The national ‘Should I Stay or Should I Go’ Programme had four key aims.

1. To stimulate the development of sustainable local housing options services
2. To support, monitor and evaluate the local services
3. To develop an evidence base (identifying the value – or otherwise) of these services
4. To produce replicable models of service

In this paper we consider how far these were achieved and observations re any surpassed or not achieved and any possible reasons for this.
1. To stimulate the development of sustainable local housing options services

Was this achieved? Yes, the project surpassed targets and expectations with regard to development of new services, none of which would have been developed without the stimulus of the national initiative. With regard to longer term sustainability it is too early to draw firm conclusions – indications are positive in terms of immediate continuation of the pilot projects but it would be necessary to review their continuation in about 2 more years to draw further conclusions.

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<th>TARGETS</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE MEASURES</th>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>SCHEDULED OUTPUTS</th>
<th>Achieved</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. 5 Pilot Housing Options services established</td>
<td>• Number of Pilot projects</td>
<td>• 8 pilot services established and monitored</td>
<td>• National Advisory Committee established</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>2. 6 other Advice Projects incorporate Housing Options Advice for older people into their activities and link into SISOSIG Programme</td>
<td>• Number of Advice Projects making use of Website material and networking via co-ordination meetings and training events</td>
<td>• Apart from 3 additional housing options services established and monitored as formal pilots (see above), at least 3 new services started up and used our website materials. These projects (Weymouth, Bournemouth and Reading) also networked with the national programme and with the pilots. A further 2 areas used website materials &amp; included housing options advice in their work (Surrey and West Glamorgan). 13 other areas expressed interest in setting up a service following use of Housing Options website.</td>
<td>• Start Up pack published</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>• Recruitment pack produced</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>• Coordinator to develop and maintain close contact with at least 5 local projects</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>• Training &amp; induction programme</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Advice, support &amp; training provided to assist with volunteer involvement</td>
<td>Yes (limited success)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Models of best practice produced</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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3. National voluntary sector organisations, including Age Concern and Help The Aged, actively promoting the integration of the housing options advice model into mainstream advice services for older people

- Extent to which Advice Agencies incorporate Housing Options Advice for older people into their activities.
- Housing Options Advice/Awareness training was delivered to 374 staff in Age Concern organisations, SCOPE, HIAs, housing, health and social care organisations.
- Briefing paper on volunteer involvement provided for website. Advice given to Derbyshire project to help them produce local volunteers’ information pack. Volunteer involvement pack for website drafted. Not finalised
- Anecdotally there is a growing awareness of the issue of better housing advice for older people and through this programme C&RE has become involved with the creation of a national housing advice consortium and raised the profile of this issue amongst HIAs

4. HAs incorporate housing options advice into service for tenants and prospective tenants

- Extent to which national voluntary sector/ advice organisations promoted integration of housing options advice
- Limited, though have done some training (Waterloo housing association) and presentation at NHF conference.
- Information packs – volunteer involvement
- Local volunteer recruitment events
- Training days relating to volunteer involvement

| Partially | Yes - Not a success | Yes – with project staff. |
| 5. Housing Options advice services being supported and promoted by regional and national policy makers | • Number of conference & training events where SISOSIG has featured as an example of best practice | • Presentations given at 8 conferences (includes 3 x 'Support & Housing in the Countryside' Seminars (hact/Countryside Agency/Housing Corporation) - 2002; 'Beyond the City' conference, Yorks. Forum of Charitable Trusts - 2002; 'Village Voice' conference, Help the Aged - 2003; 2 x SISOSIG conferences - 2003; 'Innovations in Older People's Housing' conference, hact - 2005). 10 housing options training events 6 additional conferences where SISOSIG reports distributed as example of good practice (includes current round of ODPM conferences on 'Choice Based Lettings') | • 4 SISOSIG articles in health, housing & social care press to focus on rural issues, BME & cross tenure HA allocations | Exceeded (5 published) | Yes |
| | • Number of Reports and Articles about SISOGIG published | • 3 reports published (2003 SISOSIG report; set of Evaluation Summaries plus Evaluation Report - 2005). 5 articles published (in 'Inform & Advise', Age Concern England, 'Age Today', Help the Aged; 'Working with Older People', Pavilion Press: Strategem, BGOP; 'Lifestyle', Age Concern Derby & Derbyshire). | • Training materials about housing options for use in local training with health, HA, LA housing & social care professionals | Exceeded | Yes |
| | | | • 3 pilot training sessions with health, HA, LA housing & social care professionals | | |
| | | | • Internal report on way forward plus national meeting of all partners | Yes |
| | | | • Main report | | |
| | | | | |
- Inclusion of housing options work in housing/social care policy and practice guidance and improved funding programmes eg inclusion in Supporting People
To support, monitor and evaluate the local services

Was this achieved? Yes. There was regular contact with the local projects to offer support and there was extensive time spent on monitoring and evaluation. Without the co-ordinator post very little data would have been collected. This intensive work has resulted in a valuable, comprehensive data source.

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| 1. Develop a qualitative and quantitative monitoring and evaluation system | • Framework developed  
• Data collection system created  
• Level of attendance at SISOSIG meetings and training events  
• Level of use of resource materials produced by SISOSG  
• Level of use of SISOSIG coordinator | Development of the monitoring system was time consuming and problematic. However, the resulting data enabled a comprehensive evaluation of projects. Data collection not popular with the local services but is being adapted for future use by Age Concern England. Project staff regularly attended support meetings and found these useful. However, the relationship with the co-ordinator was affected by the monitoring system problems which dominated her contact with project staff. Resource materials were very useful, particularly when staff first came into post. | • Evaluation framework  
• Academic body to oversee system  
• Data collection system  
• Database of information and advice  
• Quarterly returns by local projects  
• Quarterly reports to SISOSIG Advisory Group  
• Network meetings & Training events for pilot project staff  
• Main report | Yes |
4. To develop an evidence base (identifying the value - or otherwise) of these services

Was this achieved? Yes - certainly as far as it could have been in the time available.

Because of the time it took to develop and establish local pilot services there was a knock on effect on the collection of hard data about local performance which resulted in the evaluation only being completed at the very end of the national programme. However, the detailed evaluation based on extensive data collection resulted both in a detailed report from Sheffield Hallam University and also well presented, accessible information in the form of research digests.

The *Should I Stay or Should I Go?* programme has helped in a joint effort with other organisations to put housing advice for older people more firmly on the policy agenda. This will now be taken forward by the Housing Advice Consortium and HOPDEV and use of some of the materials created by the programme will continue via this forum eg. training materials. It is also hoped that the evidence base that has been created will be utilised at a local level by those who wish to continue / create services.
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| 1. To create a body of evidence about housing options services which highlights:  
  • Demand level for services  
  • Cost effectiveness  
  • Views of service users  
  • Achievements  
  • Impact on housing provision  
  • Achievements/ limitations  
  • Key lessons for planners and providers  | • Published results and reports  
  • Extent to which service providers and planners changed plans/services as a result of SISOSIG  
  • Local projects are better able to raise funds to maintain and develop the service  | • Interim report produced and promoted at conferences and seminars in 2002  
  • Evaluation published 2005 and profile raised of issue via distribution and presentation at large national conference (hact and NHF)  
  • However, it has proved difficult to persuade planners and commissioners to take this on in a more strategic way and far more remains to be done  
  • The local sustainability of services remains problematic and it will only be possible to assess this impact over the next year.  | • Interviews with service users  
  • Interim report  
  • Evidence reports to assist with funding  
  • Promotional brochure  
  • Promotional seminar  
  • Main Report  | Yes  
  Yes  
  Yes  
  Yes  
  3 Yes  
  Yes |
4. **To produce replicable models of service**

Was this achieved? Yes - there is now detailed information about housing options advice services which makes it easier for anyone to set up such a scheme. The evaluation examined this issue to the degree that was possible given the small sample size therefore it is difficult to make firm conclusions about for example, relative merits of different managing agencies, but key issues about good models of service have been indentified.

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| 1. Produce models of good practice in order to enable other service planners and providers to develop local housing options services | • Evidence of models/resources being utilised by local projects and national providers  
• Website being used regularly  
• % of users whose feedback indicates that models of good practice are relevant and useful | • Web based information used by 353 occasions by organisations and individuals from 106 parts of the UK (plus Malta and Holland). Information sought from co-ordinator by 45 organisations/individuals in UK + researcher from State Dept. Adelaide, Australia.  
• Feedback form completed by 34% (119) of website Housing Options TOOLKIT users. Of these, 29% (35) were using TOOLKIT for research, 22% (26) were interested in developing housing options service, 16% (19) were using it to inform service developments, 12% (14) were | • Models & useful information placed on website  
• SISOSIG Toolkit  
• Models of good practice identified & national data collected re allocations policy & practice of HAs  
• Main report | Yes  
Yes  
Limited  
Yes |
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<th>• Extent to which local services meet external accreditation standards</th>
<th>using it for personal development purposes, &amp; 11% (13) were using it to inform development of housing and other local strategies.</th>
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<td>One project (Derbyshire) was able to include housing options service as part of its Community Legal Service accreditation. Issue not pursued with other projects.</td>
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**SUMMARY**

**What worked well?**
Employment of a national project co-ordinator dedicated to the development of local pilot services, the creation of a tailor made monitoring system, regular data collection and thorough evaluation was critical to the success of this initiative. Without this post pilot schemes would not have got off the ground (even with the offer of matched funding from the various sources), very little data would have been collected and there would be no lasting legacy of a comprehensive, practical information source for use by others interested in developing a housing options service.

Another particularly successful part of the programme that had not been planned or anticipated was the success and popularity of the training programme. This indicates a real need for better training for a wide range of professionals in the provision of housing advice and information for older people.

**What did not work well?**
The most problematic aspect of the programme was the relationship with the academic institution and the difficulties of working with them on the creation of an acceptable database.

**What would we do differently?**
We would create the database in advance of setting up the local services using an IT specialist.