

Leaving no one behind: How much supported housing will we need by 2040?

Supported housing helps more than half a million people to live independently in their communities. It provides a vital service to the people in our society who need the most support, from survivors of domestic abuse to young people leaving care. However, new research shows we're not on track to meet demand for supported housing by 2040.

The current government does not have a long-term plan for supported housing. The NHF commissioned Altair Ltd to explore the need for supported housing, including housing for older people, from 2024 to 2040.

Our research shows that supply is not meeting demand. Without a long-term plan for housing, thousands of people could go without the support they need, costing the public purse and leaving people who could live independently with support facing long stays in residential or institutional care, or at risk of homelessness.

That's why we're calling for the party that forms the next government to include supported housing in a long-term plan for housing.

What is supported housing?

Supported housing, including housing for older people, are homes that offer the right support to people who need help to live independently. It provides a safe, secure home to people who are homeless, who have a learning disability, who are facing mental health challenges, who are leaving hospital and many more people.

As of 2023, there are an estimated 509,873 supported homes owned by registered providers of social housing in England. Most supported housing is for older people. In 2023, for social landlords in England, 71% of homes were for older people.

509,873

supported homes owned by
registered providers in England

Research shows that without supported housing, 41,000 more people would be homeless, 30,000 people would be at risk of homelessness, and we would need 14,000 more inpatient psychiatric places, 2,500 more places in residential care and 2,000 more prison places.

How much supported housing will we need by 2040?

The findings show that demand for supported housing will grow significantly in the years ahead. With a rising and ageing population, we need to make sure everyone in our communities has a safe place to call home.

Looking at projections based on current supported housing homes and population rise, our research shows:

- We will need 167,329 more homes by 2040. This is a 33% increase, from 509,873 in 2023 to 677,202 in 2040.
- Most supported housing will be needed by older people. Around a quarter of homes will need to be tailored for working aged adults and the remaining 75-77% for older people.
- Long-term supported and older people's housing will be vital. We will need 20-22% of homes to be short-term and help people in crisis, and we will need 78-80% of homes to be long-term and provide a secure home for those who need it, including all homes for older people.

In reality, the demand may be much higher. The supply of supported housing has not kept pace with the increasing population of England, and we may be short of at least 50,000 homes. When we look at projected demand, as many as 1.7 million people may need supported housing in 2040.

We need

167,329

more supported homes by 2040.

The development cost of providing 167,329 more supported homes is

£33.9bn by 2040.

Support costs would be

£3.4bn per year

by 2040, which may be £1.2bn more than 2024, a 58% increase.

How much will it cost to provide enough supported housing by 2024?

To meet rising demand for supported and older person's housing, we must invest in homes that provide the right support for people to live independently. Our research shows we need an ambitious plan to meet future demand:

- The development cost of providing 167,329 more supported homes is £33.9bn by 2040.
- The annual rent and service charge costs would be £7.1bn in 2040.
- Support costs would be £3.4bn per year by 2040, which may be £1.2bn more than 2024, a 58% increase.

The cost of not acting would be much higher.

Without the right homes with the right support, more people will be at risk of homelessness, will face longer stays in residential or institutional care and will have longer hospital stays, placing more demand on the NHS and social care.

What are the solutions?

The research shows that to deliver enough supported housing into the future, we need a long-term plan for housing that makes sure every decision about care is a decision about housing.

A national plan should include an ambitious funding commitment that unlocks the development of new supported homes and secures support and housing costs.

Based on this research, we're recommending a long-term plan includes:

- A commitment to 167,329 more supported homes by 2040.
- An ability for local authorities and integrated care boards to plan, fund and commission supported housing, including housing for older people.
- Ring-fenced funding for supported housing, that rises to meet demand, covering estimated support costs of £3.4bn a year in 2040.
- A plan to collect better data on the need and demand for supported housing. We should know whether everyone who needs support to live independently has a safe, secure home, to make sure we leave no one behind.
- A recommitment to the £300m Housing Transformation Fund, to support the development of supported housing and to make every decision about care a decision about housing.

Join our campaign to call for a long-term plan for housing that leaves no one behind.

To use this research to call for a sustainable future for supported housing, we've created [a series of resources](#) you can use to make the case to your political candidates.

By 2040, at least

75% of supported housing will be needed by older people.