



IMPROVING HOMES TO CHANGE LIVES

2024 Election Priorities by Care & Repair Agencies
From Across the UK



People aged over 65
outnumber people under 15
in the UK.

Every day, Care & Repair Agencies across the UK see older people living in unfit and unsafe housing, with few opportunities for redress or to improve their situation.

Our ageing population means the Government across the UK must act now to ensure we can support older people to continue to live safely and independently at home.

About Care & Repair

Care & Repair is the older people's housing champion. We improve homes to change lives. We do not accept that any older person should:

- Live in a home unsuitable to their needs.
- Become ill because they live in a cold home.
- Live in a house that is hazardous or unfit for habitation.
- Be without necessary adaptations to help them live independently with dignity, in their own home.

There are Care & Repair branches in communities across all UK nations. Our home visiting service means that we understand the housing needs of older people. Our Agencies have adapted over time to provide a variety of handyman services, small to large housing adaptations, home improvement measures including affordable warmth and speeding up hospital discharge, and information and advice.

NORTHERN IRELAND

17% people in NI are aged 65+

Women are expected to live 20.7 years beyond 65 but only 9 of these years are disability free

Frailty is 3x more common in people 60+ in NI than ROI

18% of people over 50 have two or more chronic diseasesⁱ

SCOTLAND

Over 1 million people aged 65+

34% of all households in fuel poverty are 65+

70% of emergency admissions to hospital are people aged 65+

Men and women can expect to live 60.9 and 61.8 years in good health respectivelyⁱⁱ



WALES

21.4% of the population is 65+

People 65+ make up over 45% of single person households

77% of all calls for falls to the Welsh Ambulance service are for people aged 65+

49% of people aged 75+ are not online in Walesⁱⁱⁱ

ENGLAND

Over 10 million people aged 65+

1.6m people aged 65+ have unmet needs for care and support

40% of adults 65+ report a limiting longstanding illness

1 in 3 adults 65+ will fall this year; falls are the top reason for hospital admission in this age group^{iv}

Our 2024 UK Election Manifesto

The next UK Government must ensure the UK is a nation that empowers and provides housing choice to its ageing population.

We must commit to tackling the housing problems faced by older people so they can live with dignity and independence in their own home for as long as they choose. Homes must be warm, safe, accessible, and adaptable across the life course.

Care & Repair across the UK believe that the next UK Government should:

- 1. ENSHRINE A RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING IN UK LAW**
- 2. REMOVE THE HOUSING ADAPTATIONS POST CODE LOTTERY**
- 3. IMPLEMENT A SAFETY NET GRANT FOR ENABLING WORKS**
- 4. PROTECT HOME VISITING SERVICES AND ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION**

1. ENSHRINE A RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING IN UK LAW

The UK has already signed up to the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which includes a right to adequate housing. However, Scotland is the only UK nation that has a statutorily enforceable entitlement to housing through direct incorporation of these Rights.

- Enshrine a right to adequate housing in law to improve housing conditions for older people and protect the UK housing stock for future generations.
- Set a clear minimum standard of condition for private sector housing.

Habitability: Housing is not adequate if it does not guarantee physical safety or provide adequate space, as well as protection against the cold, damp, heat, rain, wind, other threats to health and structural hazards.

Accessibility: Housing is not adequate if the specific needs of disadvantaged and marginalized groups are not taken into account.

Security of tenure: Housing is not adequate if its occupants do not have a degree of tenure security which guarantees legal protection against forced evictions, harassment and other



2. REMOVE THE HOUSING ADAPTATIONS POST CODE LOTTERY

Housing adaptations are proven to save the NHS money.^v Despite this, access to housing adaptations varies across the 4 Nations, and across Local Authority. We do not believe that where you live in the UK should affect your access to adaptations you need to live safely and independently at home.

- Every local authority should have a local needs-based accessible housing target.
- Ring-fenced investment in housing adaptations in anticipation for our ageing population to keep people at home and ensure equitable access no matter where you live in the UK.
- Introduce Disabled Facilities Grant or equivalent across all four UK nations.

Housing adaptations prevent hospital admissions and delay entry to residential care.

Longitudinal research undertaken by Swansea University and Care & Repair Cymru between 2009–2017 showed that people aged between 65–90 were:

- 17% less likely to be admitted to hospital for a fall if they had a housing adaptation fitted.
- Did not see their fall risk increase annually, unlike those who had not had an adaptation fitted.
- Successfully delayed their entry to residential care over 1-, 3-, and 5-year time periods.^v

3. IMPLEMENT A SAFETY NET GRANT FOR ENABLING WORKS

Older people living in poor housing continue to miss out on Government and locally funded energy efficiency schemes, meaning they are at risk of being left behind in the march towards Net Zero homes.

- Include enabling works within eligible works in government backed schemes such as ECO4 so that older people living in properties in poor conditions do not miss out on energy efficiency and home improvements.



Case Study

Mr. Thomas is 79, lives alone above a Barbershop that he owns and previously ran.

The property is without adequate electricity and no heating, largely due to serious water damage caused from a leaking roof.

After bringing together Local Authority environmental health and social services to discuss the best options, Care & Repair caseworkers secured funding to repair the roof. Additional funding was secured to repair the electrical systems in the property.

Completion of these repair works enabled the caseworker to apply for a new heating system on behalf of the client to ensure the property supported independent living in a warm and safe environment.

4. PROTECT HOME VISITING SERVICES AND ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION

Whilst 99% of adults aged 16–44 use the internet daily, over 1 in 3 people aged 65 in Great Britain do not. Just under 1 in 4 have not used the internet in the last three months.^{vi} Home visiting services are vital for older people, who are often reticent to report problems with their property. At Care & Repair, often a call out for a small issue will reveal a plethora of problems with the property. We believe the UK Government must:

- Recognise the importance of home visiting services for people who are not online.
- Protect home visiting services and work with Care & Repair to better understand the opportunities to gather housing and health data that home visiting services offer.
- Ensure that Government back schemes do not undercut third sector organisations who offer home visiting services.

“Feedback from older people noted how vital Care & Repair had been, especially in trickier project management elements such as dealing with contractors,” **Age Scotland**^{vii}

“On behalf of my mom, I just want to express our gratitude for your help and unerring support in the upgrades to her home... their workmanship is exemplary. They were so considerate, thoughtful and helpful,”

Cwm Taf Care & Repair Client

This Manifesto is supported by:



Care & Repair Cymru



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ⁱⁱⁱ [Age friendly Wales: our strategy for an ageing society \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales); [Statistics Wales Demography newsletter: March 2023 | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales)

^{iv} [Our Ageing Population | The State of Ageing 2023-24 | Centre for Ageing Better \(ageing-better.org.uk\)](https://ageing-better.org.uk); [age_uk_briefing_state_of_health_and_care_of_older_people_july2023.pdf \(ageuk.org.uk\)](https://ageuk.org.uk); [Social care for older adults - NHS Digital](https://nhs.uk); [Falls later in life \(ageuk.org.uk\)](https://ageuk.org.uk)

^v [Do home modifications reduce care home admissions for older people? A matched control evaluation of the Care & Repair Cymru service in Wales | Age and Ageing | Oxford Academic \(oup.com\)](https://oup.com); [Do home adaptation interventions help to reduce emergency fall admissions? A national longitudinal data-linkage study of 657,536 older adults living in Wales \(UK\) between 2010 and 2017 | Age and Ageing | Oxford Academic \(oup.com\)](https://oup.com)

^{vi} [Internet access - households and individuals, Great Britain - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

^{vii} [making-adaptations-work-for-older-people-in-scotland---age-scotland---university-of-stirling---may-2023.pdf \(ageuk.org.uk\)](https://ageuk.org.uk)



Care & Repair Cymru

www.careandrepair.org.uk

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