

Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Retrofitting housing for independent living

- **Format:**

Presentation (in-person)

- **Author(s) Name:**

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- **University or Company Affiliation:**

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- **Abstract (300 words):**

There are 11 million people with a limiting long term illness, impairment or disability in Great Britain. The prevalence of disability increases with age, affecting around 6% of children, 16% of working age adults, 45% of adults over pension age and more than 60% of those over 80. Despite the huge numbers, the housing needs of these groups often go unnoticed. Although a limited amount of attention is paid to the design of new accessible homes, there is little consideration of the needs of those who live in the existing housing stock. To allow people with long-term conditions and those who are becoming less mobile with age to live as full a life as possible we need better designs to retrofit homes. These need to meet people's desire to maintain or restore the normal use of their home, but avoid looking medical or stigmatizing. This paper uses national data to examine the need for adapted homes in England, particularly as society ages. It assesses what we know from the literature about what people want, and conversely do not want to see in their homes. It looks at way service delivery is changing, but notes that, because the topic falls between policy areas, it is often hard to develop the solutions that

consumers are looking for. There is a growing need for architects, planning professionals and the supply chain to work more closely with health, social care and housing services to provide new and innovative building designs. It is also important to recognize that individuals are unique and there needs to be more consultation and collaboration with users, their families and carers to achieve more personalized and flexible designs. (278 words)

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Sheila specialises in issues to do with housing, disability and later life, with a focus on how disabled people of all ages can be helped to remain living independently in the community. For many years she worked as an independent consultant on change management projects to ensure that services for disabled and older people were better coordinated. She is now a Research Fellow at the University of the West of England with the aim of understanding more about the consumer perspective and providing evidence about the impact and outcomes of home adaptations. She has been commissioned by a range of organisations including: central government, local authorities, housing associations, and the independent and voluntary sectors. Recent projects have been for Care & Repair England, the Centre for Ageing Better and the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. She is the author of a considerable number of articles and reports. She is on the Foundations' Advisory Board – the organisation tasked by government to improve the way the Disabled Facilities Grant is delivered. She is also part of the international genHOME group of academics and practitioners bringing together housing related research and evidence relevant to the needs of disabled and older people. (198 words)