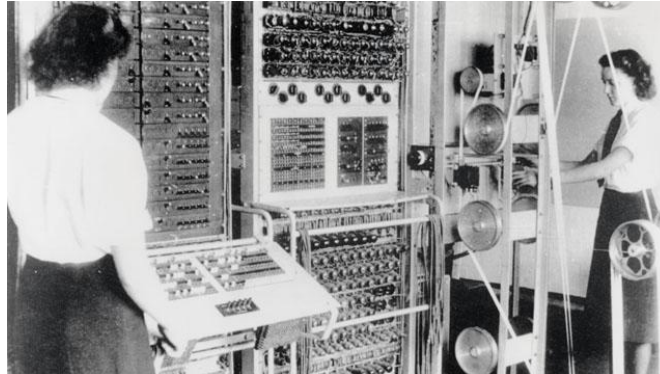


Catch 22: *Improving the health, housing and ageing evidence base*



Background

- At a time of unprecedented reductions in public expenditure higher standards of evidence are being demanded of the cost benefits of even established provision.
- Housing provision which is at great risk includes help with home adaptations and practical housing repair services, such as handyman schemes and home improvement agencies.
- The lack of investment in academic research concerning housing, health and ageing makes it difficult to cite studies of a high enough standard to make the case for housing and housing related services to the health sector.

Connecting Academic Research & Practice

The '**Catch 22**' is that practical housing services can't prove their worth to commissioners without academic research, but no-one is undertaking or funding the research that the commissioners and planners require.

Care & Repair England is forging new partnerships and stimulating fresh research in the health/ housing/ ageing field by bringing together leading researchers and key stakeholders. It will support clusters of researchers/ stakeholders to work together on research proposals/ projects that have a practical application.

It will also make the case for the need for such evidence to the major Research Councils, Government Departments and other potential funders and stakeholders.

Action to date

- **Created a virtual Research & Stakeholder Network**
- **Ran a 'Bletchley Day'**, along the lines of a sandpit, which has forged new partnerships and stimulated fresh research ideas in the field of home adaptations/ housing interventions
- **Three clusters are already progressing:**

- **Modelling cost benefit of adaptations** (led by the Building Research Establishment)
- **Developing research proposal on RCT (Random Controlled Trial) level evidence on adaptations** - (led by University of the West of England)
- **Housing decision making in later life** (led by Open University)

What next?

This is just the start of the process of improving evidence in this field.

Care & Repair England will work with the current three clusters, facilitate new groups & initiatives, grow the research network and make representations to policy makers, funders and commissioners concerning the importance of new research in this field.

Housing, Health & Ageing: The Context

- It is estimated that the number of older, disabled people in England will double from 2.3m in 2002 to 4.6m by 2041.
- Increase in life expectancy is not yet being matched by an equivalent increase in healthy life expectancy and by 2025 almost 1.5 million people aged 75 or over will be unable to manage at least one mobility/ daily living activity on their own
- Around 1.5 million individuals report having a medical condition or disability that results in them requiring specially adapted accommodation,
- 90% of older people live in mainstream housing - 75% are home owners
- There are now as many low income home owners as low income tenants and the majority of the need for home adaptations & repairs is in the private sector.
- The majority of non-decent homes are in the owner occupied sector with around a million vulnerable older people living in hazardous conditions

About Care & Repair England

Care & Repair England is an independent charitable organisation established in 1986, which aims to improve older people's housing. Its vision is that all older people have decent living conditions in a home of their own choosing.

It aims to innovate, develop, promote and support practical housing initiatives and the related policy and practice which enable older people to live independently in their own homes for as long as they wish, particularly for older people living in poor or unsuitable private sector housing.

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