



THE OLDER PEOPLE'S HOUSING CHAMPIONS NETWORK

What is the Older People's Housing Champions Network?

It is a group of older housing activists representing each region of England which aims to:

- support action by older people's groups to improve housing and related services
- raise awareness of the scale and nature of the impact of poor and unsuitable housing on older people's health and wellbeing
- influence decision making and improve wider housing related policy & practice

How did it come about and what is it doing?

It was initiated this year (2013) and is serviced by the housing charity Care & Repair England. Local champions are sharing ideas, keeping an eye on the ground in their areas on housing and ageing issues, helping to coordinate and stimulate local action and act as a source of local intelligence. For example so far it has;

- enabled local groups to submit comments on the plans to significantly change Building Regulations which could weaken the impetus for the design of homes that better meet the needs of an ageing population (Lifetime Homes Standards)
- highlighted the risk to future help with home adaptations if the new local Integration Transition Fund plans fail to include this provision
- promoted the key messages from older people about housing in the 'More than Bricks and Mortar' brochure

The network has taken the lead role in shaping Care & Repair England's proposals to the Big Lottery for the Silverlinks programme <http://silverlinksprogramme.wordpress.com/>

A blog site has been set up to enable people to share ideas, information and make comments - see <http://housingactionblog.wordpress.com/>

Who are the members?

All network members have a strong personal interest in, and are involved in, local housing issues through their groups and forums. One person from each area attends, with a reserve person to ensure continuity and regular representation. Members names and contact details are on the blog.

Future Plans

As well as continuing all of the above activities, the group plan to produce a key issues housing & ageing 'manifesto'. Some of the pressing local issues include adaptation and repair of existing housing, building a better standard of new homes, housing affordability including energy, information & advice, and linking housing to the new NHS and Social Care plans.

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