

The Rt Hon Angela Rayner, Deputy Prime Minister
The Rt Hon Rachel Reeves, Chancellor of the Exchequer
The Rt Hon Wes Streeting, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

14 January 2025

Dear Angela Rayner, Rachel Reeves and Wes Streeting,

We are writing to urge you to prioritise urgent implementation of the Older People's Housing Taskforce recommendations, as these will be crucial enablers for the Government's national missions and milestones.

As Housing and Ageing Alliance (HAA) members, we work together for improvements to the housing and living conditions of older people; with representatives from organisations including Age UK, the Centre for Ageing Better, Chartered Institute of Housing, National Housing Federation, Associated Retirement Community Operators and specialist providers in the social, charity and private sectors. Our [15-point plan](#) sets out our manifesto for creating the homes we want to grow old in.

We were pleased to inform and support the Taskforce, which included two HAA members among its number. We believe implementing its wide-ranging recommendations, many of which do not come with significant cost, will support at least three of the Government's milestones:

Raising living standards: Improved provision of housing for those in later life, including more specialist housing, adapting existing homes and ensuring new mainstream housing is suitable for ageing will drive measurable increases in disposable income and GDP. Construction fuels the economy while ensuring housing meets our ageing society's needs – and enables active participation in local economies for longer, as consumers and through employment and volunteering. Appropriate housing with support can reduce the need for unpaid carers, enabling family members to take on more paid employment opportunities, stay in work, and progress their careers – supporting the wider agenda for growth. Trusted 'housing options' information, advice and advocacy for older people would be a quick and low cost way of empowering and encouraging people to ensure that their homes, existing or new, will suit them as they age.



Building 1.5 million homes: The forthcoming Housing Strategy, Planning Bill and Affordable Housing Programme provide crucial opportunities to implement the taskforce recommendations. Doing so, such as through a pro-growth planning system, will demolish barriers currently preventing new adaptable mainstream and specialist housing for older people, contributing significantly to the 1.5 million target.

Our members' experience is that the current planning system actively militates against the provision of a greater choice of specialist housing for older people, preventing people from moving out of homes that are too large for their needs and expensive to heat and maintain. Ensuring older people have access to homes that are not only affordable but also designed for accessibility and safety is a fundamental part of building an inclusive housing market. However more investment is needed to increase total supply, which is barely touching 8,000pa across all tenures when the real need is 30,000-50,000pa, and retain and improve the quality and sustainability of existing homes for future generations to enjoy.

Ending hospital backlogs: A lack of appropriate care or support in the home is a major cause of delayed discharge from hospital. Greater provision of housing with care and support, coupled with better information and advice and support for aids and adaptations, as recommended by the Taskforce, can speed up the process significantly. Appropriate housing also means people are less likely to go into hospital in the first place. As Housing Minister Matthew Pennycook said when the report was launched: "It can enhance the wellbeing of our senior citizens and reduce demand on adult social care services and the National Health Service". This could be a major contributor to meeting the NHS standard of 92 percent of patients in England waiting no longer than 18 weeks for elective treatment.

Our view is that the Government is to be congratulated for ambitious and measurable goals in the *Plan for Change: Milestones for mission-led government*.

However, it is crucial change benefits all members of society. With almost one in five of the UK population aged 65 or over and the proportion increasing rapidly, supporting older people to live independently for longer also helps wider families and communities, aligning closely with the government's broader policy ambitions for all generations.

Poor housing for older people often also impacts younger generations; both in terms of the impact on their wellbeing of juggling work with supporting older family members and tax to fund the increased cost of health and care services.

The need for swift action is more pressing than ever. The UK's ageing population is growing rapidly and is increasingly diverse. Delaying the implementation of the Taskforce's recommendations will only increase the strain on health and social care systems and further marginalise older people.

As we have indicated above, housing is also central to social care and we urge you to ensure the taskforce recommendations are considered as part of the reform agenda for social care announced at the start of the year.

We urge you to act swiftly in bringing the recommendations to life and stand ready to support in any way we can. We look forward to your response and progress on this important agenda, and we would be delighted to discuss our views and share our knowledge with any members of your team.

Yours sincerely,

Mario Ambrosi, Director of Communications and Marketing – Anchor

Hilary Burkitt, Policy Manager - Independent Age

Dr Rosalie Callway, Projects and Policy Manager - Town and Country Planning Association

Sarah Davis, Senior Policy and Practice Officer - Chartered Institute of Housing

John Galvin, Chief Executive - Elderly Accommodation Counsel

Tracy Harrison, Chief Executive - Northern Housing Consortium

Holly Holder, Deputy Director for Homes – Centre for Ageing Better

James Lloyd, Director of Policy and Communications – Associated Retirement Community Operators

Christina McGill, Director of Social Impact & External Affairs – Habinteg

Lisabel Miles, Housing Policy Manager – AgeUK

Bruce Moore, Chief Executive - Housing 21

Nick Phillips, Chief Executive - Almshouse Association

Jeremy Porteus, Chief Executive - Housing Learning and Improvement Network

Abdul A Ravat, Head of Development & Relationships - The Abbeyfield Living Society, Chair National Housing Federation Older Person's Housing, and Lead for Ageing Well with BME National

Joan Rutherford, Older People's Housing Champions

David Sinclair, Chief Executive – International Longevity Centre-UK

Paul Teverson, Director of Communications - McCarthy Stone

Lauren Walker, Professional Advisor - Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Tony Watts OBE, Age Action Alliance