

“Evaluation of community and sheltered dwellings in Lisburn, County Antrim”

A report commissioned by Lisburn Primary Care Commissioning Pilot
Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

This study, commissioned and funded by Lisburn Commissioning Pilot, explores the views of older people in the Lisburn area regarding their homes in the community and in sheltered dwellings. Information was gathered from one hundred older people using a validated tool (The Housing Options For Older People Tool) which asked participants to measure their satisfaction across a number of areas in relation to their current home and to identify preferences for future housing.

This short Executive summary highlights some of the key findings and recommendations of the study.

Findings

- Older people tend to remain in the one home for longer than the population at large (on average 20 years).
- 86% of the community dwellers owned their own home.
- Over one third of the older people living in the community kept a pet animal, compared to only 4% of the sheltered dwellers.
- The average age of those living in sheltered dwellings was 80 years.
- 85% of those living in the community had access to a car, compared to 22% of those living in sheltered dwellings.
- 36% of community dwellers received health or social care support from the Trust, compared to only 2% of the community dwellers.
- Most sheltered dwellers believed that this would be their home for life and that they would not have to move again.
- The highest satisfaction scores awarded by sheltered dwellers were in relation to the condition of the property, ability to remain independent and sense of well being. The lowest score was in relation to size and space.
- The highest scores awarded by community dwellers were for condition of the property and ability to remain independent. The lowest score was in relation to managing costs.
- In all but one section (size and space), sheltered dwellers awarded higher scores than their community counterparts.

- In identifying factors which would render their current home unsuitable, community dwellers listed a smaller income, inability to climb stairs and no longer being able to drive as being the most influential for the sheltered dwellers, needing someone to come to stay, was the most likely reason given as they would not be able to accommodate a carer in their one-bedroomed flat.
- If considering a move, safety and security and location were cited by both groups as the most essential considerations.
- Receiving more help at home was the most popular option for both groups should they become more dependent.
- If moving to a sheltered scheme, community dwellers stated that they would be prepared to share an entrance gate and garden but would like their own front door, dining room and bathroom. They also stated a preference for a smaller scheme i.e less than fifteen units.
- The majority of both groups said that they would like to have a rural outlook.
- Almost 50% of community dwellers had used a computer in the past year, mostly for word-processing or internet shopping.
- While the majority of both groups said that they would be happy with the use of 'reminding' technology, the opposite was the case in relation to 'surveillance' technology.

Recommendations

- The provision of 'Staying Put' and 'Care and Repair' type schemes to enable older people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible.
- The availability of flexible domiciliary support services which could be provided to sheltered dwellers at point of need to prevent or delay the need for a move to more intensive care settings.
- The provision of two-bedroomed sheltered units as a standard design feature to ensure that family/carers can stay with their older relative as and when required.
- Adequate consultation with older people prior to installation of assistive technology. An accompanying awareness/education programme would ensure that decisions could be made on an informed basis.
- The provision of supported housing in both urban and rural locations to accommodate preferences.
- Consideration given to extending provision of Helpline systems, particularly among community dwellers.

Comments or requests for copies of the full report can be directed to the report authors, Helen McVicker or Professor George Kernohan at the University of Ulster Jordanstown.

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