

Housing, health and care programme



NHS

North East and North Cumbria



Housing, Health and Care Memorandum of Understanding (2025–2029)

A commitment to improving lives through better homes, health, and care in the North East and North Cumbria.

Introduction

About the Housing, Health and Care Programme

In the North East and North Cumbria we have established a Housing, Health, and Care Programme to build on the collaborative work already underway across our region to tackle and mobilise on this important issue.

Our programme is the region's sector-led improvement initiative focused on delivering better, more integrated housing, care, and support so that people can be healthy, live well, and stay independent in their own home.

The programme has been co-created by the North East branch of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), the NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board, the Northern Housing Consortium, and the TEC Services Association (TSA); with many other partners involved too.

As part of our programme, we have developed a five-year roadmap which sets out priorities for better homes and healthier lives in our region. This has been developed following a baseline review of housing needs in the region alongside rich insights and feedback from events, roundtables and our community of practice.

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to set out, for agreement, our collective commitment and pledges on our shared vision, priorities and ways of working in the North East and North Cumbria.

About this Memorandum of Understanding

This MOU sets out our collective understanding and commitment to work together to ensure better homes and healthier lives for our communities.

It covers:

- Our framework for developing and improving housing, health and care commissioning, and service offers to impact on the wider determinants of health.
- Our shared commitment to joint working across organisations and to ensure co-production is at the heart of what we do. As well as our understanding of the preventative role better housing can have on the health and wellbeing of our communities.
- A series of pledges on the above and across our three key goals for warm, dry and safe homes, and better housing for people with complex needs and older people.

This MOU focuses on how the Housing, Health and Care Programme's vision and ambition can support and facilitate joined-up efforts to improve health outcomes for our communities. It builds on the formula set out in the national housing MOU (Improving health and care through the home: A national Memorandum of Understanding).

This MOU is not intended as a standalone document but also looks to support the strategic goals and objectives of the two combined authorities in the region, the North East Housing Partnership (NEHP) prospectus, and those of many more partners.

Our pledge and commitment to improving lives through better homes, health, and care in the North East and North Cumbria.

We will work together to improve housing, health, and care for our communities. We recognise that safe, warm, and accessible homes are essential to good health and wellbeing. Through collaboration, we commit to making lasting changes that will benefit people now and in the future.

Our shared vision

"I am healthy, I can live the life I want to live and do the things that are important to me as independently as possible."

Our commitments

We pledge to take action in the following key areas:

1. Supporting people with complex needs



- ✓ Creating more high-quality homes with wraparound support for people with a learning disability, autistic people, and people with serious mental health conditions.
- ✓ Develop integrated support models to reduce reliance on institutional care.
- ✓ Improve pathways to ensure access to suitable housing.

2. Improving housing for older people



- ✓ Increase housing options and use technology to help older people live independently.
- ✓ Provide better choices and support for those with dementia, frailty, and long-term conditions.
- ✓ Establish regional standards for accessibility and home adaptations.

3. Ensuring warm, dry, and safe homes



- ✓ Identify and reduce the number of non-decent, cold, and damp homes in both social and private rented sectors.
- ✓ Create a simple referral process connecting health and housing services to tackle poor living conditions.
- ✓ Develop a toolkit for frontline workers to support people living in unhealthy housing.

4. Strengthening our workforce



- ✓ Support our workforce to confidently deliver joined-up solutions across housing, health, and care.
- ✓ Share best practices and provide training on innovative, person-centred approaches.

Our call to action to achieve our ambitions

To do this, we are committed to:

Involving people with lived experience in decision-making



By 2029, we will:

- Create principles to ensure meaningful inclusion of people with lived experience in decision making, valuing diverse perspectives.
- Embed co-production approaches at local, regional and national levels, integrating representatives in our networks, processes, and initiatives where possible.
- Develop an approach so that people with first-hand experience inform and develop actions and policies.

Supporting people with complex needs



By 2029, we will:

- Develop a regional complex care and housing strategy.
- Expand supported housing provision for people who need complex care and support.
- Develop innovative and person-centred commissioning support and housing solutions, including the use of technology, to support people to live independently.
- Develop design standards for homes intended for people who need complex care and support, integrating them into planning and housing policies/commissioning.
- Re-shape pathways to improve access to housing for people who need complex care and support. This includes mainstream and general needs housing, home ownership, and bespoke homes where needed.

Supporting older people to live independently



By 2029, we will:

- Ensure new housing follows age-friendly design standards.
- Improve access to technology-enabled care for older people.
- Implement and expand 'virtual home' initiative to help our workforce understand the impact of technology-enabled care.
- Co-produce and adopt an Independent Living Strategy for Older People (MPS) across all housing types.

Ensure warmer, dry and safer homes



By 2029, we will:

- Strengthen strategies and partnerships to reduce damp and mould in homes.
- Share data/intelligence about the nature and scale of the problem to target support and services.
- Share good practice and learn lessons around reducing the prevalence of cold and damp homes.
- Create a common and simpler referral route to improve connections between primary care and housing.
- Develop a toolkit for frontline teams to identify and reduce the incidence of people living in cold and damp home.

Our commitment to collaboration

This MOU will evolve as we progress but each organisation signing this pledge agrees to:

- ✓ Take ownership of actions within their capacity.
- ✓ Work together to achieve shared goals.
- ✓ Nominate a senior representative to meet with the Housing, Health and Care Programme Board twice a year.
- ✓ Review and renew our commitments annually.