

# **Older Persons Housing Statement**

**London Borough of Tower  
Hamlets**

**2013-2015**

## Accessibility

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This document sets out the council's plans for housing and housing services for older people in Tower Hamlets over the next three years. A summary of the main points is available. If you need a translation of the summary in your language please contact Newham Language Shop by telephoning 0800 952 0119 quoting reference number 59380. If you need the summary in a large print, tape or Braille version, please contact us by telephoning 020 7364 6250 or email us at [strategic.housing@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:strategic.housing@towerhamlets.gov.uk).

### Bengali

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### Somali

Dokumintigan wuxuu sharaxyaa qorshayaasha dowladda hoose ee loogu talagalay adeegga gurigyeynta dadka waaweyn ee Tower Hamlets. saddaxda sanno ee soo socota. Warbixin kooban oo ah qodobada ugu muhiimsan ayaa la heli karaa. Haddaad u baahan tahay warbixinta kooban oo turjuman kuna qoran luqaddaada fadlan kula soo xiriir Dukaanka Luqadaha ee Newham telefoonka 0800 952 0119 adigoo tixraacaya lambarka ah 59380. Haddaad u baahan tahay warbixinta kooban oo ku qoraan qoraal waaweyn, hab cajalad ah ama qoraalka Indhoolahayaasha (Braille), fadlan nagula soo xiriir telefoon lambarku waa 020 7364 6250 ama email noogu soo dir barta ah: [strategic.housing@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:strategic.housing@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

### Equality Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment has been carried out on this statement.

## Foreword

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Increases in life expectancy combined with improvements in healthcare and support ensure that reaching an 'old' age is no longer a barrier. Being old should not be seen as a burden, but an opportunity that can be a springboard to new learning, new experiences and a healthy and active way of life.

The majority of older people live in good quality housing, have full and active lives and are engaged in wider social or family circles. However, not all older people are so fortunate. The level of vulnerable older people increases with age through health complications, financial difficulties or the contraction of social networks, with the most elderly being most at risk of poor quality housing, isolation, and reducing independence.

We aim to make sure that all new homes in Tower Hamlets are built to a high standard that makes them suitable to adapt as the needs of residents change. We are also helping to improve the quality of older people's existing homes, whether they own their home or rent, with a range of measures designed to help with maintenance, energy efficiency and accessibility.

To help older people maintain independence, we are improving the support available to them. When a person's existing home is no longer manageable - it may be too large or unable to be adapted - we are helping them move to more suitable housing of their choosing. Also changes to the way we deliver services will look at ways of helping older people maintain and develop social networks to help them improve their independence, reduce isolation and encourage more active and healthier lifestyles.



Councillor Rabina Khan  
**Lead Member for Housing**



Councillor Abdul Asad  
**Lead Member for Health & Wellbeing**

## Older Persons Housing Statement

### Contents

	<b>Page No:</b>
1. Vision and Aims	5
2. Objectives & Principles	6
3. Introduction	7
4. Background & Demography	8
5. Demand, Supply, Support & Gap Analysis	13
6. <b>Aim 1:</b> Provide a range of good quality accommodation and access to home adaptations and improvements that offers older people housing that meet their needs.	23
7. <b>Aim 2:</b> Help older people to continue to remain active, independent and healthy in their homes supported by flexible inclusive and affordable services.	27
8. Conclusion	28
9. Monitoring	28
<b>10. Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1 - Action Plan	
Appendix 2 - Consultation	
Appendix 3 - Central Government and Local Strategies and Research	
Appendix 4 - Equality Assessment	

## 1. Vision and Aims

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**1.1:** Tower Hamlets Council is committed to improving the quality of life for all older people living in the borough. The development of this statement is central to this commitment. The statement aims to strengthen the role of Tower Hamlets Council by working with partners to promote choice, independence and offer affordable services to older people living in the borough.

### **1.2: Vision:**

**Tower Hamlets will be a place where older people will have access to a range of flexible, good quality and well designed housing.**

**Tower Hamlets will help Older People to remain active, healthy and independent by adapting services to meet the changing needs of its ageing population**

**1.3:** Tower Hamlets aims to be a place where older people will have access to a range of flexible, good quality, well designed housing. Tower Hamlets will help older people to remain active, healthy and independent by adapting services to meet the changing needs of its ageing population.

**1.4:** The statement is strongly linked with the Supporting People Strategy (2011-16), Housing Strategy (2009-12) and the Council's Community Plan (2011) and is based on two aims which are to:

**Aim 1: Provide a range of good quality accommodation and access to home adaptations and improvements that offers older people housing that meets their needs.**

**Aim 2: Help older people to continue to remain active, independent and healthy in their homes supported by flexible inclusive and affordable services.**

**1.4:** The statement has been informed by thorough consultation, with stakeholder organisations, and individual older people who attended groups and activities across the borough. Its objective is not simply to provide new housing for older people, but to work towards a range of options which recognise the wider needs of this group.

**1.5:** Decent, good quality, well managed housing, appropriate to their needs, is important for older people. For many older people this is an aspiration rather than something they enjoy. The statement plans to re-balance their needs and change these aspirations into realities.

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## 2. Objectives and Principles

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*This statement will be underpinned by the following six objectives and four driving principles:*

### Objectives

#### 2.1 Objective 1: 'CHOICE'

Provide a range and choice of housing across all tenures for older people in Tower Hamlets.

#### 2.2 Objective 2: 'QUALITY'

Ensure older people are able to access a mix of high quality, well designed housing suitable for their changing needs and aspirations.

#### 2.3 Objective 3: 'INDEPENDENT'

Make sure older people are supported to remain independent, healthy and safe in their home.

#### 2.4 Objective 4: 'ACCESSIBLE'

Increase access to information and advocacy services required by older people.

#### 2.5 Objective 5: 'INCLUSIVE'

Promote equality, participation and engagement between older people.

#### 2.6 Objective 6: 'VALUE'

Continue to provide flexible, well procured, affordable services for residents.

### Principles

**2.7:** The Council has developed this strategy based on the principles and recommendations of the Better Government for Older People steering committee, "All Our Futures" report. The three principles that underpin this strategy are:

#### Partnership

**2.8:** Developed in partnership with all stakeholders including older people themselves and their carers.

#### Integration

**2.9:** An overarching strategy taking a holistic approach to addressing issues raised by older people.

#### Older People Led

**2.10:** Based on views expressed by older people and their carers in the Older Peoples Housing Needs Assessment report which is the empirical evidence base that underpins this strategy.

## 3. Introduction

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**3.1:** Tower Hamlets is committed to improving the quality of life for all older people living in the borough. Central to this commitment is the development of this statement that strengthens the roles of Tower Hamlets Council working with its partners as key agents for change.

**3.2:** Tower Hamlets can proudly boast the active support and involvement of older people in many areas of service development. The council have older people involved in a wide variety of areas such as community safety, social care, recreation, housing and the environment. This was recognised in 2009 when Tower Hamlets was awarded Beacon Status for its 'Positive Engagement with Older People'.

**3.3:** Many older people live healthy and active lives and it is usually only in later life that some will need more direct care and support to live meaningful lives in the community. It is essential that the borough recognise the diversity of these needs in delivering flexible and affordable services to meet them.

### How does Tower Hamlets define 'older people'?

**3.4:** The commonly held definition for 'older people' includes anyone over the age of 50. Whilst the council has adopted this as its starting point, generally, age tends to be the only shared characteristic of the group as a whole. Their needs and expectations are as

diverse as the thousands of individuals who make up the over 50 population.

### Old age can broadly be divided into three stages:

#### Entering old age:

**3.5:** This group is reaching the end of or has completed a career in paid employment and/or parenting. They may have also experienced unemployment. They can be as young as 50, or the traditional retirement ages of 60 and 65. There is recognition that this age no longer reflects frailty or need.

**3.6:** There are many who continue to work full, or more commonly, part time until much older than the current retirement age. It is predicted that this group will increase in size with the impact of changing demographics, more flexible retirement ages and changes in pension rules.

#### Transitional phase:

**3.7:** This group is in transition between leading a healthy, active life and frailty. This often occurs in the seventh and eighth decades but can happen at any stage of older age.

#### Frail older people:

**3.8:** People enter this phase as a result of health problems such as stroke or dementia, social care needs, immobility or a combination of these. Frailty is usually experienced in late old age.

## 4. Background and Demography

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### Government Policy

**4.1:** A host of government reports, initiatives and directives over the past few years have highlighted the need for services that promote independence and choice for older people.

The key documents are as follows:

- Quality and Choice in Older People's Housing, DETR (2001)
- National Service Framework for Older People, DH (2001)
- Our health, Our Care, Our Say; A new direction for community services -White Paper, DH (2006)
- Commissioning Framework for Health and Well Being, DH (2007)
- Putting People First, DH (2007)
- Lifetime Homes Lifetime Neighbourhoods – A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, CLG/DH/DWP (2008)
- DCLG/DH/HCA :Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation: panel for Innovation (HAPPA1) 2009.
- Health and Social Care Bill, DH (2011).
- Localism Act, CLG (Dec. 2011)
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- Housing Our Ageing Population: Plan for Implementation: All Party Parliamentary Group on Housing

and Care for Older people:  
November 2012

**Further detail on all these policy documents is set out in Appendix 3.**

### Local Strategies and Research

**4.2:** The needs and provision of services for older people are covered through a range of local strategies and research:

Tower Hamlets [2020 Community Plan](#) is to 'improve the lives of all those living and working in the Borough' by 2020

The Council [Local Development Framework](#) (2010-2025)

The [Housing Strategy](#) (2009-12)

[Supporting People Commissioning Strategy](#) (2011 – 2016)

The [Homelessness Strategy](#) (2008-13)

A [Best Value Review of Sheltered Housing](#) June 2006

In 2008, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) commissioned Tribal to produce a [Needs Assessment for Extra Care Sheltered Housing](#) for older people over the next five to ten years

The [Ridgeway Report](#) (Ridgeway Associates 2010)



During 2009, the council carried out a **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)** for Tower Hamlets

The council commissioned Trimmers Associates to carry out a detailed **Older People's Housing Needs Assessment** looking at housing need, supply and demand for older people's housing in Tower Hamlets

Gateway Housing Commission led an **Older Persons Housing Commission** in 2012

Tower Hamlets Homes carried out an **Inquiry into Ageing** in 2012.

**Further details in all these areas are set out in Appendix 3.**

### Tower Hamlets

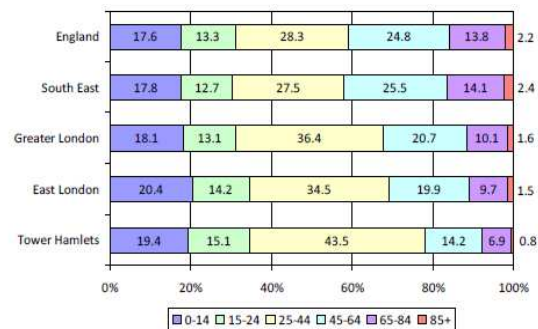
**4.3:** Tower Hamlets is a geographically small but densely populated urban borough in East London. The borough is made up of a number of long established communities, as well as more recent neighbourhoods created by the regeneration of the old docks. Immense wealth sits alongside some of the most deprived areas in the country. Health inequalities are particularly marked.

**4.4:** LBTH is one of the most diverse boroughs in the country with around half of the population coming from a minority ethnic group. Nearly one in three people come from a Bangladeshi background, and there are also significant numbers of Somalis, Lithuanians and Romanians in the borough. It is a very young borough, with more than a third of the population aged between 20 and 34.

### Demography

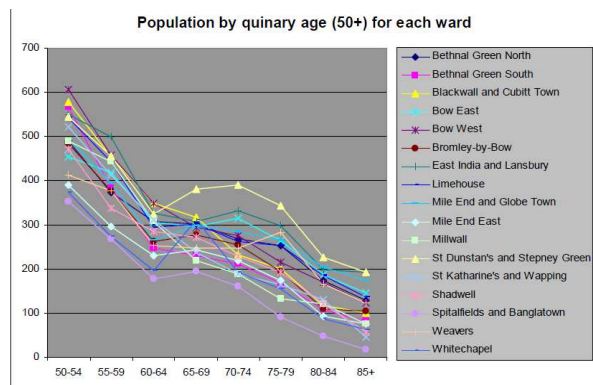
**4.5:** Tower Hamlets has a population of around 254,000 (Census 2011). The population has increased by 29% since 2001. Of these around 15,500 people are aged 65+.

**4.6:** Tower Hamlets has a high proportion of people in the 25-44 age group accounting for 56% of the total population. Conversely, Tower Hamlets has a much lower level of the population in the older age groups (65+) at 6% compared to East London (11%), and nationally (16%).



Source: ONS 2007 Mid Year Population Estimate

**4.7:** The largest numbers of older people live in Bethnal Green and Bow compared to Millwall and Spitalfields & Banglatown.



**4.8:** The GLA 2009 round population projections suggest a small decrease in the 65-84

population over the next couple of years, followed by a very gradual increase and then steady growth from around 2017. The over-85 population shows a different trend, with steady growth in the early years which slows from around 2016, but with much higher percentage growth overall over the period to 2031.

### Tower Hamlets

**4.3:** Tower Hamlets is a geographically small but densely populated urban borough in East London. The borough is made up of a number of long established communities, as well as more recent neighbourhoods created by the regeneration of the old docks. Immense wealth sits alongside some of the most deprived areas in the country. Health inequalities are particularly marked.

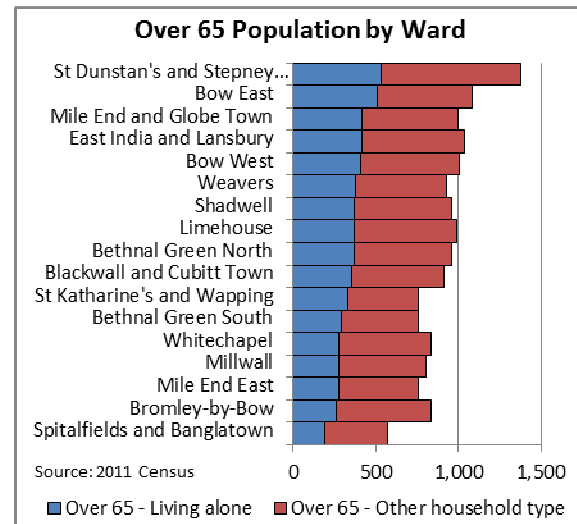
**4.4:** LBTH is one of the most diverse boroughs in the country with more than two thirds of the population coming from a minority ethnic group (69%). Nearly one in three people come from a Bangladeshi background. It is a very young borough, with over 40% of residents aged between 20 and 34, and the lowest median age nationally at 29.

### Demography

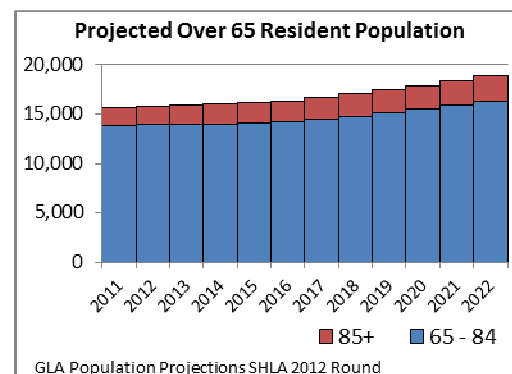
**4.5:** Tower Hamlets has a population of around 254,000 (Census 2011). The population has increased by 29% since 2001. Of these around 15,500 people are aged 65+.

**4.6:** People over 65 make up much lower proportion of the population in Tower Hamlets at 6% of residents, than in London (11.1 %) or England (16.4 %).

**4.7:** The largest number and proportion of older people is in St Dunstan's & Stepney Green where 1,379 older people account for 8.6% of residents in the ward. The lowest proportion is in Millwall where over 65's account for 3.5% of residents (around 800 people).

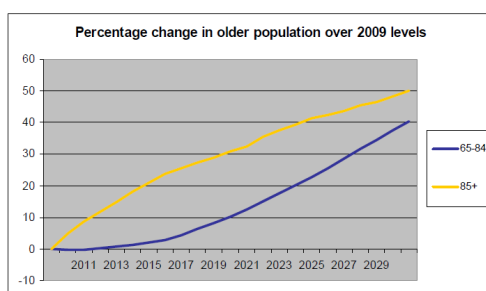


**4.8:** The GLA 2012 round of population projections indicate that the over 65 population will steadily increase over the next 10 years to reach almost 19,000 by 2020. This is over 3,000 additional older residents more than the 2011 Census figure (a 21% increase).



**4.9:** Those aged 85 and over are also expected to increase as a proportion of the over 65 population, from 11.6% in 2011 to 13.7% by 2022. The number is

projected to grow from 1,800 (2011) to 2,800 in 2022.



Source: GLA 2009 Round population projections

years old by 4,914 people between 2006 and 2026, an increase of 27.1% over the forecast period. In the 85+ age group there is a rise of 1,553 people (81.0%).

#### 4.10: Consultation

The Council consulted extensively through a variety of methods with a range of stakeholders in order to inform this statement. Details of the consultation are set out in

#### Appendix 2.

**4.9:** There is an overall predicted increase in the population of 65+

#### 4.11: Set out below is a summary of main support and provision of housing and housing related support for older people in Tower Hamlets

Type of Housing or Support	Where	Provider	Recipients
Advice on housing options	Albert Jacob House	Tower Hamlets Council	Older residents from all sectors
Tenancy advice and support	Tenants Homes /Landlord offices	Landlords	All tenants over 50
Health and wellbeing support	Network centres	Linkage	All tenants over 50
Assistive technology services	Residents Homes	Procurement in 2013	Older residents from all sectors
Home Improvement Agency	Residents Homes	HIA	Older residents from private sector
Home Care	Residents Homes	Tower Hamlets Council First Response team	Adults over 18
Floating Support	Residents Homes	Look Ahead	Adults over 18
Older person designated housing	Across Borough	Tower Hamlets Homes and RPs	Adults over 50
Sheltered Housing	Housing schemes for older people	Gateway Housing Association and RPs	Adults over 50
Extra care Housing	Housing	Sanctuary	Residents with

	schemes for older people requiring additional help	Care	additional care needs and/or dementia
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## Health and Housing

**4.10** Housing has a role to play in reducing the inequalities in health outcomes faced by the poorest in society. Social housing accounts for just over forty per cent of the homes in Tower Hamlets housing a large proportion of older people in the borough. Social housing not only provides decent housing, but investment in a range of community services, including health provision.

**4.11:** The council produced the annual **Joint Strategic Housing Needs Assessment (JSNA)** in 2011. The JSNA is a process that identifies the current and projected health and wellbeing needs of the local population, informing the priorities and targets set by Local Area Agreements and leading to agreed commissioning priorities that will improve outcomes and reduce health inequalities.

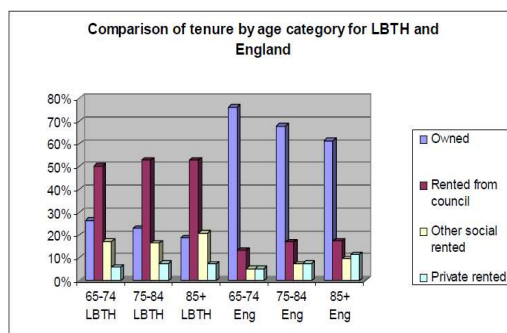
**4.12:** The JSNA found significant health inequalities for residents of Tower Hamlets including the following specific findings relating to older people:

- **A:** There are over 2,000 people aged 65 and over on GP registers with depression in Tower Hamlets; around 415 are diagnosed with dementia and around 215 with Severe Mental Illness and over 2000 have depression
- **B:** Older people account for 9% of suicides in Tower Hamlets.
- **C:** 33% of older people who use Adult Social Care services have suspected or diagnosed mental health conditions.
- **D:** There is a lack of awareness about depression and dementia in older people amongst the general public and within health and social care services.
- **E:** There is evidence of harmful drinking in those over the age of 65 in Tower Hamlets, including an over-representation of older people attending A&E due to alcohol.
- **F:** Around 9,500 people aged 65 and over are thought to have a limiting long term illness in Tower Hamlets.
- **G:** 1,500 older people are thought to have moderate or severe visual impairment;
- **H:** 7,600 older people have a moderate or severe hearing impairment;
- **I:** 190 a profound hearing impairment;
- **J:** 50 people are thought to have a moderate or severe learning disability;
- **K:** According to national estimates around 4,800 people aged 65 and over are expected to have a fall in Tower Hamlets (1,900 men and 2,900 women).
- **L:** Over 400 people aged 65 and over were admitted to hospital in Tower Hamlets in 2009 as a result of a fall.
- **M:** A larger than average proportion of the older population are assessed as eligible (i.e. as having critical or substantial needs) for Adult Social Care services in Tower Hamlets, including homecare, residential care, day care and nursing services.
- **N:** The population aged 85 and over will steadily increase. This is likely to contribute to an increase in the number of people using services for physical disability, sensory impairment, dementia and frailty (therefore potential increased demand for services, particularly home care).
- **O:** 58% of over 65s living here account for 92% of the secondary care expenditure.

## 5. Tenure, Demand, Supply, Support & Gap Analysis

### Tenure and Household and Profiles

**5.1:** Around 56% of older people are tenants in the social sector (housing associations and the Council) in LBTH, with a further 6.4% renting privately. The tenure balance amongst older people in Tower Hamlets is quite different from the pattern in England as a whole, with a significantly higher percentage of older people renting from social landlords and much lower percentage owning their own home (See graph below).



Source: POPPI

**5.2:** In terms of property type, 83.9% of older people live in flats/maisonettes or bedsits and only 16.1% live in a house or bungalow. This is in line with the rest of the population in Tower Hamlets and represents a much higher percentage of flat dwellings than in the country as a whole or in other parts of London.

**5.3:** The largest proportions of the properties occupied by older people have two bedrooms (41%); the next most common is bedsit and 1 bed flats (28.8%). It is notable that over a quarter (27%) live in three or four bedroom properties. Even if they can be persuaded to downsize to more accessible accommodation (or housing which offers care and support options) it is likely that most will want two or more bedrooms. This is supported by the data in the Housing Survey on size of supported housing required: 83.4% of respondents wanted accommodation with two or more bedrooms.

**5.4:** This is also supported in the findings in the Housing Needs Survey that found that 53% of under-occupiers are aged over 60 years. The focus groups held as part of the 2012 Gateway Housing Commission also found that older persons would prefer to live in accommodation with an extra bedroom.

**5.5:** The Council has reviewed its approach to reducing under occupation with its main Registered Providers and will increase publicity, introduce new incentives and actively manage cases where tenants have indicated that they are willing to consider moving to a small suitable property. The government's welfare reforms will reduce housing benefit for tenants



of working age who are under occupying by at least £14 per week and it is anticipated that this could stimulate demand for downsizing in the over 50 age group.

## Demand

**5.5:** Tower Hamlets runs a Common Housing Register for housing applicants which includes Tower Hamlets Homes (the council's ALMO) and key housing association landlords in the borough. All of those over 50 who apply for housing are offered an assessment to see if they are suitable for sheltered housing.

**5.6:** The Older People's Housing Needs Assessment found that it was generally quicker for someone to be re-housed into sheltered accommodation than into general needs accommodation. As applicants are aware of this, it increases demand for sheltered housing even where this may not be the most appropriate solution for the individual concerned. For this reason, overall demand for sheltered housing is likely to remain high in the short-term. Some individual schemes are less popular; consultation carried out showed that this often relates more to location than to the quality of accommodation on offer.

**5.7:** Demand for older people's housing is influenced by aspirations, and there is qualitative evidence that many older people in the borough are not looking to the traditional sheltered housing model as a priority choice

## Demand from B & ME Communities

**5.8:** Specific demand from black and minority ethnic elders was not covered in the needs assessment. However, the consultation did identify that Bangladeshi elders often face overcrowding and many feel that their problems are not heard. As the Bangladeshi population ages, there may be a demand for culturally specific care and support services through either separate or integrated provision. The gap analysis conducted within the needs assessment factored in increased demand to allow for phased adjustments in cultural expectations within the Bangladeshi community.

In addition, the 2012 Older Person's Commission found that there remains a strong cultural drive to care for people within the extended family as far as possible.

**5.9:** Of 949 sheltered housing users surveyed in 2010/11, 31% were from black or ethnic minority backgrounds. Of these 12% were from Asian communities and 13% from the Afro- Caribbean communities. Gateway Housing Association owns and manages 2 specific schemes for Asian and Somali elders in the borough.

## Demand: Disability

**5.10:** Over 20,000 households in the borough include someone with a disability. 10% of the stock has been adapted to be more accessible. The JSNA summary set out at 4.12 above demonstrates that substantial numbers of older people have a disability. Of the 949 sheltered housing users surveyed in 2010/11, 47% described themselves as having a disability.

## Demand: Dementia Needs

**5.11:** There were 1449 predicted cases of dementia in 2011 and this is projected to rise by 13% in 2017, across the population as a whole.

**5.12:** However the projected increase in the over 85 population is likely to be much more significant in percentage terms as this group is set to grow over the next 10 years and is at higher risk of developing dementia.

**5.13:** Dementia prevalence is particularly aligned to the number of people aged 85+ within the population. As this is a segment of the older population where Tower Hamlets can expect to see a steady increase, it is unsurprising that overall dementia needs will rise and that the greatest need of care will be amongst the oldest and potentially most complex constituency.

**5.14:** Taking all these factors into consideration there is an increasing need for housing for people with dementia in the borough.

### **Demand: LGBT Older People**

**5.15:** Although the council has very little statistical data on older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, it is estimated that there is a sizable community living in the borough and that it is set to grow. Of the 949 sheltered housing users surveyed in 2011, less than 1% described themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

**5.16:** Through our consultation on this statement, older LGBT people have reported that they sometimes experience discrimination,

particularly in communal accommodation.

**5.17:** The 2012 Older Persons Housing Commission found that providers need to ensure that they implement their equalities policies in relation to the LGBT community to enable this section of the community to feel safe and secure in their homes.

**5.18:** The council aims to work with Rainbow Hamlets and the Older People's Reference Group (Age Concern) to make sure sheltered services are welcoming and appropriate for older LGBT people.

### **Supply for older persons: existing specialist accommodation**

**5.18:** There are some 744 units of sheltered housing with support (26 schemes) and a further 260 units of housing designated for older



people without support. The average size of scheme is 26 units with a range from 6 to 41 units. The median build date is 1980 (where information is available) suggesting that at least half of the stock is more than 30 years old.

**5.19:** There are four well established Extra Care Sheltered Housing (ECSH) schemes within borough. They are owned by two different Registered Providers, (Sanctuary Care for Coopers Court; and Circle for the other three schemes) and the care is provided by Sanctuary Care, the care arm of Sanctuary Housing in all four schemes.

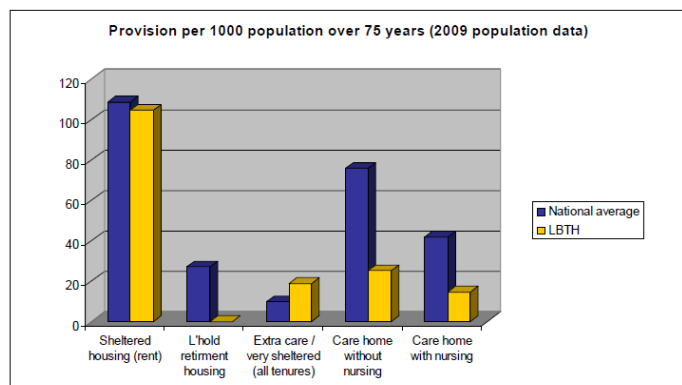
**5.20:** Two new schemes, Sue Starkey House and Shipton House, both completed in early 2012, provide an additional 53 units rising to 59 units as current ordinary sheltered units are absorbed into the Shipton House scheme, The former will be targeted at older people, but referrals will also come from younger adults (aged 18+) with physical or learning disabilities or with mental ill-health. Shipton House will provide care for older people with dementia.

**5.21:** The level of provision of sheltered housing is almost exactly in line with the national average based on the population over the age of 75 years. The borough is unusual in that there is currently no leasehold retirement housing. This is probably a result of the economic profile, resulting in very limited numbers of residents with the financial means to support private sector homes and strong performance by the borough in providing home care which is currently free at the point of

delivery. However, Gateway Housing Association are in the process of developing two shared ownership schemes for older residents building on the finding of the Older Person Housing Commission which addressed the need to widen the spectrum of retirement housing in the Borough.

There is significantly lower provision of care home places per head of older population than in other parts of England, which reflects the borough's policy to support residents in their own homes

The table below sets out the comparison with the national averages:



**5.22:** Quality of accommodation is as relevant as quantity for older people as standards have changed more rapidly than in general needs accommodation. The Best Value Review noted that in 2006:

- 7% of accommodation was bedsits.
- Only 3% of units had two or more bedrooms.
- Void rates are low (only 2% in 2004-5 and just under 3% in 2011).

**5.23:** Sheltered Housing is not evenly distributed across the borough with an absence of sheltered housing schemes on offer St. Katherine's and Wapping Mile End East and Bromley by Bow.

would require major works and investment. It would also involve greater charges to leaseholders.

**5.24:** The Council's ALMO, Tower Hamlets Homes manage a number of blocks that are classified as Elderly Persons Dwellings. The Council will consider the option of installing lifts where there are disabled older people in residence. New lifts could open up access to older people but

**5.24:** Set out below is a map showing the locations of sheltered and extra care sheltered schemes across the borough:



# Sheltered and ExtraCare Sheltered Housing in LBTH Feb 2013

TOWER HAMLETS GIS for Development and Renewal

Path: W:\Development & Renewal\Planning\1 - Maps\2013\AF206982PD - Care and Extra Care Facilities\Care and ExtraCare.mxd



## Supply for older people: Accessible Housing

**5.25** Supply of accessible housing comes from two sources: new developments or adaptations to existing properties. Within the

social housing sector approximately 10% of the stock has been adapted to increase accessibility but less than 1% of the social housing stock is fully wheelchair accessible. The council was unable to find sufficient information about the amount of stock in other tenures which has been adapted or is wheelchair accessible; it is reasonable to assume that this will be fairly low.

### Remaining at home: Home Care

**5.26:** The preference of most older people is to remain in their own homes for as long as possible but the availability, cost and flexibility of homecare packages can have a direct influence on the extent to which housing options are a viable and readily available alternative to residential care.

**5.27:** Tower Hamlets commissions and provides a large amount of home care and its performance in enabling access to intensive homecare was the best in the country in 2006-7. It also performed well on helping people aged 65+ to live at home. Therefore given accessible, good quality housing there should be potential for a high percentage of older people with care needs to live in independent housing. Indeed, there are much higher packages of care delivered in general housing than in extra care housing.

**5.28:** Tower Hamlets is the only council in England that provides free home care. Demand for independent accommodation for older people is likely to increase compared with demand for extra care housing in the future. There is

a case that as there is an increase in older people and their care needs, the borough will need to consider how residents can continue to remain independent in extra care housing without necessarily being too dependent or reliant on residential and/or nursing care in later life.

### Remaining at Home: Social Housing Landlord Support

**5.29:** Tower Hamlets Homes has identified that around one third of its tenants and leaseholders are over 60. In 2013, it has taken forward an initiative to review how it should provide landlord services into the future to meet the needs of this group. Their emerging ideas will be discussed with the other landlords across the borough. A number of initiatives have been identified including a raised level of decent homes works, extra accessibility works, the development of digital communities and a raft of potentially beneficial community support and service delivery improvements aimed specifically at older residents.

### Remaining at Home: Private Sector Support

The council is committed to helping both tenants who live in the private sector and owner occupiers enjoy secure, accessible and well managed accommodation. Initiatives covering day to day repairs, adaptations to make properties more accessible, assistive technology to improve security and emergency responses

as well as energy efficiency

initiatives will be considered.

## Meeting needs: Gap Analysis

### Extra care:

**5.30:** The Needs Assessment for Extra Care Sheltered Housing (2008) models demand for Extra Care Housing (ECH), based on four different scenarios for the future use of Dementia Care ECH in Tower Hamlets as follows:

- 1 - Current rates of approved referrals applied to the change in the older population
- 2 - Allowing (in addition to the point above) for 30% of current referrals to residential care being transferred to Extra Care Housing
- 3 - Increased demand to allow for phased adjustments in cultural expectations within the Bangladeshi community
- 4 - An allowance for a balancing of communities in extra care housing whereby 50% of residents will have lower levels of need.

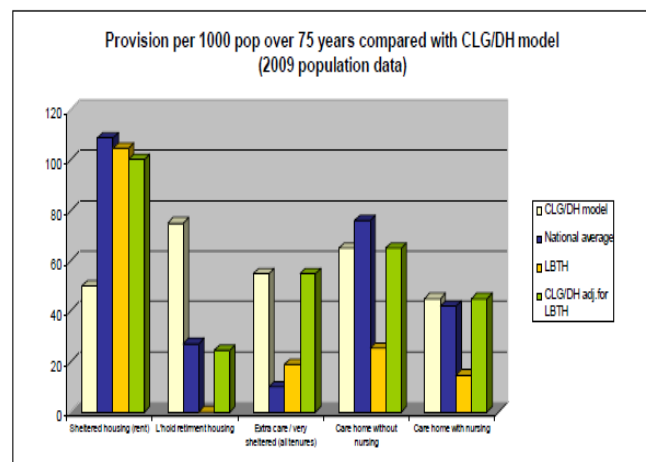
**5.31:** Applying the percentage increases implied by the four scenarios to the existing stock of extra care housing suggests that increases of 137% and 195% would be required by 2018 to respond to Scenarios 2 and 3. This translates into a requirement for 381 and 475 units respectively. The question of which scenario should be used for planning depends upon the extent to which extra care housing is promoted in the borough in the future and the speed of cultural change in the Bangladeshi community, but it would seem to be reasonable to

assume that Scenario 3 of 475 units is a realistic forecast.

A fuller explanation on this modelling is set out in the Needs Assessment.

### General Provision:

**5.32:** A comparison between the supply levels recommended by Government and current levels of provision in LBTH are shown in graph below. Tower Hamlets have made an adjustment to the tenure balance between rented and leasehold sheltered housing suggested in the model, to reflect the high proportion of social housing in the borough.



**5.33:** Translating these levels of provision into numbers of units and applying GLA population projections (and adjusted for tenure balance in Tower Hamlets) shows demand for additional unit numbers shown in the table below.

The table sets out 3 future scenarios in comparison to current levels:

- 1- Provision for 2009 model based on Dep't Health/CLG Guidance



**2-** Provision for 2018 model based on Dep't Health/CLG Guidance adjusted

**3-** Provision for 2031 model based on Dep't Health/CLG Guidance adjusted

	Existing Provision	Provision for 2009 population of LBTH based on model (adjusted)	Provision for 2018 population of LBTH based on model (adjusted)	Provision for 2031 population of LBTH based on model (adjusted)
Sheltered housing (rent)	895	858	943	1295
L'hold retirement housing	0	210	231	318
Extra care / very sheltered (all tenures)	161	470	517	710
TOTAL	1056	1538	1691	2323

The 2009 figure of 470 units suggested by the model for extra care is relatively close to the needs assessment of between 375 and 481 set out at **5.32** above.

A similar comparison can be made for the 2018 and 2031 figures. The Council will now need to investigate further as to what provision it wishes to follow through in its commissioning priorities for the future.

**5.34:** The first steps toward new provisions are being taken forward through an application for funding through the GLA Care and Supported Housing Fund. The Council is supporting four schemes being proposed by Gateway and Islington and Shoreditch Housing Associations which will provide 67 new homes for rent and 19 homes for affordable shared ownership.

**5.35:** The Older People's Housing Needs Assessment also suggested

that there is considerable scope to increase the provision of extra care housing. Although current demand is not reported to outstrip supply, the council believe this to be a product of the nature of the current service (which caters for a relatively narrow range of care needs) and the way in which the extra care housing has been promoted. With more targeted and more extensive marketing the perceptions of extra care housing amongst older people could change and result in much greater demand. The Council will consider re-commissioning provision in this area.

**5.36:** In addition there is a need to provide more flexible and accessible accommodation that can cater for the needs of the 85+ group. This accommodation is not the perceived traditional sheltered housing but something that can deliver the same benefits (e.g. through separate but linked communal/'hub' facilities). This type of accommodation can be expected to be in strong demand into the future. An increase of this type of accommodation by at least 20% over existing levels should be considered for over the next 15 years.

**5.37:** Based on the assessment of standards in the existing stock at least a quarter of the available stock for older people needs to be replaced and this re-provision will need to be factored into future planning.

## Other Provision

**5.38:** Leasehold retirement housing is notable by its absence in Tower Hamlets and therefore there is also

likely to be some (limited) scope for re-balancing the stock in relation to tenure. There has been a lack of private leaseholder schemes for older people in Tower Hamlets due to its tenure profile being largely social housing stock (around 40%), and a lack of financial means from residents to support the development of such schemes in the borough.

Gateway Housing association will be taking forward two schemes that will provide 18 units of shared ownership for older residents in the Isle of Dogs and Bow.

**5.39:** The provision of housing options to purchase on a leasehold basis need to recognise that many older owner occupiers in the borough have very limited incomes: many are leaseholders who purchased under 'Right to Buy'. The new Gateway Housing Association Shared Ownership schemes accommodation designed for older people could potentially meet the needs of those that previously purchased their Council homes. Supporting these household to move into more suitable accommodation will in turn potentially free up larger ex council homes which could help reduce overcrowding which is another council priority.

**5.40:** The qualitative dimension of demand is equally important. In the figures discussed above the council

have used the term 'sheltered housing' to refer to any form of designated accommodation for older people which meets their needs in terms of accessibility and, if needed, access to support. It is clear from the consultation the council have carried out that traditional sheltered housing with a dedicated support officer service is valued by many existing residents, but its image, profile and, in many cases, the accommodation on offer, mean that current demand is unpredictable.

**5.41:** Through the Older Persons Pathway Board, the Council will continue to consider how it can achieve best value for money and to look at ways of how the borough can better meet the needs of sheltered housing tenants in an affordable way.

**5.42:** Given the strong messages about social isolation amongst older people, the importance of social engagement, and the challenges of transport, older people's housing therefore needs to be located in close proximity to community 'hubs' such as the Sundial scheme in Bethnal Green. Ways of integrating service provision with those hubs where a wider provision of support and care is also offered to the surrounding neighbourhood community alongside existing residents will continue to be investigated.

## **6. Aim 1: Provide a range of good quality accommodation and access to home adaptations and**



## **improvements that offers older people housing that meets their needs.**

### **6.1 Introduction**

**6.2:** Changing aspirations and social trends are shifting demand for older people's housing. Whilst increasing life expectancy and wellbeing in older life is to be celebrated it presents new challenges for housing, health and social care services. Tower Hamlets need to consider what sort of housing older people will need and this could include adaptation and remodelling of existing stock and looking at other housing options across all tenures. The wider policy agenda for older people encourages a rebalancing of the housing stock by decreasing the number of residential or institutional care homes and increasing the housing options for older people.

**6.3:** The Older People's Housing Needs found that whilst the borough had a range of social, sheltered, extra care and supported accommodation, a greater range of housing was needed to meet the demand of housing required by older people in Tower Hamlets.

### **6.4 Challenges**

- The density and shortage of housing for all ages impacts upon older people.
- There is a shortage of good quality accommodation that is appropriate to older people's needs and as a result there is little choice.
- There are very low levels of owner occupation and few choices for the minority that do own their homes to move within the borough to suitable housing.
- There are problems of overcrowding faced by older people living as part of extended families; at the same time many older people 'under occupy' their accommodation.
- There is a lack of good alternatives to encourage older people to consider a move to a smaller or more suitable property.
- Although levels of adapted stock are reasonably high there are still less than 1% of units that are adapted for wheelchairs and there is a shortage of ground floor and accessible accommodation.
- The use of assistive technology is under-developed in regard to people with dementia, but this is an area that the council needs to explore in more depth.
- There is a need to improve the marketing of the Home Improvement Agency.
- Dementia and Mental Health needs are set to increase, with a corresponding need for more specialist housing which meets these needs.
- Many older people are isolated on upper floors because of inaccessible communal areas.

- Security and safety issues are high on older people's agendas.
- Sheltered housing remains popular amongst tenants but the demand for vacancies is variable, with quality and location being the key factors.
- The advent of personalisation means that consideration needs to be given to new models, including high quality accommodation with flexible support services.

In order to address these challenges, the following priorities for action have been devised.

## 6.5 - Priorities for Action

- **AP1.1:** To consider the requirements for a range of older persons accommodation on all new developments as part of the affordable housing delivery and planning process.
- **AP1.2:** To plan for longer term provision of extra care sheltered housing schemes to meet future demand including dementia care.
- **AP1.3:** In partnership with Registered Providers and Supporting People to review existing sheltered housing stock and consider remodelling to ensure it is decent, secure and fit for purpose.
- **AP1.4:** To promote the Council's offer to older under occupiers and assist applicants in finding suitable smaller properties where they have expressed that choice.
- **AP1.5:** To take forward an affordable private leaseholder scheme in Tower Hamlets and support the Gateway Housing Association Older Persons Housing Commission.
- **AP1.6:** To market the Home Improvement Agency and the grant funding process for major works and Disabled Facilities Grant to enable older people to remain safe, warm, and secure within their existing homes.
- **AP1.7:** To review assistive technology provision to increase uptake amongst those with critical and substantial need ensuring it is accessible to a wide range of client groups including those with dementia.
- **AP1.8:** To promote the private sector handyperson service.
- **AP1.9:** Develop the affordable warmth strategy to help older people live comfortably within their existing homes in order to reduce fuel poverty for older people by offering support and grants to makes homes more energy efficient.

## 7. Aim 2: Help older people to continue to remain active, independent and healthy in their homes supported by flexible inclusive and affordable services

## 7.1: Introduction

**7.2:** This second aim of this strategy is based on ensuring older people in Tower Hamlets across all tenures are able to maintain a sustainable quality of life that allows them to live independently in their own homes as long as possible and to promote health and well being. This aim is supported by a common theme expressed during the consultation by older people of their fundamental desire to live independent lives in their own homes.

**7.3:** Accessible, flexible and inclusive services will provide more opportunities for older people to stay in the borough in housing which can adapt to their needs. The council aims to provide well procured, affordable and Value for Money services which will in turn give residents good quality, inclusive and well managed services and help residents to remain secure, healthy and independent.

## 7.4: Challenges

- Effective housing support, benefits advice and practical help needs to be made more available to enable older people to stay in their own homes – for example through the creation of more community hubs.
- There will increased pressure on the Housing Choice and Options service to provide advice to the growing number of older people in the borough.
- LinkAge Plus has been successful but needs expanding by offering a wider range of referral pathways/support services and still needs a higher profile across the borough.
- “Advocacy” both in the specific meaning of the term and in the broad sense of advice and information the word was recurring theme in the research. There is a need for a more joined up approach to working with housing and support providers to enhance the flow of information, advice and advocacy.
- Partnerships in the borough are well developed but there is a need for more information about and understanding of housing at all levels and still scope for greater integration of housing with health and social care services for older people.
- Certain sections of the older population are marginalised - the older white population suffer from a ‘left behind’ syndrome, whilst Bangladeshi elders often face overcrowding and many feel that their problems are not heard.
- Older people in the borough feel very strong ties to their local area, but at the same time feel that the sense of community is being eroded.
- There is a need for some form of “transition to 3rd age” service to assist older people in making decisions and accessing the support and advice that is already available.

In order to address these challenges, the following priorities for action have been devised.

## 7.5 Priorities for Action

- **AP2.1:** Continue to provide a range of support services to older people in their own homes through Supporting People, Adult Social Care and external partners including landlords.
- **AP2.2:** To further explore the provision of hub facilities offering integrated social care, health and well being services linked more closely with housing – by means of both new building and allocation of existing units in close proximity to such facilities. Consideration should be given to existing natural hubs such as churches and mosques.
- **AP2.3:** To improve the quality of housing and health advice and information services older people receive through the third sector by securing long term funding for LinkAge Plus (currently funded by the NHS and the Council) and by implementing the Information and Advice Strategy through commissioning high quality information and advice services for residents delivered by third sector organisations.
- **AP2.4:** To develop the housing advice and options services located at various points across the borough to provide a more holistic housing options service.
- **AP2.5:** To ensure the floating support contractor provides a community based support/prevention services reaching across the diversity of tenure and location and increases take up in line with need.
- **AP2.6:** Review and develop existing housing policies with Tower Hamlets Homes and other social landlords that support older people to remain in their homes including referrals of vulnerable people to the Tower Hamlets Floating Support service.
- **AP2.7:** To involve older people in the evaluation of services to inform commissioning priorities. This will allow a degree of independence from the Local Authority on services procured.
- **AP2.8:** To promote joint working with Age Concern, Housing Providers and third sector organisations to make sure sheltered services are welcoming and appropriate for older BME and LGBT people.
- **AP2.9:** Continue to support befriending services older people facing isolation in their homes.
- **AP2.10:** To continue to support initiatives such as the annual hop festival celebrating old East End traditions.

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## 11. Conclusion

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**11.1:** This statement intends to change the current provision of housing for older people. It aims to do this by offering more choice, quality, accessibility, inclusiveness and value for older people in Tower Hamlets.

**11.2:** Decent, good quality, well managed housing, appropriate to their needs, is important for older people. For many older people this is an aspiration rather than something they enjoy. The statement plans to re-balance their needs and change these aspirations into realities.

**11.3:** This statement has been developed through extensive consultation with tenants and residents, internal and external stakeholders and the Older People's Partnership Board to ensure all the relevant information, issues and considerations have been taken on board.

**11.4:** As the statement shows, there is much that can be done to improve older people's housing situations and choices. A more creative and flexible use of current Supporting People funding will enable the variety of housing support needs of older people in different tenures to be met.

**11.5:** Finally, the statement recognises the value that partner agencies play in developing the statement and its delivery.

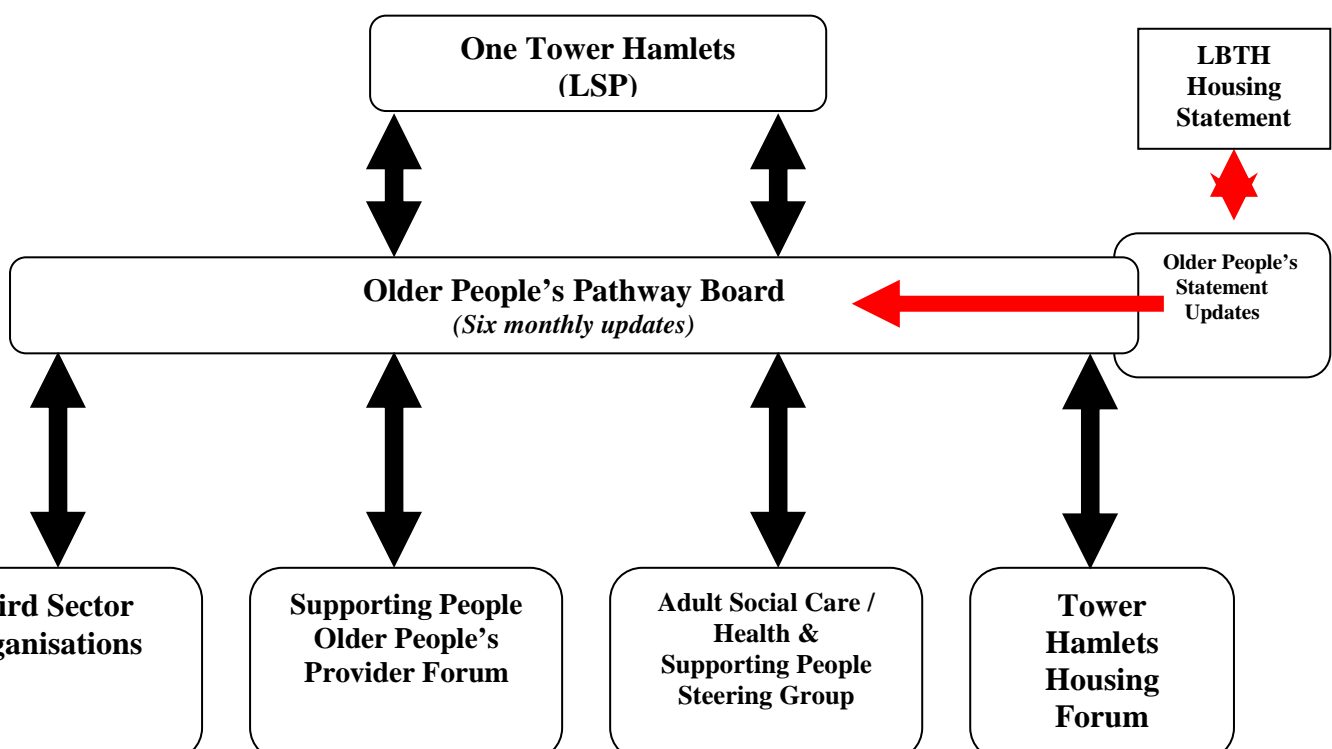
## 12. Monitoring and Delivery of the statement

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**12.1:** To make sure that the recommendations in this statement are delivered on time and to the highest standards, and that they continue to reflect the priorities of local people, Tower Hamlets will monitor progress in a number of ways.

Activity will include:

- **A:** Progress on the statement will be measured against a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic, and Time-bound) action plan and updates provided on a six monthly basis to the Older People's Pathway Board.
- **B:** Using our existing consultation framework to share progress with residents, invite their feedback and measure success. For example, Tower Hamlets Tenants' and Residents' Association, LinkAge Plus centres and Local Area Partnerships will all be important platforms for discussing progress.
- **C:** Reviewing all monitoring activity after the first 12 months, to make sure that local people and stakeholders continue to feel fully engaged in the process.
- **D:** Ensuring that key delivery partners monitor the progress of the statement according to a specific framework, which is set out below:



## How to contact us?

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If you have any questions or comments about this statement, or any other strategies mentioned in it, please feel free to contact us at:

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