

# Older People's Housing Taskforce

## EAC proposal to Government

In the current absence of a universal national 'housing options' advice service for older people and their families, and a severely depleted number of local services, this paper does two things:

**A.** Proposes that Government considers supporting two **short term initiatives** designed to:

- give profile to the Taskforce's vision and work;
- engage people living in specialist housing to publicly celebrate and communicate its benefits;
- update a well proven toolkit to help local authorities and advice services advise older people on their housing options.

**B.** Identifies three ideas for going further, **increasing our ambition in this area**, and re-thinking how we support people to make and execute choice.

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### A,1. A National Housing for Older People Awards 2024



The EAC Awards were designed to celebrate specialist housing for older people in all its forms, tenures and locations. 8 successful events were held between 2011 and 2019, each one involving more residents and providers than the previous one.

In 2019 regional heats were introduced, with their own Awards, leading to the national celebration. A record 19,000 votes were cast, and testimonials

provided, by residents, families, visitors and staff of 1,220 retirement housing developments across the UK.

The Awards became broadly self funding, thanks to a combination of major and minor sponsorships, advertising and a table booking fee for attendees (covered by housing providers).

A 2024 Awards would probably cost more than 2019's all-in figure of c.£100k because the former delivery team has been lost. And some sponsors may not return. But Government and the organisations represented in the Taskforce are well placed to assess the potential value of an ambitious 2024 event, and to think creatively about how this could be funded.

[Awards report 2019](#)

[Awards video 2019](#)

[Awards photo gallery 2019](#)

## A.2. A Housing Options toolkit for local authorities and advice agencies

The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'Housing Options for Older People' (HOOP) website. The header includes the EAC logo, the title 'Housing Options for Older People', the subtitle 'Living safely & well at home in Reigate & Banstead', and a 'Sponsored by: onefamily' logo. A navigation menu contains 'QUESTIONNAIRE', 'RESULTS', 'ABOUT', 'PARTNERSHIPS', and 'LOG IN'. The main heading asks 'How well does your home suit you?'. Below this is a search bar with 'RH12BU (Reigate & Banstead)' and a 'START HERE' button. A three-step process is outlined: 1. Answer our HOOP questionnaire, 2. Read our suggestions, and 3. Get further advice from EAC. A footer note states: 'Our questionnaire will help you think about different aspects of your home and how you live in it. HOOP works best for users in England and Scotland.'

'HOOP', Housing Options for Older People, is a long established tool to help older people think about how well their home will suit them as they grow older.

In its paper form it provides a script for dialogue between an advisor and client. In its online version it enables individuals to identify present or future concerns, offers suggestions and proposes resources specific to each issue raised and to the users location. A printable report is created for each user.

Prior to Covid HOOP was promoted and used extensively in many areas of England. Subsequently EAC has lacked the resources to maintain the tool, promote it and support its users.

The essentials required to bring HOOP back centre stage as a self-help local housing options tool are:

### Localisation

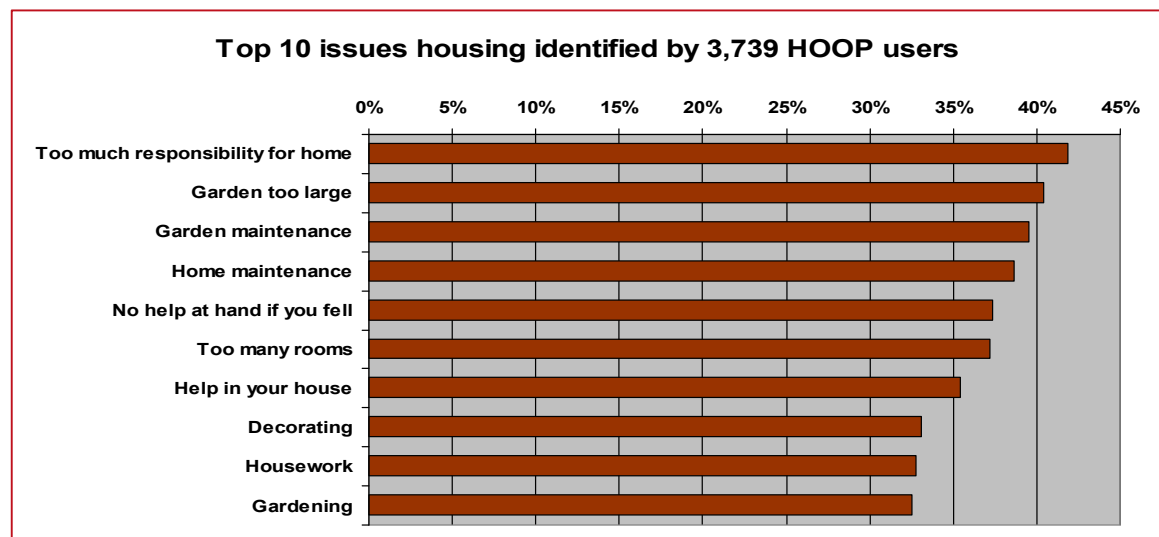
- Re-engineering HOOP localisation to accommodate recent structural changes to many local government areas.

### Investment in the data HOOP draws on:

- Localised suggestions for tackling each of 40 concerns /issues that users might identify;
- Local services that can assist them with each problem;
- Local moving home options;
- Library of further reading materials (factsheets, videos, etc).

### Reporting

Whilst HOOP captures all data provided by users, and produces personalised reports, it does not yet incorporate the aggregated reporting that could deliver data of strategic importance to local authorities and others.



### Marketing & promotion

The heightened interest in older people and their housing, engendered by the Taskforce, suggests a likely willingness of all those involved to promote HOOP, once these essential repairs and improvements are completed.

<https://hoop.eac.org.uk/>

Suggested trial postcodes:

RH1 2BU (Reigate & Banstead); WN8 8UP (West Lancs)

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## **B. Going Further – Increasing our Ambition and re-thinking information & advice**

The proposals above seek to re-establish and sustain proven interventions in this space. But there is opportunity to go further and rethink how we support

decision making by older people and their families – particularly in ways that can be self-sustaining; and leverage opportunities presented by other players. [plus whatever other context or challenge you think helpful to introduce.

***B.1. Government to engage with the Housing & Ageing Alliance (H&AA) to coproduce a housing options guide and promo campaign***

After its recent expansion the H&AA brings together a uniquely diverse group of professionals working across the spectrum of housing provision, services and policy formulation relevant to older people. It therefore has wide reach amongst agencies that connect directly with older people – from occupational therapists to strategic urban planners, trade organisations to older activist groups.

H&AA members are keen to support the work of the Taskforce, and a very practical early step could be to produce and disseminate an authoritative guide to housing options for older people, linked to a campaign to raise the profile of age-friendly housing in all its forms.

***B.2. Government to set expectation that specialist housing providers co-operate with EAC to ensure that all their schemes /developments are captured in the EAC database and presented in detail on its website***

Early work on EAC's National Database of Housing for Older People was supported from 1993 to 1998 by the Housing Corporation (now Homes England), and since then EAC has worked to create an increasingly detailed picture of the UK's specialist housing provision for older people, assembled through meticulous and ongoing original research.

Its purpose parallels EAC's charity mission – to provide trustworthy and fine grained information to help older people and their families appreciate the diversity of provision, decide which (if any) models appeal, identify what is available in their chosen location, and understand the costs involved as well as any eligibility criteria.

The database now includes 25,700 facilities (schemes) and is fully searchable on EAC's website [HousingCare.org](http://HousingCare.org), which receives over 3.5m visits annually, split between older users (45%), their family members or friends (40%), and professionals who work with older people (15%). Over 100 LA websites signpost to it, as do those of many local and national advisory agencies.

Government endorsement of the database and site would release EAC staff resources from persuading reluctant housing providers to provide basic scheme information to spend instead on enhancing the depth of the database's content.

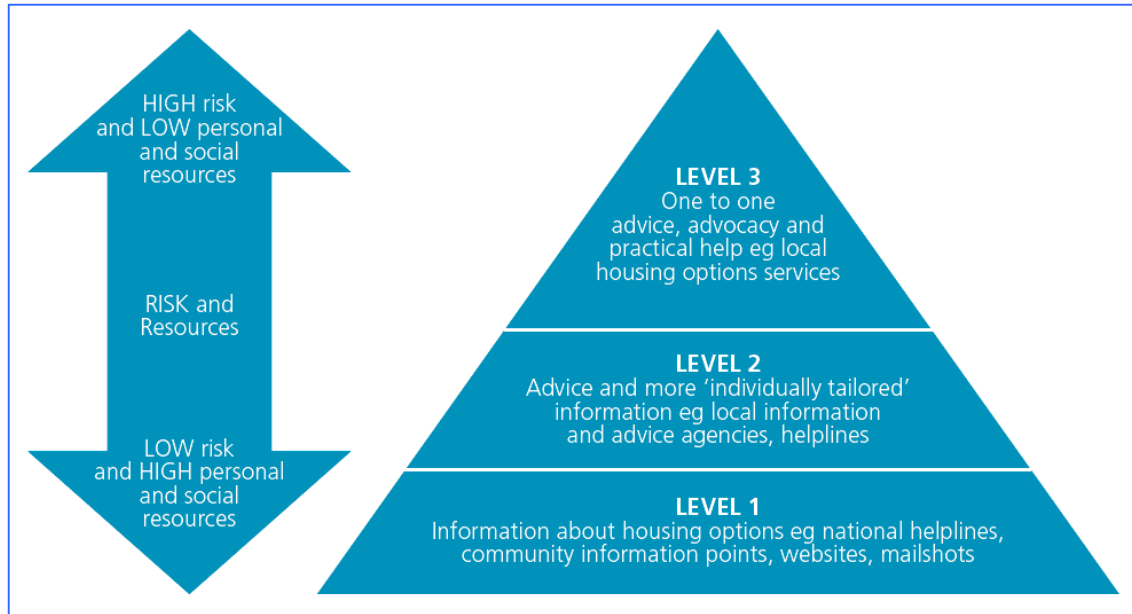
***B.3. Could Artificial Intelligence (AI) currently contribute to delivering information and advice (I&A) on housing and care options to older people and their families?***

Could Government broker an introductory workshop (led by the *Government Office for Artificial Intelligence* or *Government Digital Service*?) to explore the extent to which AI could help I&A services respond to complex customer enquiries about housing, care and related finance in later life?

A seminar might first consider how existing I&A tools (like HOOP) could be improved, and then move on to look at delivery person-to-person by housing options advisors and the extent to which these inherently expensive interactions could be made more efficient through use of AI techniques.

The output and follow-on from the seminar could prove very useful in beginning to quantify the likely cost of a universal housing options I&A offer to older people.

### Traditional hierarchy of advice



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