DISCONNECTED

social housing tenants and the
home working revolution

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CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Modern homes are not just places where we eat and sleep. Today, any home can be a place to earn a living. Whether you are a home owner or a tenant on a tower block, once you have a PC and a phone line you can potentially work or sell services/goods to anyone across the world.

'To deny one group of the population the chance to have a work room in their home is a form of active social exclusion'

This is not news to most people in Britain. 43% of homes have internet access, 52% have PCs. Largely as a result of this techno-logical revolution, there has been a home working revolution. One in four of the workforce now carries out some of their work from home.

Why does this matter to social landlords? Because the people they house are getting left behind. They are disconnected. Figures from the Labour Force Survey commissioned for this report show a divide: 5% of council tenants and 7% of housing association ten-ants work mainly from home, compared to 11% of home owners (14% of those who own outright).

Social landlords, far from working to rectify this, may inadvertently be making it worse and widening the 'digital divide'. As a survey of 25 housing associations for this report shows, most have tenancy agreements that discourage or forbid 'running a business' from their properties. None have allocations procedures which check the needs of tenants or their children to have an extra room for work or study.

For the 1.44 million families with children in social housing, the prospects are bleak. As government gears up to an IT based curricu-lum, many children are doing homework on line from home, often from an extra room. For social tenants, this is often impossible.

Put crudely, home owners can choose an extra room for work or study. They can afford to be online. Tenants are often pre-vented from having an extra room, are told they should not work from home and are often unable to afford to be online. To deny one group of the population the chance to have a work room in their home is a form of active social exclusion.

Many housing associations, the main focus of this report, have an excellent track record in community investment, funding non-housing activities in their neighbourhoods. But very few have made the extra leap and looked again at what their properties are for. Potentially they can do much more than just provide housing. For those in low demand areas, where letting with spare rooms is not a problem, home working could be a useful selling point, a way to attract tenants. But there is little evidence that this has been attempted to date.

Few landlords consider their tenants' self-employment prospects. But in high cost areas, the cost of letting work premises is

often prohibitive. Again, social tenants are excluded from the opportunity to advance themselves. But if they are allowed or encouraged to work from home, the cost of starting a business can be reduced enormously. They benefit and the community they live in benefits from a greater mix and a spirit of can-do enterprise.

62% of council and 69% of association tenant home workers are self employed. For obvious reasons of cost savings, home is the ideal place to set up a new business. As middle class parents (and the DfEE) will testify, children who have use of a PC in a quiet room at home are more likely to do well at school.

Ironically, many associations are considering home working for their own employees. And a number have launched innovative live/work schemes, some of which are detailed in this report. But they have done little to apply the thinking behind these initiatives to the vast bulk of the 1.4 million households they house. Home working, by implication, is something for the better off. Despite the barriers, one in 14 association tenants in work already works from home. More could do so.

It isn't just IT-based work than can be encouraged. This report highlights landlords that have helped tenants run taxi companies, craft and child care businesses from home.

The alternative for many tenants is to stay on income support and/or in the black market. Landlords could do a lot to tackle this, by finding ways to help tenants feel that working from home need not be surreptitious.

What can be done? Landlords can start by developing a policy on home working. They can allocate homes on the basis of work and study needs as well as housing needs. They can wire up new homes and lobby for extra

rooms on new sites. They can modernise their tenancy agreements and communicate their support for home work clearly to tenants. Government must act too. Space standards need urgent review to ensure that the 'spare' room (they have a purpose now) is accepted as a modern home requirement. Benefits need to reflect this and support it. Wired up Communities and similar projects should be reviewed to ensure that home work is supported, not left on the shelf as an issue to tackle another day. Better co-ordination of government policy is required all round.

Above all, it is time to recognise that depriving social housing tenants of the chance to work and study from home, as home owners do, is leaving them disconnected from a national advance.

'Despite the barriers, one in 14 association tenants in work already works from home. More could do so'

DEFINING A HOME WORKER

Increasingly 'home worker' means someone who uses a computer to work from home. The term teleworker is becoming less common, as more and more tasks can be performed with the assistance of IT and telephone. For this report, both IT-based home working and more traditional manual home working are relevant. The emphasis is on IT-related work, but many of the proposals relating to tenancy conditions, space etc also apply to manual home working

2 MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

'Give council and housing association tenants the same chance to work and study at home as those who own their own homes'

POLICY GOAL FOR SOCIAL HOUSING PROVIDERS
'Ensure that no opportunity is missed to provide tenants and their children with the chance to work and learn from home'

GOVERNMENT

1 Bring space standards up to date to incorporate modern aspirations and the impact of new technology on home life. Accept one extra room that can be used for work/study as a minimum standard
DTLR

2 Consider developing a new legal right for secure and assured tenants to use their home for work, subject to compliance with nuisance obligations
DTLR

3 Revise housing benefit rules to ensure they do not penalise those with a 'spare' room used for work/study
DWP

4 Appoint one minister and a task force to ensure a co-ordinated policy response to home working across departments. They should be responsible for pulling together all relevant issues currently split between departments: space standards, housing allocations, work-life balance, productivity, e-commerce, transport, home based school work etc
Cabinet Office/social exclusion unit

5 Review red tape in the benefits system that applies inappropriate hours-based (rather than output based) criteria to home workers, especially the self employed
DWP

6 Provide more targeted small business support for social housing tenants. Ensure that those in deprived areas (not just NRF districts but by postcode) get business advice
SBS/DTI

7 Offer home working tenants a one stop shop support service and website, to help them with hurdles such as planning permission, tax advice, insurance etc
SBS/DTI

8 Review Wired up Communities programme to ensure that opportunities to boost employment and enterprise from the home are better integrated within projects
DfEE

9 Create better links between education and housing policies in government. Ensure that attempts to encourage home-based PC/web homework by pupils are not held back by social housing allocation policies, tenancy conditions etc
DfEE, DTLR

10 Explore ways that home working can bring jobs to social housing tenants in more remote rural areas
DeFRA, RDAs

11 Abolish the term 'underoccupy' in recognition of the way that modern homes do more than just provide housing
DTLR

12 Review the emphasis on higher density new housing to ensure that the modern aspiration to have a work room is not damaged
DTLR

13 Consider the environmental benefits of home based work, in terms of reduced traffic congestion and CO_2 emissions
DTLR

The way ahead: how should Government, landlords and agencies support home working?

HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

1 **Develop a policy** on home working that applies to tenants and their children. Consider imaginative approaches to encouraging employment, enterprise and education based at home

2 **Review the basic assumption** that your homes are only for housing. Modern aspirations include an extra room. To deny this is a form of social exclusion

3 **Aim to provide** all households that need it with an extra room for work/study

4 Review **allocations** policies, ensuring that applicants can express a preference for a work room for their children and/or their own employment prospects

5 In areas of **low demand**, use home working as a positive selling point to potential tenants

6 **Survey tenants** annually on their (and their children's) interest in/need to work from home and their use of the internet. Report findings to relevant local employment and education agencies

7 **Check** that surveys of tenants' interest in you supplying PC or TV internet access is broken down by age. Ensure that the preferences of younger tenants of working age are not 'outvoted' by those who cannot or will not work

8 **Explore tenant home working prospects** with large employers, for example call centres

9 **Ensure that your equal opportunities policies** do not discriminate against tenants with disabilities and those with children/care responsibilities, who may need to work from home

10 **Review assumptions** that employment initiatives are about tenants going to work for an employer. Promote self employment too

11 **Recognise that starting a business** from home is often the only way a tenant can afford to do this

12 **Accept that black economy** home-based work exists and can be encouraged to become legitimate. More supportive policies/practices will help this

13 **Revise tenancy agreements** to positively encourage use of home for business. End onus on tenants to seek permission to work from home where no nuisance occurs

14 **Highlight examples** of successful home working in newsletters etc. Include contact details for agencies that can help tenants with business support and advice on in-work benefits, WFTC etc

15 **Benchmark** against other social landlords that are helping tenants and their children work from home

16 **Work closely** with local schools to ensure that housing management policies positively aid ability of tenants' children to do homework at home

17 **Ensure that wired up projects** address work and enterprise as well as access to welfare services. Favour technology that allows tenants to upload/sell as well as download/buy

18 **Establish protocols** with local authority planning departments to reduce/remove need for home working tenants to get planning permission

19 **Seek contributions** to broadband and home working support projects from cable companies

20 **Incorporate home working** capacity into Lifetime Homes and Part M compliance in new build. Anticipate broadband and modem needs. Advocate the need for extra rooms forcefully to local authorities

21 **Form a network** of landlords committed to ICT use by tenants. Such a group should ensure that issues of enterprise, employment and education are addressed alongside on-line services etc

22 **Continue to develop** innovative live/work schemes but ensure that

'live/work' as a concept is not restricted to new developments and non-core target groups

23 **Make links** between Smart Homes technology and tenants ability to work/study at home

24 **Use your buying power** to explore all possibilities of providing discounted PC/internet access to tenants and effective technical support packages. Work closely with partners on this

25 **Explore possibility of support** packages for home businesses, with slightly higher rents in return for this and for extra room/s

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1 **Apply the same steps** outlined for social landlords to your own housing management

2 **Ensure that enabling policies** recognise that homes and estates will be more sustainable if tenants and their children can work/study from home. This is a social exclusion issue

3 **Opt for quality over quantity** in new homes provision. Better to house slightly fewer people effectively (with the space/prospects to assist children's education and adult employability) than to house only according to short term housing needs. A social tenancy may be for life not for Christmas!

4 **Ensure that nomination agreements** with housing associations do not result in overcrowded homes with no room for work/study. Consider the nominated household's needs for an extra room for these purposes

5 **Recognise** that modern aspirations and new technology mean that modern homes do more than just house people

6 **Review bids by associations** for new build grant against their ability to provide homes with an extra room for work/study, where this is required

7 **Review funding of new homes** to ensure that units have an extra room for work/study where required

8 **Develop a corporate approach** to home working. Ensure that planning, housing and economic development departments are working to the same objectives

9 **Review the contribution** that home working can make to improving the environment, reducing CO_2 emissions and reinvigorating town/city centre living and isolated rural communities

HOUSING CORPORATION

1 **Consider the digital divide risks** of regulated landlords continuing to hold back home-based employment and/or study

2 **Review national guidelines** on development and housing management to ensure that the potential of tenants to work and learn from home is encouraged

3 **Issue guidance** to registered social landlords on home working issues

4 **Work with the Charity Commission** to ensure that restrictions on the use of housing association homes are reviewed and modernised. Explore ways that new regeneration aims can be used to boost home working opportunities

Two sides to the street: inaction risks depriving poorer communities of the benefits of home-based work and study

Home working is expanding rapidly in the UK and abroad. But the better off are benefiting most from its advantages: new skills, flexible working and work-life balance. Social housing tenants risk being excluded from the phenomenon

3 THE CONTEXT

HOME WORKING IS BECOMING MORE COMMON

Over a quarter of the UK workforce now carries out some of their work at home
Labour Force Survey 2001

The overall number of teleworkers in Britain increased by 39% between 1998 and 2000. The number of occasional tele-workers increased even faster, by almost 60%
Labour Force Survey

HOME WORKING INCREASINGLY MEANS 'TELEWORKING'

61% of those who work at home part time in the UK use a telephone and computer
Labour Force Survey/Institute of Employment Studies 2001

THERE IS A HOME WORKING DIVIDE, BASED ON TENURE

11% of home owners work mainly from home (14% of those who own outright) compared to 7% of housing association ten-ants and 5% of council tenants (Aug 2001).

10.8   7.2   5.3
owners   HA tenants   LA tenants
% working mainly from home

69% of home working HA tenants are self employed (62% of LA tenants)
Labour Force Survey/ONS

POORER HOUSEHOLDS ARE EXCLUDED FROM HOME WORK BENEFITS

Around 20% of social class DE use their home computers for work, compared to over 60% of both C1s and ABs
ICT access and use, 2001 DfES

18% of council tenants and 17% of HA ten-ants have no fixed phone line, compared to 3% of people with a mortgage
Oftel August 2001

3   17   18
owners   HA tenants   LA tenants
% with no fixed line

45% of 7-14 year old children from DE backgrounds have access to home comput-ers, compared to 85% of AB children, 78% of CI children and 71% of C2 children
DfEE survey, 2000
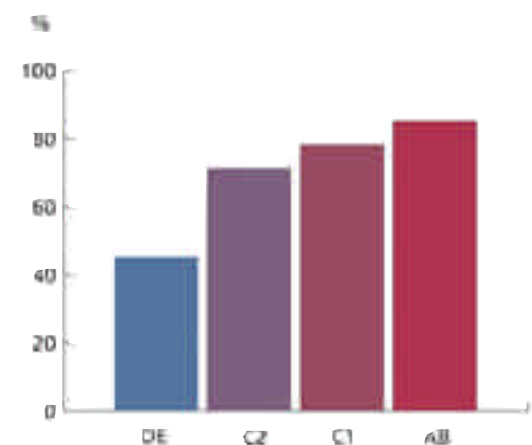
26% of DEs have a PC at home (20% with internet access), compared to 52% (43%) of the overall population

ICT access and use, 2001 DfES
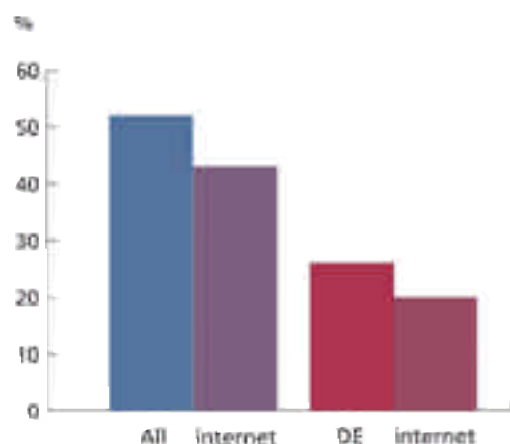
There are 443,000 housing association households with dependent children, about one in three

DTLR Housing Statistics 2001

Over three-quarters of new housing association tenants are eligible for housing benefit

CORE annual digest 1998/99

Over three-quarters of lone parent housing association households were not in work and nearly three-quarters were wholly dependent on benefits for their household income

CORE annual digest 1998/99

For more statistics, see chapter 13

Home owners increasingly work from home, free of constraints, often using spare rooms. In contrast, social tenants are overcrowded and are discouraged from home work. What will happen if this continues?

4 THE RISKS

THERE is already a clear divide between social tenants and home owners in terms of their ability to work from home and to access new technology. Social tenants are twice as likely not to have home internet access as households that own their own hom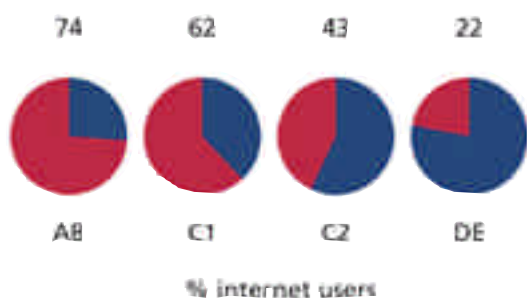e. They are also much less likely to have a spare room. Home owners who work are 100% more likely to do so at home than their council tenant counterparts.

The risk is that this gulf is set to grow. One of the reasons may be that these two factors - home working and PC/web access - have not generally been linked in programmes targeted at more deprived communities.

The Wired Up Communities programme, for example, has helped to provide neighbour-hoods with web access through set top boxes and PCs. But the aim has generally been to improve services. Little or nothing has been done to help tenants work from home or set up a business. In this sense, the initiatives could be said to be making communities 'wired for welfare' (see chapter 8).

In contrast, growing numbers of home owners work from home and use their new IT equipment to do so. Their children, in particular, are much more likely to benefit from the peace and quiet of spare rooms as a place to do home work on a PC than can their social tenant counterparts. Increasingly, home buyers actively seek homes with an extra room for these purposes.

Yet it is not home ownership per se that gives people the chance to work or study from home, with or without new technology. (Even if were the case, no-one is

seriously suggesting that the least well off will or should become home owners). If you happen to live in a council or housing association home with a spare room, provided you can afford a PC, you are just as able to communicate and sell across the world as any home owner. Your children can access just the same web learning tools and so on. The technology is relatively equal. And because of falling prices, it is becoming easier to afford.

Meanwhile, social estates are just as likely to get cabled up as home owners properties in many towns and cities. Sky dishes really do abound on council estates, demonstrating the potentially swift impact of new technology on estate residents' lives. A pity that so far it has all been about download - buying services rather than selling work. There is a risk that TV-based internet access could exacerbate this (see chapter 8).

It is not hard for landlords to negotiate with cable suppliers to include broadband IT access within their packages. When telecom companies ask for permission to put points of access on their blocks and/or links each home, there is also the opportunity to negotiate a payment that can be used to fund home-work or similar initiatives, rather like a mini section 106 planning gain agreement (see chapter 8).

Huge advances in technology have also helped to redefine the very purpose of the home. For many better off people, the home is now somewhere you can shop, some-where you can work and sell, somewhere children can study with everything they need. Inevitably this has led to a greater interest in the role of the spare room. Again, it is home owners, those who have some choice, that are benefiting. Wiring up social tenants' homes is a good thing, but the

'Sky dishes abound on council estates, demonstrating the potentially swift impact of new technology on social tenants. A pity that so far it has all been about download - buying services rather than selling work'

benefits of this will be stifled by cramped conditions (see chapter 7).

Social landlords have not yet responded to the new way that homes work. Generally, they have seen web access as a welfare service issue. They have housing allocation policies which take little or no account of the applicants' interest in having a room for work.

Housing associations' growing interest in providing new live/work schemes (see chapter 5), is targeted at non-traditional clients. The thinking behind these innovative housing/business hybrids is in stark contrast to the way the same organisations manage their general needs housing. Overall, the (surely unintended) message to the majority of tenants is: 'if you want to do well, leave the sector'. ■

PROBLEMS

- Initiatives to provide tenants and children with IT access tend to be communal rather than home-based
- Community IT projects can subconsciously re-emphasise social divisions. Home owners have the resources and the freedom to do their own thing with computers and home work. The welfare-dependent have these things organised for them
- Housing associations and councils are much more likely to be considering how their staff can work from home than how their tenants can do so
- Wired community initiatives have so far missed out the home working dimension, concentrating on improved access to welfare services
- Improved access to IT in tenants' homes often uses technology such as set top boxes, which enable download and purchase much more than upload and sale. There is an assumption that tenants are to be consumers rather than producers

Are social tenants about to get the wrong kind of technology - web access for welfare services rather than for work?

FUTURE SHOCK

This table outlines a possible scenario for 5-10 years from now. It is based on current government and social landlord policies continuing, alongside current trends

CONNECTED HOUSEHOLDS	DISCONNECTED HOUSEHOLDS
Have a spare room	Have no spare room
Often choose a property with a spare room when they move	Are allocated a property with no spare room
Have separate PC and TV	Have internet on TV if at all
Can 'upload' - send/sell information using PC	Can mainly only 'download' - buy off the web, receive info on landlord/agency services
Have fixed phone lines as well as mobiles	Often can't afford fixed lines as well as mobiles
Wired for work	Wired for welfare
Employees sometimes work from home	Employees are not allowed to work from home in their jobs
Pay little/nothing for internet costs. Shop around for best deal	Pay more for web access through TV, are exploited by telecom companies
IT costs a small % of household income	IT costs a high % of household income, a disincentive
Can afford broadband and choose best deal	Get broadband package chosen for them by landlord
Children often do homework with PC at home in spare room	Children do less web homework because of lack of space and/or disputes over who uses web-enabled TV
Individual ownership of IT equipment at home	Communal/shared provision in community facilities
Easy access to credit to buy IT equipment	Difficulty accessing credit to buy IT equipment

COMMUNAL GOOD, INDIVIDUAL BAD?

There is a persistent faith in collective approaches to tenants' IT and employment needs amongst social landlords and regeneration agencies.

Typically, landlords will try to obtain funding for projects that give their residents access to IT training, equipment and support in community centres or special IT centres. The same applies to children's home work clubs. These are often held, say, twice a week at school or in a community centre. It is assumed this is the main or only time the participants will do serious home work.

Swan Housing Group's IT centres in Basildon Essex are a good example of a well equipped ambitious project to address IT needs collectively. In late 2001, four centres were opened across the district for use by all local council and housing association tenants.

They offer free ICT training to NVQ level, with tailor made assistance programmes. The target is to get 400 residents qualified in 2002. Each centre has internet on 12 terminals, 3-8 laptops and other equipment. The service is advertised in council offices,

libraries, colleges and through tenant newsletters. The project is funded by over £200,000 of grants from the lottery and the DfES.

Project leader Anne Marie Guiver acknowledges that little has been done so far to identify those who might want to work from home. 'But we hope that the skills we can help them build will enable them to do so. We also believe that bringing people together can speed up their learning and make them feel more confident.'

The benefits of the collective approach include:
- building confidence of residents to learn together
- free access - no need to buy own equipment
- economies of scale - cheaper than kitting out every home

But there is a downside. By concentrating on collective-only solutions, the risks include:
- these projects have limited lifespan
- assumes 'hand holding' is required long term
- no sense of commitment to/ownership of the equipment by tenants
- only open certain hours
- may need to queue/book

None of the housing associations surveyed for this report had tested tenants' interest in working from home. But some had monitored their use of the internet, confirming its growing use.

'Our annual surveys sample 12,000 tenants. We noticed a big increase in home internet access recently, up from 4% in 1999 to 12% in 2000,' reported Places for People. This points to a significant, if slow, shift towards homes going on line at tenants' own initiative.

'None of the housing associations surveyed for this report had tested tenants' interest in working from home'

Everyone online: One of Swan Housing Group's new IT centres, Basildon, Essex

It is important to compare collective support approaches with home owners, who normally do whatever they want with their own equipment at a time of their own choosing. In essence, communal projects can subconsciously re-emphasise the difference.

One group has the resources and the freedom to do its own thing. The other, the welfare-dependent, has to be organised. As one housing association director says: 'You do sometimes wonder why we don't just give tenants PCs and let them get on with it. In the bigger scheme of things, the cost would be minimal.'

However, the collective approach is important, for all the reasons outlined above. It is a very helpful way to build early skills and confidence. But to be effective long term, surely these schemes need to be complemented by support for individual initiative. Having gained skills, social tenants are not being helped if they are then discouraged/prevented from working or studying from home.

'Having gained skills, social tenants are not being helped if they are then discouraged from working or studying at home'

Women entrepreneurs at a session funded by Amicus Housing Association

HOME OWNERS ENABLED

How do home owners see their opportunities to work from home? Amicus Housing Association in East Kent project manages a £500,000 Women Entrepreneurs Group in the area. It is not restricted to Amicus tenants.

A number of those attending a session during a visit for this report had plans to work from home. Their stories help to illustrate how much easier it is to do this if you are not a social tenant...

Jackie Winter is a former Amicus tenant who moved out to buy her own home under an incentive scheme eight years ago. She designs *papier mache* sculptures and objects for sale. 'It's something I can do from home, so I do. I've got a 9 and a 12 year old kid. I'd rather be in a workshop but I can't really afford that at the moment. This way I'm also around for the kids when they are back from school. I'm a single mum so I need to be near the school. I like the flexibility of working from home.'

Jackie uses a PC to develop packages she can sell to others wanting to use her techniques and designs - worksheets etc. She aims to use digital photos and a website to sell kits on line and connect groups interested in this kind of product. 'If I had stayed in my housing association home it would have been too small and too cold for me to do this. It had no central heating. At least now I've got a garage to store cardboard and other materials.'

Joanne Morgan wants to run a B&B for women, near ferries on the Kent coast. 'I will want to market it on a website, possibly with mpeg video tours of the property. Obviously running a B&B is working from home, but we also use the PC in the spare room for other things. My son wants to do computer science at college and he does his home work on it. My husband is a teacher and he uses it to create worksheets and analyse pupils' results, etc.'

Ivonna Paganuzzi wants to run a local worm-farming business from home. The idea is to set up a home composting system. 'With land fill sites at full stretch we need to find new ways to reduce waste. This system could allow people to gather waste from schools, supermarkets etc and use worm farms to turn it into compost.' She is a home owner with enough garden space to do this. She plans to deliver compost to local gardeners and people who would find it hard to pick up compost. She has researched the idea on the internet, checking similar initiatives in the USA. She intends to market the service on a website. 'Working with worms is easy,' she says. 'There are no unions!'

TENANTS AND ENTERPRISE

Amicus Housing Association has a strong track record in wider community investment. It is committed to helping its residents and others develop enterprise. Why does it think that home working is so much harder for tenants than owners? Nicola Shields, community investment manager: 'If a tenant is setting up a business, they have no assets, no property as collateral. If they go to a bank with a business plan, they will fall at the first hurdle.'

Chris Blundell, Amicus group development and property assets director: 'The reality is that a lot of work is found through word of mouth. We have to do all we can to put people in touch with one another through networks. That's one reason why collective

projects are so important.' But if people can start their business from home, isn't the need for a loan reduced? Blundell: 'That is an important point, particularly for less well off residents.'

Amicus has a savings and loans scheme that can finance business start ups and purchase of PCs. Loans are no more than 1% above bank base rate. Kent Reliance Building Society operates the scheme, which is underwritten by Swale borough council and Amicus. ■

STAFF FIRST, TENANTS SECOND

A survey for this report (see chapter 10) found that housing associations' interest in home working is considerably further advanced in respect of their own staff than their tenants.

'We're very keen to offer home working for our own staff,' said Ian Muir, project manager, East Thames Housing Group. 'We have a large building that is too small for our staff and we are trying to avoid additional office costs. The objective is to have community housing officers home working and hot desking. We've stripped out the admin work from their jobs, such as rent collection. But we have to tackle the problem that many of them don't have spare rooms themselves.'

A report for the Housing Corporation and the Chartered Institute of Housing (*Teleworking - a good practice guide*, Madeline Grinyer 1999) makes a number of telling points in the context of the lack of action to support/enable tenant home working:

'The social housing sector has often been slow in seizing on the potential benefits which technology can bring… It is clear that social landlords could gain significantly from adopting teleworking'

The list of advantages to the organisation/staff the report cites includes: office space savings, devolved structure, greater customer contact, increased productivity, maintaining a service after a disaster, increased job satisfaction, less stress and (ironically) advantages for tenants and applicants!

5 LIVE/WORK

'The way these initiatives are developed should provide a useful role model for reform of the housing management approach to general needs tenants'

A GROWING number of housing associations are now developing and managing properties tailor made for home working: live/work schemes. These schemes are usually targeted at groups who would not be eligible for social housing, but struggle to afford to both buy a home and run a business. They are a common sense way to help revive city and town centres by housing more people with spending power in areas that need an economic boost. They can also help reduce traffic congestion, as can any home working.

Schemes are not restricted to London. Examples from across the country include **Places for People**'s Creative Lofts in Huddersfield, where RDA funding has helped the association provide homes for artists and other creative businesses. **Devon and Cornwall Housing Association** is hoping to develop a smart technology scheme incorporating live/work near the Eden Project at St Austell, Cornwall.

However, all the creative energy behind what remains a small number of schemes is in contrast to the lack of initiative shown by most associations in developing 'live/work'

opportunities for their mainstream customers. The way these initiatives are developed should provide a useful role model for reform of the housing management approach to general needs tenants.

In London, the combination of high housing and office/studio costs has made live/work particularly attractive. The private sector has created a boom in this kind of home, particularly in areas around the City and East End such as Clerkenwell and Shoreditch. It is closely linked to the warehouse conversion market.

Critics suggest, however, that developers are using the live/work label to get around planning constraints that restrict residential development in industrial/commercial use areas. And, once a live/work home is sold, in practice there is little anyone can do to ensure anyone works in it. In the capital, without subsidy, live/work still remains out of the reach of many, even those on reasonable salaries by national standards.

SHARED OWNERSHIP

Metropolitan Housing Trust let the UK's first shared ownership live/work properties in 2002. The income required to be eligible is £24,000. Five of the 70 units on a canalside scheme in Hackney have been sold by Metropolitan Home Ownership. The housing association is now looking to expand this kind of provision.

The new shared owners work in the music business, TV editing, IT, textile design and interior design. There is the possibility of more shared ownership on this and other sites in the area.

Cynthia Amos, senior sales and marketing officer, explains: 'These are all local residents

Metropolitan Home Ownership's live/work scheme in Hackney, the first ever shared ownership housing of this kind

who find that working from home saves them money because they don't have to get separate living and work space. The work space costs are also tax deductible. Even in Hackney the costs are rocketing. These properties are worth over £160,000. Shared owners can buy 25% of the equity up to 75% plus rent and service charge. It's a package that requires a minimum income of £24,000.'

This is a lot more than most social tenants earn - and attempts to offer the scheme to them in the area did not succeed. But in the intermediate market in London there are many people facing serious difficulty getting anywhere to live on this income. 'Previously the new shared owners have been sharing houses with others or renting privately. None have owned before,' says Amos.

One difficulty the scheme faced was its earlier attempt to target new businesses. 'Lenders are reluctant to give mortgages to new businesses. We also need to be sure that our rental income is reliable. We have therefore had to target established businesses.'

Like at Peabody's West Ferry scheme (see over), the new residents were offered a five year business support package funded by MHO, but because they were well established the owners didn't need it

What about employees? Metropolitan tried marketing employees at schools and colleges but didn't get far. 'Teachers and others in this category don't really need the space. They don't get the tax benefits that the self employed do - they can't claim any costs back. And they must be Hackney residents to be eligible,' Amos adds.

PROBLEMS

- Housing association live/work schemes are seen as innovative one offs
- They are aimed at specific markets quite different to general social housing stock
- There is little evidence that lessons are being learned from them to apply to existing tenants in ordinary stock
- The growth in interest in live/work arguably demonstrates a greater willingness to innovate in development rather than in housing management
- There is a stark contrast between what is encouraged for often better off live/work tenants and what is discouraged for ordinary tenants in existing stock

SOLUTIONS

- Despite their niche market, live/work provides housing associations with excellent experience tackling the modern need to work from home. They should learn from this and apply the lessons more widely
- Local government, RDAs and regeneration agencies should consider the possibility of flagship live/work schemes run by housing associations as a renewal tool for urban centres or rural areas

*Cynthia Amos:
'These are all local residents who find that working from home saves them money because they don't have to get separate living and work space'*

Ian Hazelwood, IT consultant: used to sleep in his Brick Lane warehouse

Peabody's innovative West Ferry 'work/live' business incubation scheme, London docklands

'The scheme fits with Peabody objectives to support small business and economic development in regeneration areas'

BUSINESS INCUBATION

One of the biggest live/work schemes is Peabody's 27 unit **West Ferry** block in London docklands. Unlike other 'live/work' developments, this is primarily a business incubator scheme. Because units are let on short term tenancies, Peabody can ensure that this will remain their use when tenants move on.

West Ferry tenants typically need more professional dedicated business space than they can get at home, or can afford in business space. West Ferry offers them discounted start up rates and the ability to merge the cost of home and business accommodation in a city where both are expensive. This can help them take the first steps towards viable business activity. Tenants are required to work in the unit and allowed to live in their office/studio/workshop. The scheme fits with Peabody objectives to support small business and economic development in regeneration areas.

Key features of the package include:
- a hybrid business/assured shorthold tenancy
- length of stay restricted to five years to establish the business but requiring move on
- initial rent of £150 pw, rising to £300 by year five
- requirement of a three year business plan to be eligible
- business adviser support is included in the package as part of the service charge
- lease requires tenants to submit annual audited accounts to Peabody
- as the business expands, the tenant can move out to a residential flat and continue business at West Ferry with minimum disruption.■

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West Ferry tenant **Ian Hazelwood** is a Microsoft-accredited IT consultant, building systems for small to medium sized companies mainly around the City, docklands and the East End. Before moving in as West Ferry's first tenant, Ian used to have an office in Brick Lane.

'It was leaky and there were mice there, but it was cheap. The main problem was that, as a new business, I couldn't afford to insure the equipment we were storing there - it was too high a risk. I just didn't know whether all the 15 PCs we were working on would be there in the morning. I ended up sleeping in the place.'

Ian approached the East London Business Centre for help and was told about West Ferry. 'I got my business plan in for approval within a day. I stayed up all night working on it. I was the first in at West Ferry in October 1999. There was no-one else on site until January 2000!'

Ian has successfully networked with other businesses in the live/work scheme, setting up systems for them and using them to help promote his business. He believes that Peabody's subsidised work/live model is the way ahead and rates the business advice highly. But he has two main grumbles: 'They should have put broadband in here when they started. And they should consider allowing some tenants to stay longer than five years if their business is working and they can pay the full rent.'

Ian's turnover has risen 400% since moving in. He has taken on one employee who formerly freelanced for the company and uses other freelancers. He describes the Canary Wharf area as 'a small town that is now livelier than Islington' where he used to live

West Ferry tenant **Debby Little** was working for TV companies styling presenters clothes and doing fashion work. She left the TV sector to design her own clothes rather than go shopping for them for clients. She now specialises in a niche market, making customised one off garments for top end fashion stores in South Molton Street and beyond. Her clothes have recently started to sell abroad in New York and Hong Kong.

'When my lease ran out in the West End, I was looking for a proper studio space but just couldn't afford one. I love this place. I work and I sleep here, I'm not sure I've got round to the "living" yet!' The previous tenant left a compartmentalised unit with sleeping/bathroom cut off entirely from the work space. This is unusual for West Ferry tenants, who normally use self-erected divides or mezzanine floors.

Typically of the more artistic/creative businesses, she found the business plan hurdle hard to cross. She took many months to get one into shape that was robust enough to allow her to join the scheme. 'It has made a huge difference to me going through this,' she says. 'It has taught me to be well organised and systematic. David Burnikell (the on-site business adviser) has made me incredibly focused, persistent but also patient.' She is now close to showing her clothes in Paris. 'There is space around here - it clears your head. I don't think that would apply in the West End. I hate going into town now'

Debby Little, fashion designer: 'the business plan requirement made a huge difference to me'

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6 NOT FOR BUSINESS USE

A STANDARD social housing tenancy agreement will contain the words 'not for

'Tenants believe that enterprise based at home is frowned upon. It is, at best, allowed rather than encouraged'

business use'. This is largely a throwback to the long gone days when the British lived, worked and shopped in entirely distinct areas of their towns and cities. The prevention of working from home comes from a time when such work was likely to be noisy, smelly, unhealthy and disruptive to neighbours.

Today, with the benefits of new technology, this is surely inappropriate. And it can contribute little to the government's welfare-to-work drive.

A survey of 25 housing associations for this report shows that few landlords have reviewed this rule in the light of the home working revolution. Tenants that spoke to us for this report confirmed a widespread view that enterprise based at the home is frowned upon and is only, at best, 'allowed' rather than encouraged.

The vast majority of home work in the UK today is telework - requiring use of computer and phone. Many landlords assume that their tenants will only work if they 'get a job'? But there are a growing range of options for self employment. Here are some types of work that social tenants are already doing, often covertly, from their homes:

- secretarial work/typing services
- translation services
- taxi control
- admin for small businesses
- call centre work
- fashion design
- packing and processing
- book keeping
- therapy
- child care
- IT technical support
- craft
- food production
- website/graphic design

TRADITIONAL HOME WORKERS

Many landlords will be warmer at the prospect of tenants working from home with IT. A computer in a room poses less threat than, say, the often-cited 'bloke fixing cars out the front'. But many types of home working which do not rely on computers can be prevented or banned for no good reason. Progressive landlords will be as helpful as they can to tenants conducting all kinds of work at or from home. For example, Carrick District Council recently gave permission to a taxi driver to operate from home with an aerial attached to his property. Other examples in this report include child-minding, craft and therapy. See for example case studies starting on page 28.

Non-computer home working should be supported too, as social tenants are not necessarily going to find access to telework easy. A useful test for landlords to apply is: 'would home owners object to their neighbours doing this?' If the answer is no, beware the social exclusion/welfare dependency effects of taking a hard line on people working

Perhaps the most important point is that social housing tenants are the least able to afford workspace. Apart from having lower incomes, they often have no assets to use to get a loan. Working from home, at least initially while the business is being established, is a cost effective way for many to start a business. Even those with workshop or other premises can benefit from carrying out some tasks at home to save workspace costs.

Anne (not her real name), is a housing association tenant in East Anglia. She is a psychotherapist who sees clients at her home. She has not got permission to work from home: 'I lost my home when my marriage broke up. I couldn't work from home when I was in temporary accommodation with my kids - I used friends' houses. I started working from home again when I got my housing association house seven years ago.'

Why didn't she ask for permission? 'People told me you weren't allowed to run a business from home. Even though I thought that was silly and they would probably agree, I just couldn't bring myself to ask. Mainly I didn't want to take the risk - what if they said no? But also I thought it was none of their business as I wasn't causing any nuisance.' Has her business suffered in any way as a result of her choosing to be covert about it? 'Yes I suppose it has. I'm always worried people might wonder who these people are turning up regularly at my house. I've always bluffed it but I think I have taken on less clients because of this and earned less for the family.'

What does she think would help people like her? 'Landlords should look seriously at letting people have extra rooms. I'd certainly be happy to pay more if they did. In a nutshell, they should encourage business as long as it doesn't harm the neighbours.'

PROBLEMS

- Social landlord tenancies routinely discourage use of home for business
- These 'not for business use' clauses are outdated in an age when IT (and the telephone) has made work from the home socially acceptable
- Landlords generally expect these clauses to be ignored rather than review them. This encourages black economy and discourages welfare to work
- Tenants feel that the emphasis on having to get permission is anti-work and over-controlling. They resent being told how to use what they see as their home
- Types of work likely to be disallowed (eg small taxi business) would be considered acceptable for home owners
- Landlords have generally not looked at ways to encourage nuisance-free home work, eg with supportive leaflets and handbook references, liaison with planning authorities etc
- Few landlords have any idea of the demand/potential of tenants working from home
- There is an assumption by landlords that their tenants will not be self-employed, based on no evidence

SOLUTIONS

- Consult tenants on their interest in working at home
- Review tenancy agreements, dropping clauses that discourage business
- Use nuisance rather than 'use of home' conditions to prevent unacceptable activity
- Develop a home working policy to inform these changes
- Benchmark any review against other landlords who have been supportive of home working (many are highlighted in this report)
- Highlight examples of successful home working to tenants to demonstrate commitment and give role models
- Work with planning departments to get agreement for home working use of residential property
- Liaise with local economic development/regeneration agencies to explore how home working can support enterprise and employment
- Explore home employment prospects with large employers, eg call centres

Many of the housing associations surveyed for this report did take the view that nuisance was the issue, rather than work itself. 'In practice, we would take a relaxed attitude, even if a tenant had not sought permission, providing no nuisance was caused,' said Caroline Field, community development manager of Moat Housing Society.

But others were more likely to enforce. 'Formally, tenants can't conduct a business from home without permission,' said Mike Donaldson, corporate strategy and communications director, London & Quadrant Housing Association. 'Difficulties do arise. Even a mail order business can mean people coming and going all the time. We've had cases where other tenants have objected to a sewing machine going all night. We have taken action from time to time. But we will be sensitive to the nature of the business.'

Even those that accepted home working was a good thing acknowledged there was a credibility gap between their tenancy rules and their more supportive attitudes. 'We are currently unifying our group's tenancy agreements. The clauses against business use are rather old fashioned and will rarely be enforced. We want to encourage people to work and have tenants that work on our estates,' said David Power, head of policy, Places for People.

The way forward could be to deal with this issue through the nuisance regulations, bringing outdated tenancy conditions into the 21st century and ensuring that nuisance action is not applied unfairly because of any anti-home working bias.

'I just couldn't bring myself to ask permission. I didn't want to take the risk. What if they said no? But also I thought it was none of their business, as I wasn't causing any nuisance'

7.2 **You must** not run a business from your home without our written permission. This permission will only be refused or withdrawn if the business causes a nuisance to neighbours.

One of the more positive examples, but even this says 'you must not...'

SUPPORTIVE?

These extracts from tenancy agreements are typical:

'If you wish to run a business from your home you will need our prior written agreement and any planning permission which may be necessary. If agreement is given and your business disturbs your neighbours our agreement will be withdrawn and that use will have to stop'
South Liverpool Housing Association

'The tenant must not to operate a business at the premises without the prior written consent of the association. This includes carrying out car repairs for profit at or from the premises. The granting or refusal of such consent shall be at the absolute discretion of the association'
East Thames Housing Association

'The tenant will not use the premises other than for private residential purposes without written consent'
Penwith Housing Association

'Only use the house as a home for the tenant'
Prime Focus shared ownership

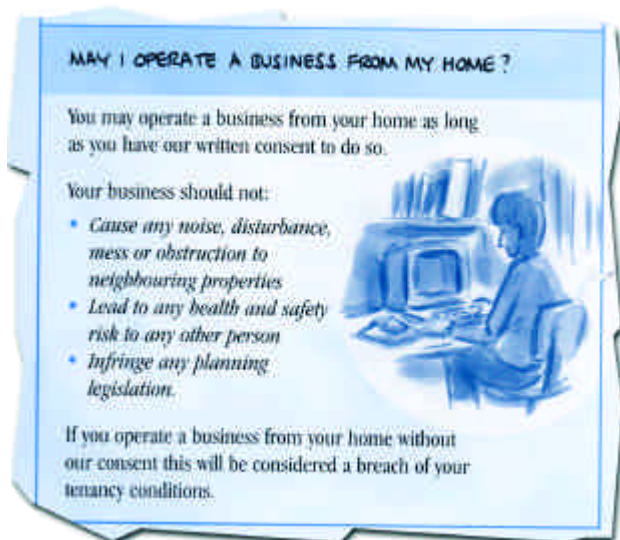3.3.2 If you wish to run a business from your home you will need our prior written agreement and any planning permission which may be necessary. If agreement is given and your business disturbs your neighbours our agreement will be withdrawn and that use will have to stop:

Devon and Cornwall Housing Association has a much more supportive wording on its tenancy agreement, one which other landlords could benchmark against: 'You will use the premises for residential purposes and will not operate a business at the premises without our written permission, which we will not unreasonably withhold.' The DCHA handbook also does, unusually, offer a supportive section on home working (below). As a result it has granted home working permission to many tenants including those involved in arts and crafts, fashion design and child minding.

MAY I OPERATE A BUSINESS FROM MY HOME?

You may operate a business from your home as long as you have our written consent to do so.

Your business should not:

- Cause any noise, disturbance, mess or obstruction to neighbouring properties
- Lead to any health and safety risk to any other person
- Infringe any planning legislation.

If you operate a business from your home without our consent this will be considered a breach of your tenancy conditions.

Even these supportive approaches could be more positive, though. They still imply that the decision whether to work is the landlords. Mortgage lenders do not explicitly require similar guarantees from borrowers although they could, if they wished to be bureaucratic. Again, there is a controlling tendency in the social housing sector in contrast to the *laissez faire* approach show to home owners.

A supportive and modern tenancy clause might read:

'You will use your property for residential purposes. If you also wish to operate a business or work from home, you do not need permission, provided this activity does not cause a nuisance to your neighbours. But if it is shown to cause a nuisance, we can require any work use to end.'

Carrick District Council in Cornwall has taken support for home working further, communicating its positive approach to tenants in its newsletter. An item, 'Working from home' appeared in a recent edition:

'For several years now we have been actively encouraging our tenants to run businesses from home. All we ask is that you get in touch with us so we can talk it over with you and then we'll give you written permission to go ahead as long as it is legal and that you will not, understandably, cause a nuisance or annoy your neighbours with noise, parking problems, unsociable hours, etc. So please give your Area Housing Officer a call today and let us know what you are planning.'

Cases of Carrick tenants working from home include a taxi driver (page 29), one of the types of home working - along with car repairs - that many landlords insist as the kind of thing you 'obviously can't allow'.

The council reviewed its housing service in 1997. This included its tenancy conditions. Around 500 tenants were consulted. Before that, the tenancy agreement stated that the property cannot be used for anything 'other than as a private dwelling'. Now the new agreement states that permission to run a business from home 'will only be refused or withdrawn if the business causes a nuisance to neighbours'

'Even supportive tenancy agreements say that the decision whether to work from home is the landlords'. There is a controlling tendency in the social housing sector'

1066 Housing Association in Hastings also makes supportive noise in its tenants handbook. A section 'Can I run a business from home?' reads:

'You must get our permission to run a business from your home or garage. We will not refuse unreasonably. You must apply in writing and a full assessment will be made of the application, including the effect on neighbours. You will also need to obtain the advice of the Council to determine whether you would need planning permission. Your business must not cause a nuisance to neighbours.'

Like South Liverpool Housing Association , 1066 refers to planning. The risk is that tenants think the planning department's permission is also required for 'change of use'. If so, this will seem like yet another bureaucratic and controlling hurdle. Many will either not bother to work from home (or at all) or will simply not tell their landlord, which is the most common response.

Landlords should not have policies that are outdated, irrelevant or ignored. Yet these tenancy conditions are often all these things. In particular, a proactive approach to encouraging home work would include looking at this with the relevant planning authorities to establish an agreement to allow it. Saying that tenants will have to sort out planning for themselves is hardly supportive.

Clare Budden, South Liverpool housing association's director of neighbourhood services, acknowledges that the planning permission part of the tenancy conditions could put people off: 'We meant that people would need permission to make physical changes, extensions in the garden and so on. It wasn't meant to imply planning consent just for working at home at all.' But change of use remains a grey area in planning law. There

are some cases of planners enforcing this against home owners, but it is very rare. Most planning authorities have allowed this to wither on the vine, as the zoning of residential and industrial commercial property becomes increasingly blurred.

Government should examine the disincentive effects on employment (and traffic reduction) of planning powers to restrict home working. This should apply equally to tenants and owners.

DIRECT EMPLOYMENT OF TENANTS
One interesting recent development is the gradual growth in direct employment of social housing tenants by government agencies to carry out tasks based at home.

The Audit Commission's Housing Inspectorate appointed 77 tenant advisers following an initial recruitment drive at the end of 2000. Several have been trained and involved in inspections. It has established a training programme for the tenant advisers. Many do at least some of their work from home. The Housing Corporation also uses tenants to carry out customer inspection of housing associations in best value reviews.

Lynda Hance co-ordinates the Housing Corporation's tenant consultation panel, a group of nine housing association tenants from around the country who meet regularly with board members to discuss ways Corporation policies can be made responsive to tenants. 'We only pay expenses, such as for child care, travel and food. But we do add some tokens of appreciation such as dinner at the House of Lords with Baroness Dean. They are not paid, because this might reduce their independence.'
There is little evidence that housing associations themselves employ tenants directly and

'Landlords should not have policies that are outdated, irrelevant or ignored. Yet these tenancy conditions are all of these things'

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allow them to work from home, though some have encouraged tenants to work as service contractors in, for example, resident service organisations.

THE BLACK ECONOMY

Many tenants will work from home without telling their landlord - or the Benefits Agency. Debbie Hay is a tenant consultation panel member for the Housing Corporation and tenant of Sanctuary Housing Association. 'I don't know of any that ask or tell their landlord. Some of the work is quite old fashioned, like taking in washing and ironing. You find men running gardening and repair businesses from home, using their homes as offices and for storage. There are often vans and trailers out the front. Some of the women take in work in batches. Others do child minding.'

Tenants generally don't go to the landlord about home working, she says. 'They just don't want them interfering in their lives. As one told me: "The minute you tell them one thing they come round looking for something else."'

Just like home owners, tenants don't want people telling them what to do with their lives. 'They don't like being reminded that this is not really their home,' she says. 'They want the freedom to live their way without interference. 'I think that most tenant home working is in the black economy, certainly off the books. I suspect that there is a lot more of this going on than landlords realise, especially now more and more people have computers. Self employment, especially for social tenants,

is often very erratic and it can be more trouble than it's worth to tell the authorities.'

For lone parents, Debbie Hay says, home working appeals because it is flexible. 'They can stop work when school ends or work with their children in the house. Many usually just do enough to get an extra £30 or £40 a week to top up their benefits.' ■

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

Jane (not her real name) is a housing association tenant in a North East market town. She works from home, selling specialised ethnic craft goods abroad through email and via other people's websites. She is a single parent on income support and does not earn very much from her work but would like to. 'I am caught between a rock and a hard place. I don't make enough to come off benefit but I want to make my own way. My house is too small to have a workshop. I haven't told my landlord that I work from home because they might say no or worse, get my benefit stopped. They like to keep us tenants in our place and remind us whose property we live in. I'm not sure they would let me do this. I would go to private renting straight away of I could get enough space and get my rent paid. There's not much help for people like me wanting to make the transition from income support to running a business'

SELLING TO THE WORLD

Pete Willis got his Carrick council house in Truro in 1999 after a period of homelessness, first staying with his family, then in temporary accommodation. 'We were victims of the market crash in the early 1990s when we got repossessed,' he says. 'I used to do retail management, running a card shop and other businesses in Truro. But the work just dried up. It's not easy getting jobs down here. We rented privately until things went wrong.'

'Instead of doing nothing, I went on a computer course. My brother in law gave me an old PC from work and it had the internet on it. I was a complete novice but I quickly learnt. I went out and got some NVQs and decided to have a go selling music on the web. What used to be a hobby has become my business.'

Pete sells through his own website, **www.petewillismusic.co.uk**. He also sells through large established sites, mainly in the USA. 'I go to car boot sales and markets to buy CDs and vinyl and then sell online. Most of my customers are abroad, mainly USA and Japan. They are into, for example, 1980s 12" singles. These often have mixes of records that you can't on today's CDs.'

Pete was advised by his IT trainers to tell the council about his business plan. 'I didn't know it was such a big deal. I couldn't see why they should object. I got a letter saying it was no problem. Social landlords should encourage this kind of thing, not just allow it'

CHILDMINDING

Beverley Nelson and **Vicky Poland**, both 21, run the Daisy Chains childminding business from home. They live in the three bed South Liverpool Housing Association home, but use most rooms for child care.

The 12 children's parents work at a variety of places including nearby Liverpool airport, Iceland supermarket, the industrial estate and various colleges. They came to SLHA after they lost their jobs when a local nursery's roof collapsed.

'We didn't have any registered childminders locally at the time. We agreed to let them have a tenancy and run a fully registered service,' says Julie Marsh, community development worker. Beverley and Vicky were previously living with their parents, who were SLHA tenants

'Most of my customers are abroad, mainly in the USA and Japan'

MAKING THE LEAP

Sue Bowden is a tenant of Carrick District Council. Diagnosed with ME and a single parent, she had not worked for some time until recently. Now she runs a small craft business with the help of working families tax credit. She sells her work at craft markets and WI stalls.

'I was going nowhere. When I found I could earn more than £20 a week more with working families tax credit, I went for it. Even if I earned nothing I'd still feel better off - I am now more occupied and more fulfilled and my health has improved. I am so relieved not to be so dependent.

'I need to work at my own pace because I get fatigue,' she says. 'I have my own website, **www.kernowmade.com**. I prefer to sell this way for obvious reasons.' She targets the USA, where there is a market for Cornish goods from families that emigrated.

Sue went to the council for permission to run her business from home in 2001. 'I wanted to do things by the book.' The council was a little snooty at first, she says. 'My housing manager asked me for more details when I wrote to him, so he could "decide whether to grant me permission"! I wrote back and said this is what I am doing, it will cause no nuisance. I did then get a nice letter saying yes and wishing me luck. But he did remind me of the council's powers to stop me if I were to cause a nuisance'

TAXI FROM HOME

Mac McDermott runs a taxi business from his home, which he recently bought from Carrick District Council. A former lorry driver, he became a taxi driver in Falmouth ten years ago. He and his wife Jacqueline decided to take the plunge and work for themselves in 2000. 'I went to see my bank manager first,' he says. 'Although I was buying my home from the council at the time, I did think it was better to get their permission as a tenant to do this.'

Mac got permission and agreed with the council that he could erect a 15 foot aerial on the back of his house, where it would not restrict anyone's view. He got planning permission to put a drive on his garden, but agreed with the council that his two other drivers would not park there. 'They always park outside the cul-de-sac. We've never had any complaints from neighbours, touch wood. They are my customers! If you upset them, you upset your business. I think the council has been very reasonable though.'

Does he feel he would be constrained the same way if he lived on a private development? 'I know I wouldn't! I know people who run all kinds of business like mine on private estates. It's still more restrictive if you are council - even if you have bought. Why should this be so?

'I think people running a business from home should get more backing. It's a good way to start up at low cost. I think a lot more would come off the dole if this happened.'

'People running a business from home should get more backing. It's a good way to start up at low cost. I think a lot more would come off the dole if this happened'

7 NO SPACE TO WORK

ONE of the most consistent complaints of tenants wanting to work from home is their lack of a spare room (indeed, the word spare is no longer appropriate). No matter how well connected to the web, no matter how supportive the landlord is in terms of giving permission to work from home, lack of space will prove a major barrier. For those who do make a success of home working, the only solution is often to move out of the sector, depriving their neighbourhood of a role model of successful enterprise and skewing the community's balance towards people on welfare.

In high demand areas, landlords will say that underletting is simply not possible. To let on this basis would deprive homeless and badly housed households of a chance to get somewhere decent to live, the argument goes.

However, if this means (and it does) allocating properties that cannot realistically be used for work - including a quiet space for children's homework, how much is this actually helping those in need? For those who have school age children or whose own prospects may benefit from a spare room, this is not 'somewhere decent to live'. It is more likely to be somewhere that holds them back. And it risks exacerbating social exclusion.

A radical approach in these areas of high demand would be to recognise that supply of social housing will not ever meet demand, then to ensure that whatever is allocated is a genuine help to the household's wider needs. In other words, house fewer people properly. Such a quality before quantity approach would require a rethink of the purpose of social housing. But this is already taking place in high pressure areas, with a proportion of the Housing Corporation's budget for new homes going to key workers. If the argument goes that a firefighter or nurse can be housed ahead of a homeless family, why not apply the same thinking to helping those who can work if they have a spare room?

Even in London, homes are about more than just housing. For those who are less well off, finding separate premises to work from is almost impossible because rental costs are so high. This is the reason that new live/work schemes are becoming so popular. Having no work space inside the home for this group is in effect preventing work completely.

Meanwhile the same landlords who occupy every bedroom to the hilt often have many properties with spare rooms occupied by elderly tenants who have far less need of the space than their younger counterparts. While it is not suggested that anyone be forced to move against their will, this mismatch does neatly illustrate the way that social housing property is not always utilised to its full potential.

LOW DEMAND, BIG OPPORTUNITY

This need for an imaginative approach to the potential use of social housing stock is particularly relevant in low demand areas. Here, there are no constraints on landlords offering spare rooms. But the ability to work from home and the way that children can be helped with home work with a spare room, are not yet used as selling points, this report's survey suggests (see chapter 10).

> 'For those who do make a success of home working, the only solution is often to move out of the sector, depriving their neighbourhood of a role model of successful enterprise'

Low demand: could some of these homes be offices until housing demand rises?

'People are increasingly using homes for more than just housing, seeking properties with spare rooms for work or for children's education. We must not allow our tenants to get left out of these advances'

Prime Focus Housing Association, like many associations, is deliberately underletting in some areas. But this is easier in low demand zones. 'There is low demand now in the West Midlands,' says Kerry Bolister, regional services director. We should be looking at how we could make our homes more attractive in these areas by promoting home working and spare rooms for children to use.'

Bolister thinks the time has come for housing associations to grasp the nettle: 'As housing organisations we need to recognise that the world is changing. People are increasingly using homes for more than just housing, seeking properties with spare rooms they can use for work or for children's education. We must not allow our tenants to get left out of these advances. Associations have not generally thought long and hard about this. It is time that they did.'

She adds that new thinking should include broadband. 'The cost of installing it is peanuts compared to redevelopment,' she argues. 'Our live/work schemes in the West Midlands all have full broadband access. Our general needs homes will increasingly get additional phone/modem points - where we can access local authority or other funds to do this, such as Sandwell's SRB6 scheme.'

PROBLEMS

- Tenants are often denied necessary space to home work
- This affects children's educational prospects
- Home owners are free to seek and get a 'spare' room. These rooms are used much more nowadays for work/study
- Landlords almost always fail to explore applicants' need for work space when they allocate homes
- Housing benefit rules discriminate against those using space to enhance their work prospects. Restricting benefit on the basis of 'underoccupation' in these circumstances is perverse
- In low demand areas, where space is available, few landlords have seen the potential of home working as a selling point to fill their properties
- Housing led allocations may help families in the short term, but if they deprive them of work/study opportunities, this could exacerbate social exclusion
- Landlords will fail to mix income groups on their estates and make them sustainable if they fail to act on the growing demand for an extra room as the norm
- Failing to provide space for work/study could contribute to the sector's decline and to low demand

SOLUTIONS

- Update space standards to allow one extra room as standard
- Phase out the term 'underoccupation'
- Review housing benefit market rent regulations to allow for an extra room
- Ensure that housing association tenancies are removed from any threat of housing benefit caps based on the extra room
- Issue guidance to local authorities stressing the importance of extra rooms in developing children's educational opportunities and adults' employment prospects

But even this low demand 'opportunity' again emphasises the divisions in home working. Tenants in the south east, for example, are given the least chance to work from home, despite their need for space potentially being greater (given higher costs of work space outside the home). Sue Littlemore, head of strategic planning and performance review for English Churches Housing Group, illustrates the contrast between high and low demand areas: 'In the south-east and London we take nominations from the local authorities. It's a case of plugging people into shoe boxes. In areas of low demand, in Middlesbrough/Newcastle, we are happy for tenants to under-occupy.'

'In the south-east and London, it's a case of plugging people into shoe boxes. In areas of low demand, we are happy for tenants to under-occupy'

ASPIRATIONS

Whatever the supply issues, the social housing sector and those who fund it need to acknowledge tenants' needs and aspirations for an extra room. These will not easily match the landlords' ability to provide it. Should the tenants then suffer the consequences in lost employment/education opportunities?

'Our tenant survey examined occupancy rates. This showed there is a demand for under-occupancy,' says Joanne Tilley, research and information manager at Jephson Homes.

'We have commissioned research into what prospective working tenants want out of a housing association property,' says David Power, policy manager, Places for People. 'This found that space was a serious factor. As we want to encourage a mix of residents on our estates, we have to address the need for spare rooms. We already allow under-occupation of properties regularly, but mainly to reduce child density and turnover. We are increasingly looking at initiatives that boost employment and enterprise in our communities and it may well be that spare rooms for work will be part of that'

NEW HOMES STANDARDS

Problems with space standards in the housing association sector are not news. Research for Joseph Rowntree Foundation published in 1994 found that half of all association homes fell below Parker Morris standards. Over 40% failed NHBDC minimum storage standards. As it argued, prophetically: 'Housing association tenants have little say in the design and amenity features of their homes. Few new tenants will turn down even the most poorly-designed property. However there are long term consequences... in letting problems and low morale sink estates.'

The researcher Valerie Karn concluded that the 'numbers are everything/minimum cost per unit approach is disastrous in the longer term'. Since this research, there has been a growing household aspiration for extra space to benefit from new technology. Arguably this makes the case for space standards reform even stronger.

It is not always the housing association as developer that is the problem. Alan Fox, housing director at Penwith Housing Association, explains the dilemma: 'We say to local authorities that we'd rather provide a spare room for any purpose - as much for sustainability as for home work, admittedly. Three bed homes allow for more kids - But funders put pressure on us to deal with short term problems, so we build two bed homes.'

Another risk is that government plans to increase the density of new homes could act against home working. 'The push to higher density development could make the idea of a spare room for home work even harder,'

says Fox. 'But there may be design solutions. Either way more grant will be needed.'

It is possible that the new Housing Corporation TCI (total cost indicator) rules may help. If providers can show they are producing to Ecohomes Good standards (which allow for a work space for a PC terminal and extra modem/phone points etc), they can get a grant multiplier. But although this helps, few associations think it is enough.

Ideally landlords will build in broadband connections and phone points as part of the capital costs of new schemes and improvements. Chris Blundell, of Amicus Housing Association: 'The utilities are always asking us to let them dig up estate roads to put in cable and install junction boxes in our blocks. There's the possibility of some planning gain here. As landlords we can ask for payments to be made towards provision of broadband in tenants' homes.' But he points to another barrier, the impact of rent restructuring: 'This could mean that housing associations will find it hard to cover the cost of these sorts of initiatives.'

Some housing associations say they feel inhibited by the Scheme Development Standards/Total Cost Indicator regime when it comes to building in extra space for teleworking. And they may not feel encouraged to, for example, provide a seating area in kitchens where children could do their homework.

The Housing Corporation, however, believes the ball is at the feet of associations and their local authority partners. TCI space bands have no upper ceiling and the Corporation, for example, makes provision for extended family accommodation in making allocations. If bids that include extra space for

NOWHERE TO STORE

Another requirement of home workers is sufficient storage space. Even the most computer-based home work will require space to store papers. In the case of those who use the home as the centre for administration to support behind more mobile forms of work (eg sales reps) or premises (eg shop/stalls), social housing's cramped space can prove a major challenge. Working from home requires more than three foot square to put in a PC and a chair, as some modern housing schemes are beginning to do. In the case of landlords with houses to let, a more creative look at the potential use of garage space and outbuildings/sheds could be considered

'We say to local authorities that we'd rather provide a spare room for sustainability. But funders pressurise us to deal with short term problems, so we build two bed homes'

HOME OFFICE AS STANDARD

Space standards need urgent review. Untouched since the war, they continue to assume that homes are used the same way, untouched by modern technology and aspirations.

Research has consistently shown that tenants who are technically 'underoccupying' a property do not recognise this. They see an extra room as an essential part of modern life.

The use of the term 'spare room' unwittingly adds to the sense that a room that is not a main living room or bedroom is somehow a luxury. Yet most home owners today will opt for such a space, given the choice. As the statistics show (see chapter 3), it is home owners and those from higher social groups that are most likely to be 'wired', to work from home, to have a room where their children can do so with a PC. Rules and regulations which do not allow households in the rented sectors to have a home office (or penalise those that do) are arguably increasing social exclusion

home working are backed by local authority partners they will be judged on their merits, the Corporation says.

Public subsidy cost is no longer seen as the chief criterion in the bidding process. The Corporation is moving away from formulaic allocations to a more strategic look at what it should fund. This view includes making an assessment about the long-term sustainability of new homes. Already, TCIs are enhanced if a scheme fulfils 'sustainability' criteria in terms of greening or security by design.

Associations should set out to win support from local authorities for bids for funding to the Housing Corporation that embrace provision for home working by adults and children.

HOUSING BENEFIT

In practice, very few housing association tenants find their housing benefit affected by use of a home office. Only around 2,000 cases are referred to rent officers each year. They can only set market rents, so in many cases association properties fall outside their remit. Local authorities have to choose to refer the properties, which few do. Their own tenants are exempt from this process altogether. In any case, as this report shows, allocation policies mean that there are not many social tenants who have home office space in the first place.

Yet many housing associations contacted for this report expressed concern that HB rules could stop them providing extra rooms for work or any other reason. 'We had a confrontation with a local authority in the north-east over under-occupation when we let a three bedroom home to a single parent,' said David Barrow, customer services director, Bradford & Northern Housing Association. 'The council referred the rent and housing benefit declared that the accommodation was too large and would not meet the full rent. This kind of attitude does not encourage the provision of spare rooms.'

This issue needs to be addressed. It may only be reform of the housing benefit rules for private renting that do this. In the private rented sector, the rules are rigorous and inflexible. Although not the subject of this report, many tenants of this sector are relatively deprived. And record low levels of new build provision mean that there will be a growing use of private renting for priority groups in housing need.

Rent officers will automatically allow housing benefit to be paid only on an acceptable number of rooms. If, say, a family has two bedrooms occupied but uses the third for children's home work or adult work/training, they will only get benefit as if they lived in a two bed home. The space standards that inform this are outmoded. This approach not only risks exacerbating social exclusion (by emphasising the different aspiration ceilings of tenants and owners). It is likely to be a false economy. Underoccupation penalties may have helped cut housing benefit spending, but there are long term costs if children are forced to live in homes with no space to study and adults are deprived of the opportunity to work from home or start a business with low overheads.■

WORKING IN THE BEDROOM

Brenda Chester is a self employed co-director of community business support agency Enterprise Direct Ltd. She suffers from rheumatoid arthritis, which makes typing and going up and down stairs difficult. She lives with her 17 year old son in a two bedroom Amicus HA property in Faversham, Kent.

A former manager of projects for a Kent Business Links agency, Brenda went freelance after health problems made it hard to go out to work. She does her phone and paperwork in her living room downstairs. Her PC and fax is in her bedroom. 'I'm never away from my work,' she says. 'Visitors just see an office when they come into my front room. I can't say what a huge difference it would make to me if I had an extra room.'

When she moved to Faversham from her previous housing association property in Beckenham under the mobility scheme, she asked for three bedrooms so she could work from home. 'I was told flatly that the number of rooms was based on housing needs. I can't use a laptop because of my hands. So I have to go up and down the stairs to use the PC. Because I sometimes have operations on swelling in my legs, this can be painful. And it can slow down my productivity. Most people in my position would give up - but that's not in my nature.'

What does she think landlords are doing that could be improved generally? 'Social landlords just don't see these properties as being for anything other than living. But that's not how I see my home. It is the place I work that allows me to pay the rent. They should look much more closely at allocation policies. They should ask more questions about the real needs of people who apply.

'At the moment we are treated as little more than numbers and points. People with children need a spare room. This should be non-negotiable. It's essential for the children's educational status that they can work somewhere quietly'

'Visitors just see an office when they come into my front room. I can't say what a huge difference it would make to me if I had an extra room'

Brenda Chester, Amicus tenant, in her home in Kent. Despite severe arthritis, she has to move constantly from living room (where she keeps her files) to upstairs bedroom (where she keeps her PC) to run her business

8 WIRED FOR WELFARE?

NEARLY 12,000 homes in six neighbourhoods across England have received funding under the £10 million Wired up Communities programme, which was launched in 2001. The aim is to 'bridge the digital divide between the ICT haves and have nots by placing computers directly into people's homes for good'. Schoolchildren will also benefit through the support of the national e-Learning Foundation. The computer:pupil ratios in these areas will be made higher than national targets (1:5 for secondary, 1:8 for primary by 2004).

Learning from the pilot in Kensington Liverpool, the six are:

- Carpenters Estate, Newham, East London: 750 homes on the estate and the local primary school
- Framlingham, Suffolk: 1,500 homes in the market town and the local school
- BeaconNet, East Manchester: 4,500 homes and local schools
- Whitebirk Estate, Blackburn: 2,500 homes and five local schools
- Alston, Cumbria: 1,200 homes in three small towns, isolated farms, three schools
- Brampton upon Dearne, South Yorkshire: 1,500 homes in the former mining community, 265 laptops for schoolchildren

One of the programme's tests is how people in the communities use the services made available, 'especially those relating to employment and education'.

> 'The set top boxes we are supplying are going to have to go out with a leaflet that explains that they are not suitable for home working. The fact you can use Microsoft Office on them is fine for occasional, but not regular use. This is also against the tenancy agreement'

MISSING INGREDIENT
From the perspective of this report, the development of home/school links by WUC projects is welcome. But home working (as opposed to looking for/training for jobs online) has not been addressed. This is a missed opportunity which needs to be reviewed. It is best illustrated by the example of the Carpenters estate in Newham. There, a leaflet is being prepared that will discourage tenants from using their set top boxes to work from home.

Richard Stubbs of Newham Net: 'Obviously the Carpenters network would make working from home easier, but the set top box we are supplying is going to have to go out with a leaflet that explains that a TV is not a suitable platform for home working. The fact you can use Microsoft Office on it is fine for occasional, but not for regular use. It is also against the tenancy agreement, which means that encouraging it would be problematic.'

Stubbs explained that home working will be tackled in the future. But these comments show how it can be an afterthought. They also raise questions about the suitability of using set top boxes for work (see page 39).

KENSINGTON EARLY LESSONS
There are 4,000 homes in this New Deal for Communities (NDC) area. Half have been given PCs, in the country's first Wired up Communities pilot. Most of the 2,000 PCs were ex-Government department stock. 'There have been some major problems with their quality,' says Anne Marie Turner, NDC operations manager. Over 600 callouts have so far been necessary, casting doubt on the cost effectiveness of recycled PCs. 'No wonder the government didn't want them,' one local resident joked.

There have also been 50 new PCs given to community champions, people who can promote IT use as part of their work in the

community. Patience Jones is a board member of the NDC partnership. 'I use the PC to email others on the NDC board and also to produce a newsletter for my residents' association,' she says. 'I'd like to build websites with other residents but I'm at saturation point at the moment with all my NDC work.'

'These PCs are only to be used for home use, not for work' says Turner. 'They have low memory. They are very much for people who wouldn't be able to buy one.'

The PCs have also been offered to local traders. It seems strange that the assumption is that the same PCs will help people do business in a trade setting but can't do so in a home setting. Again, the opportunity to boost home-based work has been missed.

Are people using them to work for a living? 'Not that I know of,' said one mother at the local primary school. 'But I do know people who are copying CDs for people. They are making a mint on the side, charging at least £3 a go.' There is some interest in home working here, but it needs encouragement. 'For women at home with kids it could be a good option to work when they are at school,' said another mother.

When residents register for a PC, they fill in a form on what they will use the it for and their circumstances.

Residents interviewed for this report said

PROBLEMS

- Initiatives to 'wire' homes have so far failed to connect with the home working agenda. An opportunity is being missed
- Many initiatives provide welcome improvements in access to services, but these are often welfare services
- Some of the technology is biased towards consumption not production. It is not easy to load productive software onto TV set top web access kits
- Surveys of resident preference for PC or TV access are not always analysed fully. If younger working age/parent residents prefer PCs, this should be noted
- Opportunities to gain payments from cable companies that could fund home working initiatives are often overlooked
- Recycled (sometimes ex-government) PCs are not normally a cost effective or helpful way to provide computer access

SOLUTIONS

- Ensure that any wired up or smart homes project enables the possibility of home work for recipients
- Encourage use of IT that is productive and gives users greater control over what they can do with the equipment
- Community websites/intranets should explore the possibility of residents selling services etc to one another online
- Take great care to ensure new users get access to sufficient training and decent technical support
- Try to give users a real sense of personal ownership of the equipment. Charging helps this, with affordable credit (eg through credit unions) to make it easier
- Provide easy-to-understand advice on internet dial up charges and providers. Negotiate special group packages (eg with cable companies) if possible
- Link initiatives to a review of other home work/study factors such as space, allocations and tenancy conditions

there was very little aftercare. 'All they did was put them in the houses, say "there you go, ring us if they break down",' said one. Others complained of the lack of community news or emails sent out.

Another concern is the cost. Pauline has five children. Her 14 year old is using the PC at home in a spare room to do coursework. 'You really notice what difference it makes at secondary school,' she says. But she was shocked when the family had a bill for their new separate phone line for £500. 'The kids had spent ages online and it cost us a small fortune,' she says. She was unaware of some of the packages available that can reduce the cost of internet calls to nothing depending on the internet service provider.

If the scheme was launched again, residents and staff say they would:
- avoid using old recycled equipment
- do a training needs analysis first
- phase in the PC supply rather than do it in one go
- define clear target groups for them.

Anne Marie Turner concludes: 'The message is "never give people recycled computers again!"'

'There is a clear risk that if you give people equipment that doesn't work well and it has low memory, it will put them off. On the other hand, some of our residents have given their PCs back and have gone off to buy themselves new ones.'

EAST MANCHESTER

East Manchester, a combined New Deal for Communities and Single Regeneration Budget area, has achieved a total of £3.6 million to wire up the neighbourhood. NDC itself paid for the launch of the area's own website, **www.eastserve.com**. This includes new resident-friendly interactive content from local agencies, for example a virtual police station which can be contacted online. It also has employment information

Steve Mather, East Manchester NDC: 'Psychologically, the arrival of PCs in homes is important. People already have TVs. This signifies a real change'

Steve Mather, director of employment, training and business development, explains how the project went forward: 'In 2001 we initially gave 450 homes and 10 community venues recycled PCs to pilot the programme. We hit barriers straight away, such as the high numbers of residents with no phone land line or bank/credit access. If you want to access the web, you need credit and you need a fixed phone line.'

Wired up Communities funding of £1.3 million expanded the impact to 4,500 homes, around 45% of the area's total. Residents are given four options: a new PC, a recycled PC, an internet only computer (with no hard drive) or set top TV access. 'Around 75% are opting for PCs. Having one gives families access to new skills and employability in a way that TV access currently cannot match. You can't load much

software onto a TV box. Psychologically the arrival of PCs in homes is important. People already have TVs. This signifies a real change.'

The equipment requires some payment, to encourage a sense of commitment and ownership. the 100% subsidy option was rejected. 'New PCs cost £200, recycled ones £30. Residents can get a loan from the credit union to pay for them. It works out at around £4 per week for a new PC. This also encourages their financial stability and reduces the risk of contact with loan sharks'

Another bid for £1.8 million from the Learning Foundation ensured that home/school IT links were strengthened. 'This has enabled us to introduce wireless within schools, so that there is no need for IT rooms. Laptops can be moved from site to site with high speed access by wireless. Pupils can go home without any equipment and carry on working on-line with their home access equipment. The kids here are getting better IT skills and learning content at school and at home. This is encouraging their parents and it may explain why so many are opting for PCs rather than set top boxes. The PCs have become a symbol of achievement and aspiration.'

Technical support is provided by a local community enterprise that was already helping residents use recycled kit.

The area has also obtained £500,000 for UKonline IT learning centres, which residents are required to visit before getting subsidised home IT equipment. A scheme to provide a large free access intranet for East Manchester is currently being drawn up. This will include a wireless broadband connection for all participating homes, schools, centres and businesses. Access to the local network will be free, access to the web

(unlimited use) will be around £13 per month.

'We haven't tested levels of home working interest,' Mather admits. 'But our assumption is that this kit is the residents and they can do with it what they choose. No social landlords in the area have reported any problems with tenants wanting to work from home. We will look at this but my hope is that it simply won't be a problem. Given high levels of low demand here, it may be possible to bring people into the area who want to combine home and work and use our broadband and IT package. If this happens, we wan boost the spending power of the local economy and provide more role models for younger residents'

UPLOAD OR DOWNLOAD?

Landlords and regeneration agencies are keen to fund access to computers and internet for their residents. But should they opt for TV-based applications for user-friendliness, or PCs that can be used more flexibly? Is there a risk that TV set top boxes will wire homes for 'download' rather than 'upload'? Will those with TV access be able to buy online and access community information, but find it hard to create and send files or sell work?

SLHA's community website/intranet (left and right), which will soon be available soon in all its tenants' homes

South Liverpool Housing Association is a stock transfer landlord with 4,500 homes in the Speke and Garston areas of the city, in one of the country's most deprived wards. After a bid for wired up communities cash failed, SLHA looked to wire up its residents in a different way, through learning centres. The Key is a £600,000 project to do this. Four centres are to open in existing community facilities including a catholic church, a sheltered housing scheme, a tenant resource centre and a village hall.

The concept is 'family learning'. Video conferencing will link the four centres together. They will combine normal PCs with playstations to get children interested, plus online learning materials.

'What we're providing is all based closely on consultation with residents,' says Robbie Davison, new initiatives manager. 'We're specialising in different areas. For example Speke will do a lot of video and film, Garston will pioneer community internet radio.'

The learning centres will connect with set top box TV internet connections, which are being provided to every home in the area at the rate of 500 home per year from March 2002. **www.sgkey.org** is the website where these services are being hosted.

Two thirds of those who expressed a view in consultation preferred to have TV internet to a PC. Does this mean that the one third might be disadvantaged in terms of the still limited capacity of TV-based applications?

'It's about crawling before you walk,' he says. 'We think that this change has got to start in people's "comfort zone". By making community news and services available on the TV every time you switch on, residents will find it easier to adapt and learn the new technologies. Yes there's a limit to what software can do with the TVs, but suppliers are beginning to address this.'

In the second phase, he suggests. 'we may be able to create bursaries for people who want them to get laptops, maybe PCs. But at first there's a lot of learning to do.'

Like other TV access initiatives, the initial emphasis is on online services. Partners in the project include the Education Action Zone, Sure Start, a local SRB partnership, the Police, Fire Brigade, GPs and the credit union. All are to offer something to residents through the TV link and will be contactable this way.

'The emphasis is less on handing out information, more on online service accountability.' says Davison. 'Repairs will be reported this way. Homes will be let online, nurseries will show places. The police are offering game style toolkits for children to check whether their parents' cars are safe. The fire brigade will be emailing residents to encourage the use of smoke detectors and so on. We should be held responsible for our service delivery to our tenants. If people email us to get a repair done and want a reply in writing, that creates an audit trail. This will make us more accountable.' ■

'We should be held responsible for our service delivery. If tenants email us to get a repair done and want a reply, that creates an audit trail. this will make us more accountable'

SELLING VIA COMMUNITY WEBSITES

South Liverpool Housing Association tenant **Maureen** recycles designer clothes and sells them on to others in the area. She wants to scan photos of the clothes and show them on www.sgkey.org, the community website. Her first market is the people she knows. When they turn on the TV they will be able to go to a number of local websites selling items and services as well as community information. Maureen and others like her will be able to use the learning centres to learn how to make websites and to update them. But their local market penetration will be deeper with residents accessing their websites via the TV.

'She will be bombarded with emails and calls,' says new initiatives manager Robbie Davison. 'Armani clothes will definitely sell well through a local website. This is exactly the kind of social enterprise we want to create. We are offering business and IT support to those who need it. Perhaps Maureen and others like her will use the centres to learn how to make websites and to update them. But the local market penetration will be all the more powerful for being accessible via the TV'
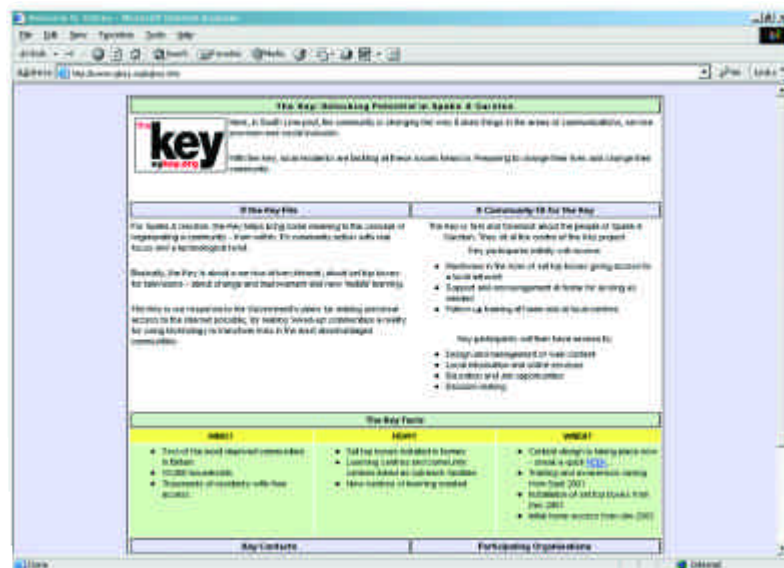
WILL SMART HOMES WORK?

Smart Homes use electronic networking technology to integrate devices and appliances found in almost all homes. They also use environment systems more common in factories and offices, so that an entire home can be controlled centrally or remotely as a single machine. This technology offers the prospect of significant improvements in the living standards of older, sick and disabled people who, without automated domestic activities, might otherwise be totally reliant on home care. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation website contains more on this, see chapter 12.

However, these benefits can only be realised if the technology becomes affordable and accessible to those who most need it. This is only likely if a broader consumer market develops - pushing down prices and increasing availability. If or when this happens, it will be important to ensure that social landlords do not exclude their tenants from its benefits. It would be a huge missed opportunity to fail to link Smart Homes technology with the tenant's work and study needs

'Designer clothes will definitely sell well through a local website here. This is exactly the kind of social enterprise we want to create'

Robbie Davison, South Liverpool Housing Association: 'Going for TV internet is about crawling before you walk. This change has got to start in people's comfort zone'

Research shows that school children with access to a home PC and internet will do better at school. But social housing tenants' children are the least likely to have this. And, even for those that do, allocation policies mean spare rooms are rare

9 HOMEWORK FOR CHILDREN

'Only 45% of 7-14 year old children from DE backgrounds have access to home computers, compared to 85% of ABs, 78% of C1s and 71% of C2s'

FOR home owners, there's no debate. Those that can do so ensure that their children have use of a computer at home. They are also likely to have this computer in a reasonably quiet room, home office or otherwise. The 1.44 million families with children in social housing are less likely to have the equipment at all. And if they do it may well be in an unsuitably crowded room. Imagine the scene in a housing association flat with set top TV internet access in the living room when the 13 year old wants to do some research for school. Their brother/sister wants to watch Neighbours. Who gets their way?

Little wonder that housing association assistance for school children is often in the form of funding for after school homework clubs in community halls or at the schools themselves.

Statistics show a clear gap between social groups on the use of PCs at home by children. According to a DfES survey, only 45% of 7-14 year old children from DE backgrounds have access to home computers, compared to 85% of AB children, 78% of CI children and 71% of C2 children.

This aspect of the home working revolution - the revolution in how children do home work - is something social landlords cannot easily dismiss. Even those who believe that few of their tenants will, in practice, ever work from home cannot ignore children's homework needs. Research also shows a growing interest in PC ownership for children's needs amongst estate residents.

An overwhelming 85% of teachers think that the government's ICT-focused curriculum puts pupils from less privileged backgrounds at a disadvantage, the *Guardian* reported in 2001. Education secretary Estelle Morris was reported as saying: 'my biggest fear is that we get it wrong and miss the chance. The thing that worries me most is that we cause the digital divide to grow.' The point is that schools' growing reliance on new teaching media and online learning is no use to children who cannot access it. Aside from equipment affordability, landlord allocation policies are in urgent need of review.

A recent survey of schools recommended for their work with ICT (for the British Educational Communications and Technology agency, February 2002), found 'a surprisingly low response to questions about special initiatives to provide more access to ICT for pupils without home access and to actively develop home-school links'.

Less than one quarter of over 140 schools that responded said that they had additional initiatives to support pupils who did not have access to ICT at home. Only 44% of the schools indicated that they were engaged in specific initiatives for supporting home-school links.

Children in Kensington Primary School, Liverpool: IT use in schools is flourishing, but will it continue at home?

These projects included:
- homework guidance on school web site
- e-mail for parent communication and sending homework
- home access to school servers
- use of digital TV for home internet access
- on-line homework support
- '**www.mychildatschool.com**' (for monitoring attendance)
- virtual classroom pilot
- the use of laptops.

A joined up attempt by government to tackle this issue will inevitably require action to ensure there is enough space in children's homes to benefit from the technology at all. If this is not addressed, the result could be middle class children learning at home at their convenience, while socially excluded children continue to be excluded from this, only using IT at school or in occasional sessions in communal settings.

LINKS BETWEEN CHILDREN AND ADULT PC USE
A spin off benefit of investment in children's ICT use at school and home is that it can encourage the parents to use technology. In **East Manchester**, for example, a successful bid for £1.8 million from the Learning Foundation ensured that home/school IT

PROBLEMS
- Education is rapidly going online, with a growing requirement for pupils to work with IT
- Yet social tenants' children are significantly less likely to have access to the web/PCs at home
- Unlike better off children, they will also be less likely to have a quiet room at home available for study
- Allocation policies routinely fail to look at children's needs for space to study and use IT at home
- Initiatives to help estate children do home work with IT often restrict them to community premises for limited times
- Landlords can be dubious about home-based IT study, preferring paternalistic collective solutions
- Landlords sometimes see lack of space not as a root cause of educational disadvantage but as a reason not to support home-based IT for study at all
- An educational divide could grow as a result of these factors

SOLUTIONS
- Government needs to urgently review the policy contradictions between education and housing
- Schools should become more involved in matters that affect home based study, working closely with social landlords
- Landlords should review allocations policies to provide an extra room for households with school age children
- Landlord support for home work clubs etc should be linked to attempts to enable home based study

links were strengthened. 'This has enabled us to introduce wireless within schools, so that there is no need for IT rooms,' says Steve Mather of the New Deal for Communities project there. 'Laptops can be moved from site to site and have high speed web access provided by wireless. Pupils can go home without any equipment and carry on working on-line with their home access equipment. The kids here are getting better IT skills and learning content at school and at home. This is encouraging their parents and may explain why so many opt for PCs rather than set top boxes. The PCs have become a symbol of achievement and aspiration.'

Karen Gorry of the Education Action Zone in **Kensington**, Liverpool, where Wired up Communities funding was piloted, agrees: 'Mums were saying "I don't want one of those" but the kids said "go on" and showed their parents how to use the PC. People here said: "I'll get one for the kids". Then they got used to them and started using them themselves.'

The Kensington infant department IT suite has had 11 PCs for the past two years. Gwyneth Williams is the infant school's IT co-ordinator. 'I find that the kids with PCs at home are far more adept at using the mouse and opening windows here in school.

'A sensible approach could be to twin track:running home work clubs in tandem with help for individual home-based study'

You can tell - they have more confidence. If the digital brain gets used [an intranet learning tool which gives children their own web page to build up with useful information - see **www.digitalbrain.com**], they do much better at key stage two.'

COMMUNAL HOMEWORK OR HOME ALONE?
Why is provision for social tenants' children's computer access and homework clubs so often funded in communal exercises, when better off children often work individually at home? Nicola Shields, community investment manager at Amicus Housing Association: 'It's free. People say "that's great, I can try it without buying a PC." Many children find there isn't the space at home to do homework properly. This is going back to the working class roots of self-improvement through working men's clubs, the Workers' Education Associations etc.'

It is hard to argue with the case for building up children's confidence with tailor-made help in supervised settings. Many will simply not get the support at home that middle class children get. But isn't there a risk that communal provision is arranged *instead* of help for home learning rather than as well as? Chris Blundell, Amicus group development director: 'It's a step by step process. We and our partners first aim to get people familiar with using PCs at all for work and study, then we will try to make it easier and cheaper to get them at home, then we will support their enterprise.'

There are landlords that have helped home based study, for example **Moat Housing Society**. 'Our Greenwich Homes come with broadband cabling,' says Caroline Field, community development manager. 'Free second-hand computers have been distributed. We are working with the council on access

to low-cost lease

computers through Microsoft's Anytime Anywhere learning.'

But the tendency in the sector is to provide communal facilities on a rationing basis.

Peabody Trust has three homework clubs based on estates. Children come together once a week, bring their homework with them and study together at a local community facility where computers are available for homework use. The reasons it gives for this kind of support include:

- lack of quiet space at home
- by studying together they learn from each other and are able to help one another
- a tutor offers extra assistance if required
- the young community is brought together in a non-threatening situation
- the wider community comes together to talk about fundraising for the homework clubs etc
- it leads to other community events being organised for young people.

What would the children say was their ideal way to help their children do home work? 'I suspect if you asked them they would say they would prefer their own bedroom with access to their own computer and not have to share with anyone,' says Alvin Wade, head of tenant involvement. 'But most do enjoy the homework clubs. For them and their parents, the clubs also break down barriers between neighbours. There are also fears of

kids just interacting with a computer alone and having access to unsuitable material on the web.'

Frances Kneller, housing policy manager at **Guinness Trust**, takes a similar view. 'We help to recycle old PCs for use by tenants groups. We have established links with schools to support homework clubs. It is important to support community efforts in this way rather than concentrating on the individual.'

This sort approach seems over-protective if not paternalistic. It involves assumptions that are rarely applied to better off children. But it is perhaps valid to doubt that 'everyone for themselves' will always work. The sensible approach would seem to be twin track - running home work clubs like Peabody and Guinness do in tandem with help for individual home-based study. ∎

'People said "I'll get a PC for the kids". Then their kids showed them what to do, they got used to it and started using it themselves'

Kensington: Parents are worried about internet phone costs and PC technical support

A survey of 25 housing associations, responsible for a fifth of all association stock, revealed an almost complete lack of action on home working to date, but a growing interest in tackling this in the future

10 SURVEY FINDINGS

WHAT COULD THE GOVERNMENT/HOUSING CORPORATION DO TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOUR TENANTS TO HOME WORK?

POLICY REFORM PROPOSALS

Survey respondents' suggestions to the Government and the Housing Corporation included:

- make working from home a performance indicator
- link up government policy on IT, education and social housing
- encourage larger homes that enable home work
- create a working-from-home tax credit
- encourage more flexible allocations
- raise awareness of the issue
- change housing benefit rules that penalise 'under-occupancy'
- allow units to be provided as work spaces
- improve education and training for tenants
- allow the use of social housing grant to build workshops
- unify funding streams and make them accessible
- encourage housing associations to broaden what they do
- put forward more ambitious design standards
- offer business support packages
- increase child care support
- provide revenue funding for trainers
- find out what tenants really want on home working

'Make working from a home a performance indicator to encourage associations to get their tenants involved'

'We have to get away from the mentality in the social housing sector that tenants have lower standards in terms of space'
Community

'Raise awareness of the issue and make associations take notice. Investment has to increase for this policy to work'
Hyde

'The Housing Corporation ought to wake up to the 21st century and understand that each room has to have coaxial and telecom points'
Irwell Valley

'You ought to be able to access the internet from any room in the house. But we're not given extra resources for this and have to bear the whole cost ourselves'
English Churches

'Change the housing benefit rules to allow a degree of under-occupancy and simplify the benefit system as a whole'
Bedfordshire Pilgrims

'The grant regulations need to change to allow funding of workshops, for example. Other subsidies are needed to make home working a real possibility. It is crazy the way we have to try to bring money together from so many different streams to encourage employment and training schemes'
Bradford & Northern

'The Corporation should increase Total Cost Indicators and change Scheme Development Standards so that additional, flexible space is built into residential units. We should be

About the survey

The sample was chosen to represent a broad mix of associations by size and region. Interviews were conducted in late 2001 and early 2002 by phone. Thanks to the following 25 who took part: 1066, Asra Greater London, Bedfordshire Pilgrims, Bradford & Northern, Broomleigh, Circle 33, Community, Devon & Cornwall, East Thames, English Churches, Guinness, Home, Hyde, Irwell Valley, Jephson, London & Quadrant, Maritime, Moat, Penwith, Places for People, Presentation, Prime Focus, Three Rivers, William Sutton Trust

able to provide garages, shops and utility areas that are purpose-built to cover the kind of jobs it is unrealistic to expect people to do from their homes'

Irwell Valley

'Simply having bigger properties would make it easier for people do all sorts of things in their home. We need an increase in supply of affordable housing to enable us to make decisions about letting properties with a spare room'

Devon & Cornwall

'A working-from-home tax credit, via pay or the family tax credit arrangements. Guidance could encourage housing associations to provide extra rooms as part of their lettings policy'

William Sutton Trust

'Some sort of grant should be made available to cover things like the installation of telephone points and broadband links. When anyone moves into a property, these facilities should be there. This has to become part of mainstream funding'

Home

'Make working from a home a performance indicator to encourage associations to get their tenants involved. We could encourage user groups of tenants to say what they want to do and in that way make it an issue. The modernising government agenda has to move out of Whitehall and embrace tenants'

Broomleigh

'Link the work the government is doing on IT with social housing. There is no coherent policy at present. There should be a new technology package that associations can co-ordinate'

Three Rivers

DO YOU HAVE A POLICY ON TENANTS WORKING FROM HOME?

None of those surveyed had any kind of policy on enabling tenants or their children to work from home. One said it would review its approach

'We do not have one at present, but we will look at the issue seriously when we review our business strategy'

Bradford & Northern

'We have an anti-poverty strategy. For some people, working from home is a way out of poverty. One of our aims is to encourage staff to work from home so it is logical we should do the same for tenants'

Guinness

'There is still a perception among tenants that working at home is not allowed. We have to do more to change that. The size of property is a major issue. There is not much spare room in our homes. Tenants also need a skill or profession or they can end up stuffing envelopes at home'

Hyde

'One of our aims is to encourage staff to work from home so it is logical we should do the same for tenants'

DOES YOUR TENANCY AGREEMENT PREVENT/DISCOURAGE HOME WORKING? IF SO, HAS IT BEEN ENFORCED WITH WARNINGS/EVICTIONS?

Of the 25 associations surveyed, 24 said tenants needed written permission to work from home. All said permission would be granted if the work did not disturb neighbours. There were few examples of anyone asking for permission, however

'Most people would ignore this anyway if they wanted to work from home'
East Thames

'We ask tenants to let us know if they are running a business and we usually give permission. We have to take action in cases like car maintenance where it annoys neighbours'
Jephson

'Threatening to evict tenants involved in activities like mini-cabbing will encounter legal difficulties. It is difficult to see a court enforcing an eviction
Devon & Cornwall

'Generally, this is not enforced provided no nuisance or annoyance is caused to neighbours'
Prime Focus

'Written permission is needed. This can be withheld if the activity is more than incidental to the residence's use'
Circle 33

'We don't want to stifle legitimate home-working. But we have had to take action against illegal and dangerous activities. This includes people running a taxi service from their home, tenants running a shop from the accommodation and others mixing audio tapes to the annoyance of neighbours'
Irwell Valley

'Written permission is required. We have encountered difficulties with people trying to run a taxi service to someone making garden ornaments. An all-embracing policy would be difficult to enforce in the courts'
Home

HAVE YOU CONDUCTED RESEARCH INTO THE LEVELS OF TENANT HOME WORKING OR THEIR INTEREST IN IT?

No HA contacted had conducted research into this. Four said they would ask the question in their next survey. One association said it was not the business of landlords to know whether tenants worked at home

None of the associations knew how many tenants worked at home.

'We haven't researched this yet but we intend to in our annual tenants sample survey. We are drawing up questions on this subject with our researchers for the spring 2002 survey and will be happy to share these with other social landlords'
Places for People

'No. We may ask this question in a future survey, however'
Broomleigh

'It's not our business to know. We wouldn't ask other people so why ask social housing tenants?'
William Sutton Trust

WHAT DO YOU DO TO HELP DISABLED TENANTS OR THOSE WITH CARING RESPONSIBILITIES TO WORK FROM HOME?

None of the associations had an explicit policy on helping disabled tenants work from home or supporting those with caring/child care responsibilities to do so. But 20% said they would offer assistance with aids and adaptations if approached by tenants

DO YOU BELIEVE THERE IS A MATCH BETWEEN TENANTS THAT HAVE SPARE ROOMS AND THOSE THAT USE THEM FOR NON-HOUSING PURPOSES?

Twenty one of the 25 (over 80%) could not answer this. One said it told local authorities it was better to provide a spare room but funders put pressure on to deal with short-term problems. Another association said it was easier to under-occupy in the north-east than the south

'We are reviewing our policy although it is still predominantly needs-led. Under-occupancy will help achieve balanced communities'
Jephson

'There is over-supply in the North West and we could provide spare rooms if asked'
Irwell Valley

'We have many tenants whose accommodation is too small and we can't transfer them, creating a log jam. It's not just about space for people to work at home. Is home working the thing of the future? People need social contact'
Guinness

'We've got massive overcrowding. We have an incentive scheme to encourage people to trade down, to free up bedrooms, but there is low take up. We need these spare rooms for housing'
East Thames

'We've got massive overcrowding. We need any spare rooms for housing'

HAVE YOU DONE ANY RESEARCH INTO TENANTS' EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS IF THEY WERE TO BE PROVIDED WITH PCS/INTERNET ACCESS?

Only two had asked about employment prospects and aspirations in a survey and a third was planning to do so. But ten (40%) had been actively involved in one form or another in this area. They had either provided training for tenants and their children or supported community facilities equipped with PCs and access to the internet. Maritime is considering how to provide low-income tenants with PCs.

'A recent survey asked about employment status, educational attainment and career aspirations. Most tenants rated knowing about IT the most important among their aspirations'
Presentation

'We have established a couple of community flats in areas of high turnover. These have free internet access. Hopefully, it will whet some tenants' appetite and encourage them to explore the possibilities of working at home'
1066

'We employ a company called Bootstraps to support tenants with work preparation and capacity building. Community profiles will tell us how many tenants have PC/Internet access. A pilot study has shown us that one in five have access to a PC'
Community

'Our regeneration arm does research in this area. Their work includes helping to provide internet access. There is a programme for reconditioning old PCs and making them available to tenants and in community centres'
Hyde

'Is home working the thing of the future? People need social contact'

There is over-supply in the North West. 'We could provide spare rooms if asked'

'Yes, we've looked at people's employment requirements, including what it will need to make them ready for work in terms of, for example, having skills in e-commerce. Our new development brief provides for facilities for access to the internet from all rooms'
London & Quadrant

'No. Many wouldn't be interested in self-employment'
East Thames

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THE POTENTIAL FOR HOME-BASED WORK TO REDUCE TRAFFIC CONGESTION/CO₂ EMISSIONS?

Eight associations (about a third) already encouraged their own staff to work from home and provided them with support to do so. But none of the 25 questioned had actively considered the impact on the environment of more tenants working at home

'Many tenants wouldn't be interested in self-employment'

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED OR PROVIDED ACCOMMODATION THAT ENABLES HOME WORKING (EG LIVE/WORK SCHEMES)?

One in five had looked at live/work or were already providing it. There is a growing interest in this market, but it is seen as specialist (eg city/town centre business start ups). There was no apparent relationship with the 'live/work' prospects of their general needs tenants

'Properties developed in conjunction with the Castle Vale HAT have converted roof spaces providing additional living/working areas'
Prime Focus

'Yes, the association plans to install cable in all new homes and make homes more internet accessible'
London & Quadrant

'We have been approached by a private developer to manage live/work units on a former colliery site'
Three Rivers

'We successfully secured RDA funding to help us develop the Creative Lofts live/work scheme in Huddersfield. This is pioneering a new approach to linking jobs and housing. It is a model we may be able to replicate elsewhere'
Places for People

WHEN YOU ALLOCATE HOMES, DO YOU CONSIDER THE NEEDS OF TENANTS AND THEIR CHILDREN TO USE A SPARE ROOM FOR WORK/STUDY?

Although 70% of those surveyed said they allocated on the basis of need only - mostly under pressure from local authorities - a number had moved or were moving towards a more flexible lettings policy. Irwell Valley takes the needs of children into account. Devon & Cornwall lets with spare rooms to try to reduce child density. English Churches will allocate with extra capacity in the north of England. Places for People is asking people what they want from their homes in terms of space

'Yes. The needs of children are taken into account and given weight in the allocation process'
Irwell Valley

'Yes when it comes to school homework, no when it comes to employment/business'
Asra Greater London

'In the current environment, we simply don't have the capacity to be able to provide an extra room. We have to deal with basic needs, with putting a roof over someone's head'
Circle 33

'Our policy is based on need and takes no account of spare rooms for leisure or educational use. But this should be an aspiration for social landlords. The opportunities should be the same as those in the private sector'
Community

'We do not have the capacity. The borough council has 60 households in bed-and-breakfast accommodation. Rehousing them is the priority'

1066

'In our dreams. Local authorities want our places filled up with people'

Guinness

'We look at all the personal circumstances. We want to build balanced communities and that means looking at, for example, child densities. We look at the need for personal space as well as living space'

Three Rivers

HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY INITIATIVES WITH SCHOOLS TO ENABLE TENANTS' CHILDREN TO DO HOMEWORK ON A PC AT HOME?

Moat Housing Society has distributed recycled computers for its Greenwich Homes scheme. Apart from that, no association is directly involved in helping provide PCs for children to work on at home. Eight associations - about a third - are however involved in community-based projects and/or in providing computer training for young people

'Not specifically, although we have converted a bungalow on an estate into facilities for children to do homework in'

Jephson

'We collaborate in the provision of after-school clubs with internet access'

1066

'We are involved in a regeneration project in Durham that involves recycling old computers for use by tenants in a community facility rather than at home'

Three Rivers

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE THE MAIN BARRIERS STOPPING TENANTS/CHILDREN WORKING FROM ONE OF YOUR HOMES?

The answers provided overlapped. The main themes identified were:
- lack of space
- lack of computer skills
- money to buy PCs
- proper promotion of the opportunities
- legal issues
- insurance
- council tax
- the capabilities and skills of tenants
- the cost of wiring up homes.
- type of employment/business to take up
- housing benefit regulations
- the grant regime for new schemes
- the absence of training facilities to help people to work remotely.
- affordable childcare
- basic skills gap
- restricted capacity to do home alterations
- transport for those who work from home

Many social landlords and regeneration agencies are helping to boost ICT access for tenants. A few are also helping their tenants work from home. Here is a selection of organisations doing more than most

11 WHO'S DOING WHAT?

CARRICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Promotes home working in newsletter, sympathetic tenancy agreement, permission granted to internet sales businesses, taxi company etc
▶ **Pete Jarman**, head of tenancy services
01872 224400, pjarman@carrick.gov.uk

PRIME FOCUS HA

Installing online learning facility at 155 bedspace homelessness project, provides live/work housing in West Midlands
▶ **Kerry Bolister**, regional services director
01902 717343, kerry.bolister@focus.co.uk

PEABODY TRUST

Runs 27 unit West Ferry 'work/live' business incubation scheme near Canary Wharf, docklands, planning live/work in Sutton with environmental emphasis
▶ **David Tannahill**, head of commercial initiatives, 0207 928 7811
davidt@peabody.org.uk

DEVON AND CORNWALL HA

Sympathetic tenancy agreement and tenant handbook, permission granted to home workers including arts and crafts business, fashion designer and child minder. Planning possible live/work scheme at Eden Project
▶ **Stephen Teagle**, director of business and community investment, 01392 252566
stephen.teagle@dcha.co.uk

AMICUS HA

Runs Women Entrepreneurs project in Kent that helps home-based business start ups. Offers tenants 'savings and loans' scheme - affordable finance for PC purchase etc
▶ **Chris Blundell**, group development and property assets director, 01795 431134
cblundell@amicus-group.co.uk

METROPOLITAN HOME OWNERSHIP

First provider of shared ownership live/work, Hackney
▶ **Cynthia Amos**, marketing officer
0208 829 8000

PLACES FOR PEOPLE

Lets homes with spare rooms, runs Creative Lofts live/work scheme in Huddersfield
▶ **David Power**, head of strategy
01772 897200, power.dave@nbh.co.uk

SOUTH LIVERPOOL HOUSING

Runs community website, IT learning centres. Offering all homes TV internet. Permission granted for child care business
▶ **Robbie Davison** new initiatives manager
0151 285 5627
robbie.davison@slhltd.co.uk

EAST MANCHESTER NEW DEAL FOR COMMUNITIES

Wiring up homes, offering choice of PCs or set top box, strong link between school IT and home-based learning
▶ **Steve Mather**, director of employment, training and business development
0161 230 2100
s.mather@notes.manchester.gov.uk

SWAN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Runs four IT centres across Basildon, free training and tailor made support for 400 people in 2002
▶ **Anne-Marie Guiver**
01277 844726, aguiver@swan.org.uk

LONDON AND QUADRANT HA

One of number of agencies running DKTV (different kind of TV), set top box community web access project
▶ **Mike Donaldson** 020 855 72038

REPORTS

Living at work - a new policy framework for modern home workers
Tim Dwelly, Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2000

Teleworking - a good practice guide for social landlords
Madeline Grinyer, CIH 1999

Housing association space standards decline
Valerie Karn, JRF housing research findings 118, 1994

Blurring the home/work boundary - profiling employers who allow working at home
Centre for Labour Market Studies, Leicester University 2001

Telework and the New Workplace of the 21st Century
US Department of Labor, 2001

The complete guide to flexible working
HOP Associates/Toshiba 2001

Working anywhere - exploring telework for individuals and organisations
DTI, DfEE, DETR 2000

WEBSITES

Home working statistics
www.statistics.gov.uk/themes/labour_market

Children and home based study
www.becta.org.uk/teaching/homeschoollinks
www.dfee.gov.uk/schoolpoll

ICT use in schools
www.dfes.gov.uk/statistics/DB/SBU/b0296

Phone connection/ICT use on estates
www.oftel.gov.uk/publications/research/2001/q6fixr1101.htm
www.oftel.gov.uk/publications/research/2001/q6intr1101.htm

Smart homes
www.jrf.org.uk/housingtrust/smarthomes

Wired up communities
www.dfes.gov.uk/wired

Internet access analysis
www.dfee.gov.uk/research/re_brief/RB252.doc

Audit Commission tenant advisers
www.bestvalueinspections.gov.uk/housing/tenadvisers

13 STATISTICS

UK NATIONAL TRENDS

There has been a consistent trend towards home working in the UK

Around a quarter of a million British people joined the teleworking workforce in 1999, an increase of 19%
Labour Force Survey

In spring 2000, around 1.5 million people in the UK worked from home at least one day per week using a computer and a telephone link to client/employer, up from 1.2 million a year before
Labour Force Survey, Institute of Employment Studies, Leicester University

INTERNATIONAL TRENDS

If UK trends are heavily influenced by what happens in the USA, the American shift towards teleworking is particularly significant. EU member states also show a rapid uptake

16.5 million were regularly employed as teleworkers in the US in late July 2000 (12.2% of the workforce), 13.8 million working only from home
Telework America 2000

Around seven million employees in the EU, 4.5 per cent of the labour force, telework regularly away from their employer's premises
e-work 2001, EU

'The expansion in teleworking has accelerated in recent years and is likely to further accelerate in the years to come'
The high road to teleworking, ILO 2001

HOME WORKING TODAY

Most modern home workers are 'teleworkers'. The term home worker is increasingly assumed to mean working with the aid of computer/phone

Despite an overall decline of 1% in the numbers of clerical workers in the British workforce, there has been a 12% increase in clerical teleworking
Labour Force Survey

Non-manual occupations account for around 80% of those who work at home to varying degrees, compared to 60% of the employed population
Labour Force Survey/Institute of Employment Studies

Compared with the rest of the working population, teleworkers are more likely to be graduates, to be married and to be in midcareer (in their 30s or 40s)
Labour Force Survey/Institute of Employment Studies

HOME COMPUTER/INTERNET ACCESS

Those from the DE and related social classifications are significantly less likely to have a PC or use the internet

22% of DEs use the internet, compared to 43% of C2s, 62% of C1s and 74% of ABs
ICT access and use, 2001 DfES

Growth in internet use from 2000 to 2001 was higher among ABs (up 11%) than DEs (9%). The digital divide is increasing
ICT access and use, 2001 DfES

USE OF COMPUTERS BY ESTATE RESIDENTS

ACORN* classification estate residents are much less likely to use computers than most households, but there is a growing interest: 33% of CEGHs have a PC, 26% have internet access. 30% of CEHUs have a PC, 29% have

internet access. The national average figures are 52% and 43% *ICT access and use, 2001 DfES*

CEHUs and CEGHs are less likely to say that they have no need to use a computer (14% and 12%), a marked contrast to 2000 (46% and 26%)
ICT access and use, 2001 DfES

Daily use of internet among CEHUs with access has increased substantially from 26% in 2000 to 59% in 2001
ICT access and use, 2001 DfES

Growth in demand is strong. Between 2000 and 2001, CEHUs experienced a large increase in ICT use (up 15% to 39% for PCs and 18% to 34% for internet)
ICT access and use, 2001 DfES

BARRIERS TO HOME WORKING

Fear of cost and relative lack of access to fixed phone lines are significant barriers to home working and PC use

18% of council tenants and 17% of HA tenants have no fixed phone line, compared to 3% of people with a mortgage
Oftel August 2001

CEGH/CEHUs* are slightly more likely than other groups to cite the benefits to their children of ICT use (74% agree that 'computer skills are essential to my children's work now' compared to lower figures for other ACORN group households)
ICT access and use, 2001 DfES

Of the 14% who do not use computers but are interested in doing so in the future, the main factor is the perceived cost. 57% of those from the DE social group cite cost, compared to 41% overall
ICT access and use, 2001 DfES

For CEGHs/CEHUs the cost of telephone calls is mentioned by only 8% (compared to 38% in 2000) as a reason for not using the Internet. A greater barrier is not owning a PC (22% compared to 10% in 2000)
ICT access and use, 2001 DfES

CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO HOME COMPUTERS

Around 30% of households with children under 16 use computers for helping with their children's schoolwork, general knowledge and for developing their computer skills
ICT access and use, 2001 DfES

In a survey of 144 schools recommended for their ICT work, only 44% had pursued home-school IT links and only 23% had carried out ICT initiatives for pupils without home web access
BECTA, 2002

SOCIAL HOUSING STATISTICS

There are 2,812,000 local authority homes for rent, representing 13.3% of the total housing stock
DTLR Housing Statistics 2001

There are 995,000 local authority and 443,000 housing association households with dependent children
DTLR Housing Statistics 2001

The total number of housing association homes for rent in England is 1,388,000, 7% of the total stock
DTLR Housing Statistics 2001

63% of housing associations tenants are of working age (16-59), 23% are between 5 and 15
Housing Corporation Survey of Existing Tenants 1999/2000

* ACORN classifications include: 'Council estate residents, greatest hardship' (CEGH) 'Council estate residents, high unemployment' (CEHU)
There are 5.4 million people in these groups, including many housing association tenants