Strategic Partnership Agreement

National Housing Federation
Mental Health Network, NHS Confederation

The National Housing Federation and the Mental Health Network, NHS Confederation, have established a Strategic Partnership to work together on the issue of housing and health. This document outlines our shared interests and how we will work together.

About Us

The National Housing Federation represents 1,200 not-for-profit housing associations in England and campaigns for better housing and neighbourhoods, supporting and promoting the work that housing associations do. Over half of the Federation's members provide care and support services which improve the lives of vulnerable and older people, and many more engage in work to improve the health of their tenants and the wider community.

The Mental Health Network (MHN) is part of the NHS Confederation (NHSC) and provides a distinct voice for mental health and learning disability service providers. We represent 79 members, including statutory, for-profit and third sector service providers. The NHSC is the independent membership body for the full range of organisations that make up the modern NHS. We work to inform and influence the development of healthcare policy, to represent our members' views and advocate on their behalf and help to make sense of the complex policy environment.

Our Shared Interest

Good quality, affordable housing underpins good health and participation in wider society. Keeping people safe, warm and dry helps to prevent many of the most common health conditions[1]. Poor housing conditions increase the risk of severe ill-health or disability by up to 25% during childhood and early adulthood[2]. As well as contributing to the quality of the built environment, housing organisations provide a range of care and support services which directly contribute to improved health outcomes. Housing related support provides vital support services to a range of client groups such as older people, people with mental health problems, people with learning disabilities, and homeless people. This support maintains independence, promotes access to health services and prevents the need for more acute interventions[3]. The

[1] Inside Housing, *House Proud: Health*, 2010
[2] Shelter, *Chance of a lifetime: the impact of bad housing on children's lives*, 2006
[3] National Housing Federation, *Health and housing: worlds apart?*, 2010, outlines the role that housing and support plays in the mental health care pathway

Government's own analysis shows that housing related support saves around £315m to the health service in a year[4].

Housing has an important role to play in health, well-being and the delivery of health and adult social care services. Now is the time for our two organisations to ensure that housing and support play a role in the new health world.

Our Shared Aims

Both the Mental Health Network and the National Housing Federation have significant overlapping interest in this field. We believe through working together we can both more effectively advance our shared interests in terms of influencing national policy, as well as support our respective members working locally. Over the year 2011/12 our shared aims are two-fold:

- Strategic - influencing the national policy environment as it relates to the delivery of mental health and housing
- Practice - working together and encouraging relationships between mental health providers (in the NHS and independent sectors) and housing associations.

Our Work

Joint briefing: The first output from the partnership will be a joint briefing for housing associations and mental health providers. This will:

- Outline the evidence on the link between housing and health,
- Showcase examples of good practice through joint working,
- Try to make sense of the policy context surrounding the issue – the Health and Social Care Bill, Mental Health Strategy and Localism Bill.

Further work: In addition to the work above already agreed, our organisations will develop a programme of joint work during 2011/12. That will include providing opportunities for housing and mental health providers to come together and explore opportunities for joint work at a local level.

Our organisations commit to working together over this year on this strategic partnership, and to reviewing further opportunities for joint working following this initial period.

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[4] Capgemini, *Research into the financial benefits of the Supporting People programme*, 2006