

WM Housing Event: My home, my care, my way

September 2022

Making every decision about care a decision about housing

The ASC White Paper “People at the Heart of Care” describes the government’s ambitious 10-year vision for transforming care and support in England. To achieve its vision, the White Paper sets out a raft of policy reforms aimed at ensuring:

1. People have choice, control, and support to live independent lives.
2. People can access outstanding quality and tailored care and support.
3. People find adult social care fair and accessible.

Amongst the planned reforms, there is a commitment to allocate at least £300 million to integrate housing into local health and care strategies, with a focus on increasing the range of housing options available for people who draw on care and support services.

My home, my care, my way

The ASC White Paper, and the emerging plans for the Housing Transformation Fund (HTF) being launched in early 2023, provided the context for our first ‘physical’ event in the region since early March 2020, delivered in partnership with TSA, Think Local Act Personal and the Housing LIN.

Introducing the event on behalf of WM-ADASS, Pete Fahy (Director of Adult Social Care & Housing, Coventry City Council) described the opportunity to “do something significant” by transforming options for housing with support. We had a packed agenda, with fantastic contributions on a range of themes:

Policy into action – DHSC described their progress in designing the £300 million HTF and their plans to launch the fund, including the likely requirements for accessing the fund. DHSC also described how local partnerships have the ability to determine how the fund can be best used to make improvements against the policy objectives; our Housing LIN partners provided some practical advice on establishing local housing partnerships to define and drive the ambition and outlined their work with all 14 local authorities in the West Midlands as we gear up for the development of bids to the HTF.

Housing Solutions – Rich Amos (WM-ADASS Regional Co-production Advisory Group) gave a powerful presentation on the challenges and benefits to him, as a person who draws on care and support services, in finding the right combination of housing and care and set the conference a challenge to think about what “home” means to us all. This was a recurring theme throughout the day and helped to reinforce the need for better housing solutions.

Jeremy Porteus from the Housing LIN challenged us to reimagine what housing for the future must look like – highlighting the need for contemporary, accessible, intergenerational, attractive and adaptable housing options.

Louise Lee (Head of Specialist Housing at Platform Housing), Graeme Jackson (Head of Investment & Development at Advance Housing & Support) and Sue Deeley (Co-Director at Gettalife CIC) gave local examples of different housing solutions and what they mean for the people they support. The clear message here is that there are many fantastic approaches already in operation – our baselining work with the Housing LIN will help identify many more from within and outside of the region and this will contribute to a bank of evidence for local housing partnerships to consider as they develop their plans and HTF bids.

Home technology – whilst there was an opportunity to explore some of the products and kit on offer, through our exhibitor networking sessions, the emphasis was very much on technology in the home as part of an integrated care offer that enables greater independence. Nathan Downing (TSA) talked about how the principles behind Technology for our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation (TAPPI) are being implemented through six test sites, with Louise Lee (Platform Housing) describing the potential benefits of the TAPPI principles for Platform’s customers at its test site in Herefordshire.

Two sessions from event co-sponsors Appello and Millbrook Healthcare focused on the role of digital solutions for TEC services. The forthcoming digital switchover should be seen as an opportunity for service redesign in telecare, rather than simply a requirement to update existing platforms (do councils understand the readiness of telecare and telehealth providers for the digital switch and what this might mean for people who draw on these services?); while Essex County Council has seen huge benefits in its TEC services through a strong partnership with Millbrook and through its focus on culture change.

Co-production - the event was firmly and deliberately anchored in the lived and learned experiences of people who draw on care and support services and there was a strong emphasis on co-production throughout the day, including a joint ‘call to action’ from Kate Pieroudis (TLAP) and Rich Amos (WM-ADASS Regional Co-production Advisory Group). Using TLAP’s Making it Real Framework which can be used to develop quality, personalised care and support, we are all asked to “work in partnership with others to make sure that all our services work seamlessly together from the perspective of the person accessing them”.

More to come

The topic of ‘Housing’ is a really broad one and whilst we covered a lot of ground in the event, there were many themes within the White Paper that we just didn’t have the time to explore. Issues such as home adaptations and use of the Disabled Facilities Grant, the importance of

planning policy on future housing supply and design, and the role of housing in population health management and health inequalities were all alluded to, but not fully discussed. We will return to these topics as we move towards the development of our local housing strategies.

Aspiring for Better

The overall impression from the day was that there's lots of great stuff already happening in regard to both housing solutions and technology solutions – but that there's so much more still to do.

The White Paper and the Housing Transformation Fund provide a focal point and a target for local housing partnerships. We feel the West Midlands region has made a good start and we hope that this event will galvanise the type of transformation needed to increase and improve housing options and technology-enabled models of care for people who draw on care and support services.

A series of short video clips will soon be made available by WM-ADASS recapping key points and learning from the day.

Next Steps

Over the coming months Local Partnerships will be able to apply for “Development & Strategy Funding” of between £100k - £200k to help them strengthen existing partnership working, collate their evidence and prepare a strategic plan to better meet the aspirations described above. These Strategic housing plans will act as a gateway for access to larger Investment Fund allocations of between £2m - £5m from the Housing Transformation Fund. It is therefore important for local authorities and partners to start considering how they will make the most of the opportunities provided by the fund.

For more information about the WM-ADASS Housing Transformation Support programme please contact paul.johnston@wm-adass.org.uk.