

Leaving no one behind: Why we need a long-term plan for supported housing

Supported housing helps more than half a million people to live independently in their communities. It provides a vital service to the people in our society who need the most support, from survivors of domestic abuse to young people leaving care. However, new research shows we're not on track to meet demand for supported housing by 2040.

Our research shows that there is not enough supported housing to meet demand and that demand for supported housing will grow significantly in the years ahead as the population continues to increase and age.

Our research shows:

- **We will need at least 167,000 more supported homes by 2040.** This is a 33% increase, from 510,000 in 2023 to 677,000 in 2040.
- **Most supported housing will be needed by older people.** By 2040, 75-77% will need to be tailored for older people.
- **Long-term supported and older people's housing will be vital.** By 2040, we will need 78-80% of homes to be long-term and provide a secure home for those who need it.

To meet rising demand for supported and older person's housing, we must invest in homes that provide the right support for people to live independently. Our research shows we need an ambitious plan to meet future demand:

- The development costs of providing 167,329 more supported homes is £33.9bn by 2040.
- The annual rent and service charge costs would be £7.1bn in 2040.
- Support costs would be £3.4bn per year by 2040, which may be £1.2bn more than 2024, a 58% increase.

The cost of not acting would be much higher. Without the right homes with the right support, more people will be at risk of homelessness, will face longer stays in residential or institutional care and will have longer hospital stays.

To meet demand, we need a long-term plan for housing that includes:

- A commitment to at least 167,000 more supported homes by 2040.
- An ability for local authorities and integrated care boards to plan, fund and commission supported housing, including housing for older people.
- Ring-fenced funding for supported housing, that rises to meet demand, covering estimated support costs of £3.4bn a year in 2040.
- Better data collection on the need and demand for supported housing.
- A recommitment to the £300m Housing Transformation Fund.

What is supported housing?

Supported housing is low-cost rental accommodation provided in conjunction with support, supervision or care for people who often have complex and multiple needs. Supported housing is an essential lifeline to more than half a million people in England, as it helps individuals live independently in their communities, while also alleviating the pressures on the NHS, social care services, criminal justice system and public purse.

Good-quality supported housing is vital to wellbeing. It helps residents build healthy relationships, improve self-esteem, retain social connections and combat loneliness.

Support helps people settle into their new home, maintain their tenancies, stay safe, access work, education or training, learn skills and access services.

By 2040, at least

75% of supported housing will be needed by older people.

Supported housing caters to various groups, including:

- Older people with care or support needs.
- People with learning disabilities/autistic spectrum disorder.
- People with physical disabilities.
- People with mental health related needs.
- Vulnerable young people.
- People recovering from substance abuse.
- People with experience of the criminal justice system.
- Individuals and families at risk of or who have experienced homelessness.
- People fleeing domestic abuse and their children.

Supported housing covers a range of different housing types to meet the different levels of need.

This includes:

- Hostels (temporary accommodation for people experiencing homelessness).
- Refuges.
- Sheltered housing (individual units with support services for older or vulnerable people).
- Supported living complexes (individual units with support services available).
- Extra care housing (usually higher level of support for older people).

The role of housing associations

By working with local authorities and other key partners, housing associations deliver tailored care, housing and support services across England, providing up to 70% of supported housing available.

By understanding the gaps in current provision and increasing the range of housing options available, housing associations help residents access appropriate affordable housing.

Why we need a long-term plan

Without a long-term plan for housing that incorporates the demand for supported housing, thousands of people could go without the support they need. This would cost the public purse by increasing the strain on the social care, health, criminal justice and housing sector, leaving people who could live independently with support, at risk of homelessness or long stays in residential or institutional care.

Research into the [supported housing sector's impact on homelessness prevention, health and wellbeing](#) showed that 9 out of 10 supported housing residents have at least one health condition or disability and half of all residents have multiple or complex needs.

Without supported housing, 41,000 more people would be homeless, 30,000 people would be at risk of homelessness, and we would need 14,000 more inpatient psychiatric places, 2,500 more places in residential care and 2,000 more prison places. These figures would only continue to increase as the population grows.

Without a long-term plan, we are stuck with short-term solutions that overall do not meet demand, might not provide adequate support and are more expensive to run.

Supported housing is a lifeline for people in crisis and helps people to move into independent tenancies. It also provides ongoing support for people with long-term support needs. However, many are held back by the lack of affordable suitable housing. This is why there is a need for an increase in the supply of social housing.

A report on [the economic impact of building social housing](#) highlights the range of benefits including:

- Increasing employment.
- Decrease in yearly Universal Credit claims.
- Reduced financial pressure on the NHS.
- Reduced homelessness and number of people in temporary accommodation.

We need

167,329

more supported homes by 2040.