. Develop a user-friendly high profile website as a point of access to a wide range of services and information (eg Housing Options Online).

3. Informal advice networks

3.1. Identify methods for making contact with informal advisers – friends, relatives and carers.

3.2. Promotion of practice development through mentoring and consultation.

4. CLS partnerships

4.1. Provide guidance to specialist advisers on CLSPs and referral arrangements.

4.2. Review the ways in which the CLSPs can help to promote and link together advice services concerned with older people.

5. Data collection

5.1. Develop a common format for the collection of data on older homeless clients.

5.2. Establish a common approach to monitoring and evaluation across services.

6. Training

6.1. Develop specialist training courses for generic housing advice workers.

7. Conference

7.1. Set up a networking event for service providers combining an element of training.

8. Good practice

8.1 Review and promote existing good practice particularly in relation to peripatetic services targeting isolated and vulnerable older people.

9. Agency agreement

9.1. Formal agreement between the key agencies and interest groups on the broad objectives of this initiative.

Appendix 2

To prepare this paper, we contacted the following 28 organisations. The researchers would like to thank the 20 organisations which returned the questionnaire for their swift and helpful response.

Advice Services Alliance

Richard Jenner

Age Concern Cymru

Sarah Megson, Policy Officer

Age Concern England

Steve Boyo (Policy)

Jeremy Fennell, Assistant Director of Information

Age Concern Northern Ireland

Caryl Williamson

Age Concern Scotland

Jess Burrow

AIAC (Northern Ireland Association of Independent Advice Centres)

Bob Strong, Director

Anchor Staying Put

Carolyn Greenhalgh, Director

Association of London Government (ALG)

Duncan Bowie, Principal Housing Policy Officer

Care Direct (Bournemouth pilot)

Mark Sharman, Director (Help and Care)

Care and Repair England

Sue Adams

CAS (Citizens Advice Scotland)

c/o Abigail Bremner, Social Policy Team

CHAS (Catholic Housing Aid Society)

Ian Bottomley, Advice Services Manager CHAS Westminster

Counsel and Care

Alison Clarke

DIAL UK (Disability Information and Advice Line)

Barbara Smith, Information Officer at national HQ

Elderly Accommodation Counsel

John Galvin

FIAC (Federation of Independent Advice Centres)

Gareth Kingston, Head of Membership
Anjila Scinha, London-based Housing

Frontline

Dee Springer

Homeless Link

Pip Bevan

Housing Rights, Belfast

Janet Hunter, Director
Sharon Geary, Information Officer

Law Centres Federation

Lynne Evans, Social Policy

Legal Services Commission

Marie Burton

NACAB

Cathy Murphy, National Homelessness Advice Development Officer

NIACAB (Northern Ireland Alliance of Citizens Advice Bureaux)

Natalie Strain, Social Policy and Information Officer

SeniorLine (Help the Aged)

Elizabeth Lodge, Manager (SeniorLine)

Shelter

Joanne Marks, National Development Team

Shelter Cymru

John Puzey, Director

Shelter Scotland

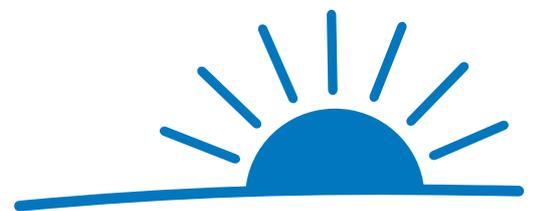
Caroline Toshack/Elaine Rosie, Scottish Homelessness Advisory Service

Shelterline

Paul Taylor, Director

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