

Providing Housing for People with Disabilities – Some Observations of English and Australian Housing Associations

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Overview

- How can Australian Housing Associations develop a form and capacity to provide for the housing needs of people with disabilities
- Is this possible within the emerging community managed housing policy and funding framework?
- Role of Supported Housing Ltd
- Housing context for people with disabilities
- Why England
- Four English Housing Associations-
- People with disabilities
- Life time housing standards
- Issues

Supported Housing Ltd

www.shl.org.au

- People with a disability have access to high quality, secure affordable and appropriate housing
- SHL provides housing for people with disabilities who require support to live in the community
- 95% on Disability Support Pension or similar
- Mental health, chronic illness including HIV/AIDS, Intellectual disability, acquired brain injury, physical and sensory disabilities
- 595 Properties with 990 tenants / residents
- Transitional housing, long term, single, shared, family, mixed equity partners including families and NGOs
- All properties have a signed partnership agreement guaranteeing sufficient support to assist tenant to live in community
- Registered Housing Association – one of eight in Victoria

Supported Housing Ltd (cont)

- Tenancy management
- Asset management
- Project development
- Project management
- Property search
- Spot purchase
- Construction
- SHL \$13.m additional housing 05/07

Housing People with Disabilities

- 18.8% of population with core activity restrictions (ABS stats)
- 700,000 Australians on DSP with approx 20,000 applicants p.a.
- Welfare-to-work arrangements mean increasingly likely to be on Newstart or Youth Allowance reducing income, personal security and housing outcomes
- 25% of people included in annual national homelessness services census have a disability
- DSP income of \$13,000 pa (social housing up to \$35,000)
- To house people with disabilities requires secure affordable housing close to public transport and services + formal support services provided to same location at the same time
- Pwd experience housing market failure (including the social housing market) with insufficient housing they can afford, lack of formal support and too little suitability modified stock

Why visit England

- A response to the housing affordability crisis by Australian govts is to grow the supply of affordable housing through the development of Housing Associations (HAs) in preference to state housing authorities
- National Rental Affordability Scheme (Commonwealth), Affordable Housing Program (Victorian)
- England has 40 yr history of HAs including transfers of large amounts of public housing to management by HAs
- How to arrange care support to maximise independence
- Home ownership for pwd on low incomes
- Housing design standards
- Role of specialist disability housing associations

Housing Associations in England

- \$165B of social housing including \$80B sourced from borrowings or private sector investment
- Housing Corporation funding round every 2 yrs
- Housing 50% funded by Housing Corp + 50% borrowing
- Foreign and UK banks tender for this business
- Borrowings supported through housing subsidies for low income people paid directly to the Housing Associations
- PWD can receive additional subsidies for rental and mortgage borrowings
- Approx \$280 per week rental subsidy some of which can be used for housing support
- Personal care support services are delivered by a third party organisation using individualised funding
- Home ownership 70% and rising in England

Advance Housing Association

- Provides housing and other services for people with ID & mental health issues across south & central England
- “Every member of society has status.... Mission to help marginalised people find ways of overcoming those obstacles and benefit from a place in society which is theirs by rights”
- 1352 housing units including 188 home ownership
- SOLD – ID (65% pwd and 35% Advance)
- Pwd pay fee to rent 35% and cover major repairs
- Organise subsidised interest only loan up to 100,00 gbp or 75% value of the property for purchase share
- Advance inclusion unit to support shared decisions
- Difficult to apply for capital and must be included in partnerships

Liverpool Housing Trust

- 16,000 properties with approx 1200 dedicated to people with disabilities
- Tenant support service including adaptations, assistance with benefits, life line telephone alarm
- Supported housing team manage 700 tenancies in partnership with 30 agencies who are evaluated on an annual basis
- Tenancy rights and responsibilities are same for all tenants
- Sheltered housing – controlled door entry, on site staff, central alarms, cctv and on site manager who provides back up and support 9 to 5 five days per week

Habinteg

- Disability focussed HA including strong advocacy and research and general housing
- Architect and design driven, with nationally recognised expertise
- 2120 homes including 530 built specifically for wheelchair users
- All properties built to lifetime homes standards
- Aim for high quality, thoughtfully designed housing and services and mainstreaming of accessible and inclusive homes
- Involved in policy and design debates and addressing negative stereo types

John Grooms Assoc

- 1200 wheelchair accessible homes where residents can cook, bath children, use every room fully, door, window and reach every light switch
- Wheelchair accessible holiday homes
- 28% increase in numbers of people in wheelchairs in last 20 years
- Work with local government to achieve 10% of stock wheelchair accessible

People with Disabilities

- Visited 3 people Sefton, Liverpool and London
- Wheelchair modified properties
- Tenants requiring assistance for meal preparation and most elements of self care eg unable to move from beds unaided
- Live independently in well modified one bedroom properties with one to one support waking hours
- Alarm call response during night time hours
- One man had a vehicle which carer drove - active life and outings every day including quality relationships with carers
- One man active ocean sailing trips with carer support
- Secure housing, individualised support and back up night time support through electronic alarm lead to higher quality of life than shared supported housing in Victoria

Lifetime Housing Standards

- Bathrooms size and accessibility
- Chair lifts or stair chairs
- No steps to the front door
- Large rooms, suitable for turning wheel chairs
- Wide doors
- Less / no passages / open entrance and move around
- Electrical plugs at one metre
- Kerbs not high
- All new homes in London to be built to lifetime housing standards

Summary Issues

- English HAs provide new stock, improving conditions of transferred stock, responding to special needs communities, rural communities and housing for key workers
- HAs are becoming larger particularly with stock transfers - 6 @ 50,000+ units, 10,000 to 20,000 common
- England requires 4m new housing units in 10 years
- Large associations can provide stock for pwd within general housing developments
- Focus on size and economies means smaller specialist housing associations losing access to direct Housing Corporation funding which they can only access as part of larger consortiums or private developers
- Shelter UK concern that borrowings make HA's risk averse reducing access by poorer people with complex needs and challenging behaviours

Summary

- Advance - specialist including significant mixed equity
- Habinteg - national profile, advocacy and policy input as well as design expertise
- Liverpool Housing Trust - generalist with specialist group embedded and
- John Grooms - wheelchair housing, national approach to provision including mainstreaming of provision

Issues

- Target social housing allocations to ensure reasonable level of housing outcomes for pwd
- Increased rental subsidies for people with high support needs
- Coordinate individualised support with housing development
- Sector advocacy for life time standards across all stock
- Electronic call systems, combined with housing design and individualised support can make independent housing a reality for people with high physical / intellectual disabilities

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