

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

‘A Better Life’ Programme

‘A Better Life’ is a five-year programme (2009-2013) funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, focusing on ways of ensuring quality of life for the growing number of older people with high support needs in the UK. In the initial phase of the programme a range of expert reviews were commissioned to bring together the available evidence on various aspects of the lives of older people who have high support needs, including [several reviews and an overview](#) into aspects of housing with care. A round-up of the evidence, a report on equality and diversity, the expert reviews, as well as the six early messages emerging from the programme can be accessed on the Better Life webpage of the JRF website:
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/work/workarea/better-life>

Housing with care projects within ‘A Better Life’

‘Affordability, choices and quality of life in housing with care’

Timescale: 21 months (January 2011 - September 2012)

Principal Investigator: Ian Copeman (HSP)

This research project, carried out by the Housing and Support Partnership, is one of three projects looking at key aspects of the experience of older people with high support needs living in housing with care schemes. This project investigates how affordability affects the choices (of care and other services) that older people with high support needs make (or are made for them), and the consequences of these for their quality of life. The primary focus is on those people who fully or partially self-fund their housing and care, and on those who hold individual personal budgets.

Key areas the research will investigate include *decision-making* (timing, processes, who decides); *quality of life* (for the individual and other residents); *value for money and affordability* (different perceptions, also in comparison with other housing options). The research will explore these areas from the perspectives of older people and their families/carers, providers, commissioners, as well as other people and organisations working with older people with high support needs. The project will benefit from the input of two small consultative groups, one of older people with high support needs living in a housing with care scheme, and another of providers and other stakeholders.

In an age when increasing numbers of older people are expected to fund their own care, the findings of this research will contribute to the evidence base on the take up of care options in specialist housing and on key factors that drive these choices.

‘Whose responsibility?’

Boundaries of roles and responsibilities in housing with care schemes

Timescale: 20 months (January 2011 - September 2012)

Principal Investigator: Ian Copeman (HSP)

One of the distinguishing features of housing with care schemes is that they confer housing rights to residents (as opposed to care homes which do not). This means that the boundaries of responsibilities between housing providers and others, such as care providers (when separate) and commissioners, need to be clear. More importantly, this can help answer the question of how these issues affect the lives of older people living in schemes who have high (or increasing) support needs. Can a rights-based approach empower them?

The Housing Support Partnership will look at the national context (e.g. legal, regulatory, policy) as well as at the local circumstances such as commissioning, market conditions, internal management, partnership working and ways of dealing with complaints and redress. The research will identify differences between schemes and solutions, and will seek and reflect on the perspectives of older people and their families and carers. As with the project examining affordability, consultative groups of older people and other stakeholders will help shape this research.

A Viewpoint by Jenny Pannell and Imogen Blood introducing and exploring some of the initial findings from this work has been published by JRF in October 2011 and is downloadable from [this page](#).

As well as highlighting issues and recommendations for policy and practice, one of the key outputs from the research will be a practical guide for housing providers and residents.

‘Living together, getting along’

Timescale: 18 months (January 2011 - June 2012)

Principal Investigator: Karen Croucher (CHP, University of York)

The team at the Centre for Housing Policy, University of York, will seek to identify and explore current approaches to promoting supportive communities, reducing the marginalisation of, and minimising frictions and tensions between, groups of people and individuals with and without high support needs living in housing with care schemes.

The investigation will include a variety of potential approaches, both formal and informal, proactive as well as reactive, used by housing providers and other organisations, but also by residents themselves, and will incorporate a range of different housing with care settings. The project will consult and work with groups of older people with high support needs to identify the most promising approaches. As part of this, it will proactively seek to engage with residents with cognitive impairment, who are often the most marginalised among those living in housing with care.

Developing an understanding of approaches that can enable meaningful, supportive relationships and full, active participation is an important part of investigating housing with care as a way of living which enhances the quality of life of

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