



Housing:

The Current State of
Social Housing for
Hamilton Seniors

2023

Report developed for



By Otago Polytechnic
Occupational Therapy School



STENZOO

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Stakeholders:

Age Friendly Hamilton, Hamilton City Council, Otago Polytechnic.

Project leaders:

This project was completed by third-year Occupational Therapy students Christy Lion-Cachet, Cassie Welsh, and Frances Brown.

Community Organisations:

We thank the following community organisations for their time and consideration in supporting us by providing data for this report: Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity, Accessible Properties, Abbeyfield NZ, Kāinga Ora, Bishop Gaines Village, Te Rūnanga.

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Supervisor

We thank Lizzie Martin for her support and guidance throughout this project.

INTRODUCTION

Whakatauki

Ma te mahi tahi tatou mo te oranga o te katoa

We should work together for the wellbeing of everyone

This whakatauki sums up the ideal behind our research project with Age Friendly Hamilton. As Occupational Therapists, we felt that the sentiment behind this whakatauki aligns with our practice. We see this project as a way to support our community by considering how suitable affordable homes will support the individuals' interaction with their environment, what activities their homes can enable them to participate in, and how this impacts on their well-being.

The growing senior population (65+) and the decreasing numbers of house owners are impacting Age Friendly Hamilton's stated goal: Older people are encouraged to live in their own homes to have a choice of housing that is appropriate and accessible with universal design.

This research project has two main aims. The first is to consolidate the current affordable housing situation in Hamilton, and gain an idea of what future plans the agencies have to gain more understanding of what deficits there may be to help inform future planning.

The second is to research and seek up-to-date information about what barriers there are to achieving the above goal and what recommendations can inform these from here.

This report is to tautoko (support) Age Friendly Hamilton's housing goal.



OBJECTIVES: PROJECT SUMMARY

Question 01 What is the current situation of housing for seniors with special reference to social housing?

Question 02 How does this situation align with the housing needs of seniors in this city?

Question 03 What barriers exist to achieve appropriate social housing for seniors living in Hamilton?

Question 04 What can we learn from social housing for seniors in other parts of New Zealand?



QUESTION ONE

What is the current situation of housing for seniors with special reference to social housing?

- Current Housing Situation
- Current Housing Situation for Māori
- Social Housing of Hamilton
- Social Housing Quick facts

CURRENT HOUSING SITUATION FOR SENIORS

Indicator	Information
Social Housing for Seniors	One-third of renters aged 65 and over live in social housing across New Zealand. Of this 33%, 7% rent from a local authority and 18% rent from Kāinga Ora, with the remainder from other community or government providers (Stats NZ, 2020).
Social Housing Register	<p>The housing register as of June 2023 shows 2,649 seniors (aged 65 and over). The number of seniors on the register increased by approximately 31% per year from June 2018 to June 2023 based on the yearly average, indicating a significant upward trend of seniors in need of social housing (Ministry of Social Development, 2023).</p> <p>There were 228 on the Hamilton housing register in June of 2023 (not specific to seniors). Of that 198 were considered priority A, referring to applicants who are considered at risk and includes households with a severe and persistent housing need that must be addressed immediately.</p>
Home Ownership	Leading up to the superannuation age, approximately one in four people aged 60 to 64 in 2018 did not own the home they lived in (Stats NZ, 2020).
Housing Conditions	The Waikato region reports that between 75-100 out of every 10,000 individuals are experiencing severe housing deprivation. Within this population, seniors constitute 7.5% (Stats NZ, 2020).

CURRENT HOUSING SITUATION FOR MĀORI SENIORS

Indicator	Information
Social Housing Register	<p>Growth in the applications for social housing has outgrown the supply of social housing. The growth in Māori applicants for social housing increased by 210% between March 2016 and December 2018. This growth for Māori adults is 33% more than the increase of the total public register. It is understood that Māori made up 46% of new applicants to the public register in 2017. This demonstrates that severe housing deprivation is 6 times more prevalent in Māori than in European individuals (The New Zealand Government & Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2018; Stats NZ, 2020).</p>
Home Ownership	<p>Māori home ownership rates are only 43% compared to 63% for the general population. Of the Māori population, 57% are renting the homes they live in. Homeownership rates for Māori are declining significantly faster for Māori than for non-Māori (Stats NZ, 2020). These are significant statistics when considering the housing situation of Māori elderly, as they are thereby less likely to own homes (Twyford, 2018). Renting in Aotearoa influences more residential movement and poorer health and wellbeing outcomes (Stats NZ, 2020).</p>
Housing Conditions	<p>Many Māori live in unsuitable and unhealthy homes, leading to negative impacts on their health, education, employment, and other social outcomes (Twyford, 2018). Around 20% of Māori live in overcrowded homes. Statistics demonstrate a strong connection between household crowding and houses that are mouldy and damp (Stats NZ, 2021).</p>

SOCIAL HOUSING IN HAMILTON

	Number of Properties	Waitlist	Future Plans
Accessible Properties	343 single bedroom units	18, further unspecified number awaiting information	Plans to 18 units across two sites
Kāinga Ora	3,409 long-term homes (not transitional)	1,704 (not specific to seniors)	850 over next few years
Salvation Army	40 units	Has a waitlist, unspecified number	Currently building 10 units
Te Rūnanga	24 units plus community hub	60 currently in transitional housing	Currently building 12 units
Habitat for Humanity	12 units	Unspecified	No current plans to expand in Hamilton
Bishop Gaines Village	57 units	20 minimum	No current plans due to being at building capacity
Abbeyfield NZ	12 units	Unspecified	No current plans

SOCIAL HOUSING QUICK FACTS

Growth in the applications for social housing has outgrown the supply of social housing

(The New Zealand Government & Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2018)

Around 31,000 older people living in New Zealand are severely housing deprived.

The Waikato region has some of the highest numbers of older people who are severely housing deprived.

(Ministry of Social Development, 2023)

The need for social housing is increasing at an average of 31% per year for those aged 65 and over based on data from the social housing register

(Ministry of Social Development, 2023)

Māori are 6 times more likely to experience housing deprivation than other populations in New Zealand.

(The New Zealand Government & Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2018; Stats NZ, 2020).

QUESTION TWO

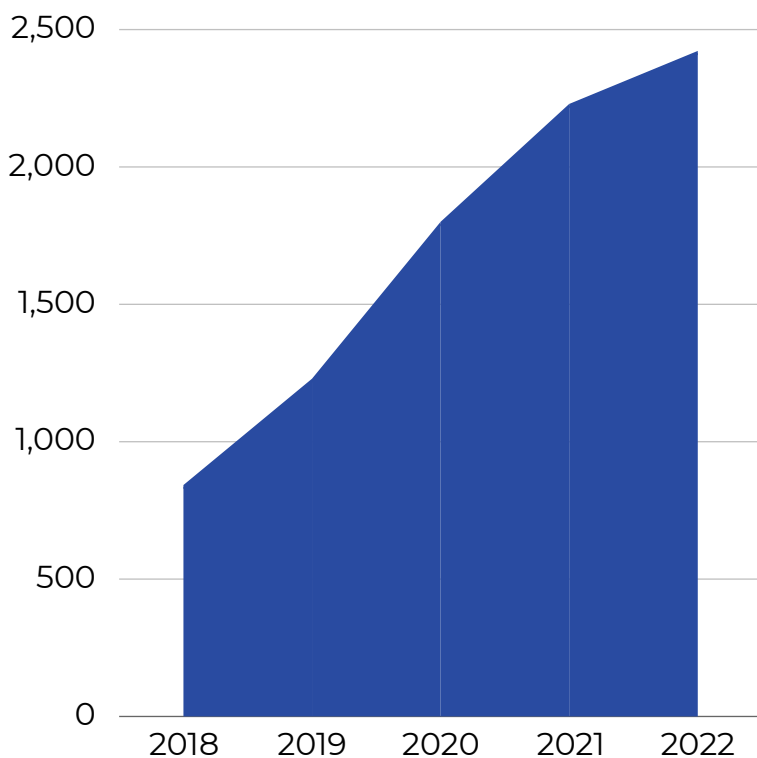
How does this situation align with the housing needs of seniors in this city?

- The growth of the older population
- Housing needs for Māori and non-Māori seniors
- Map #1 Hamilton City Suburbs
- Map #2/3-Areas of high population
- Map #4- Hamilton city bus routes
- Map #5- Frequently visited locations



THE GROWTH OF THE OLDER POPULATION

There were 19,500 people over the age of 65 living in Hamilton in 2018 (Stats NZ, 2018). This population number is predicted to consistently increase and reach 32,100 by 2033 (Stats NZ, 2018). This growth in the number of older tenants creates a large demand for additional social housing (The Salvation Army & Johnson, 2017). The growth of the elderly population of Hamilton influences a greater need for social housing. Therefore, more social housing needs to be supplied to keep up with this consistent and strong growth in the over 65 population.



The housing register as of June 2023 shows 2,649 seniors (aged 65 and over). The number of seniors on the register increased by approximately 32% per year from June 2018 to June 2023 based on yearly average, indicating a significant upward trend of seniors in need of social housing. Note this is NZ wide and not specific to Hamilton (Woods & Sepuloni, 2022).

WHAT DO SENIORS NEED IN A HOME ?

1)Seniors require properties that are accessible. The risk of disability increases as people age (McIntosh & Leah, 2017).

2)Housing should have small accessibility modifications. Howden-Chapman et al. (2023) completed a trial that found by inclusion of internal and external handrails reduced falls and injuries significantly

3)Housing should promote social connection, through close proximity to other social housing (Iwarsson, 2004).

4)Elderly require social networks to decrease experience of loneliness and improve overall wellbeing (Kim & Lee, 2022).

WHAT DO MĀORI SENIORS NEED IN A HOME?

Boulton et al. (2021) completed a quantative study to explore what Māori individuals believe are the elements of a healthy home. The elderly participants of the study identified the following;

1)Home has historical meaning and connection. Being where their ancestors lived and being near burial sites of loved ones promotes a sense of connection.

2)Being close to Whanau is essential in allowing elderly Māori feel part of a community and gain a sense of Whanaungatanga and belonging.

3)Being in areas that are familiar contribute positively to gaining a sense of spiritual safety.

4)Having access to traditional resources and being close to their marae, maunga, and awa.

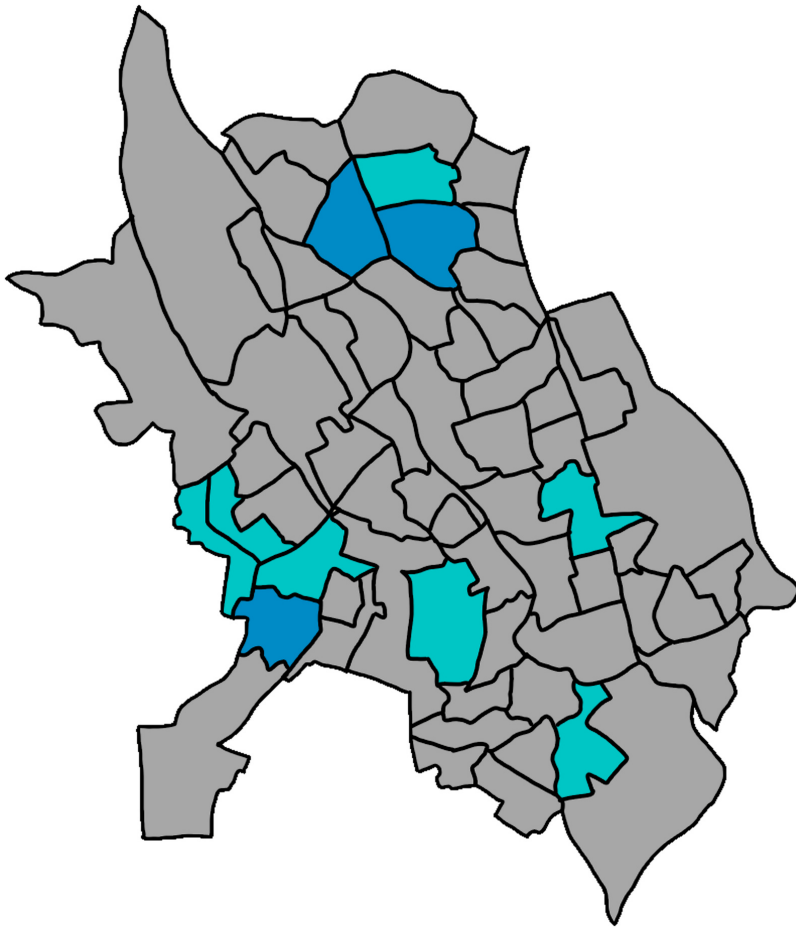
HAMILTON CITY DEMOGRAPHICS

The following maps display the demographics of Hamilton City.

It is important to note where the current senior population is mostly situated and compare this with what other infrastructure and facilities are accessible for those living within these areas to support meaningful engagement with their communities.



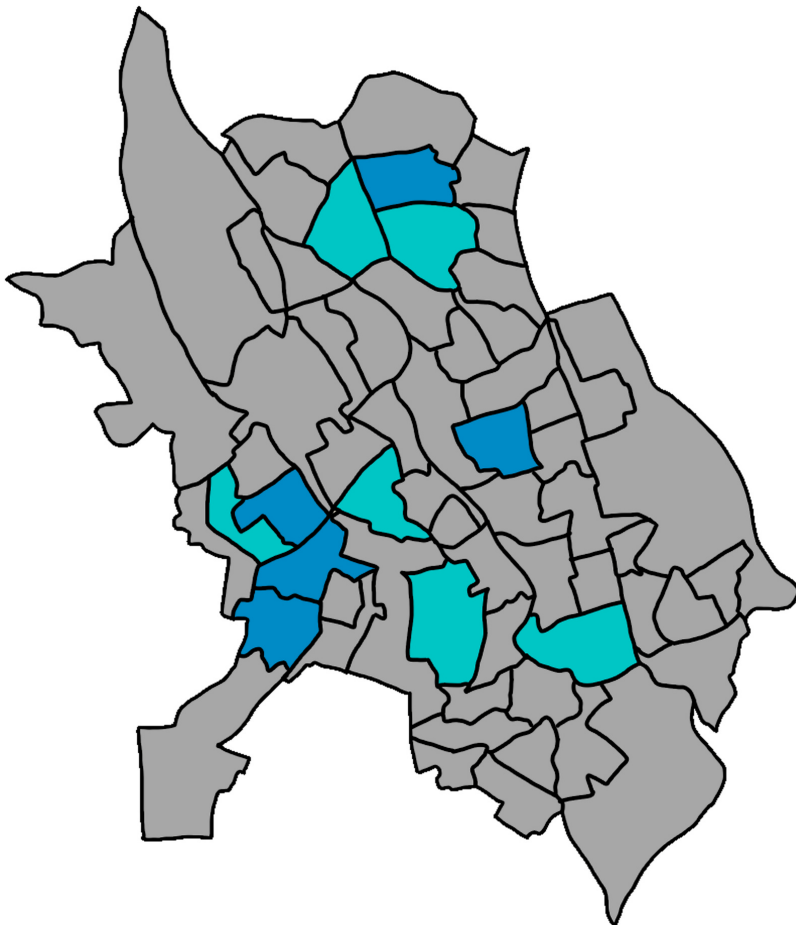
AREAS OF HIGH POPULATION



Subburbs with
higher population of
65+

Darker blue representing a higher
population

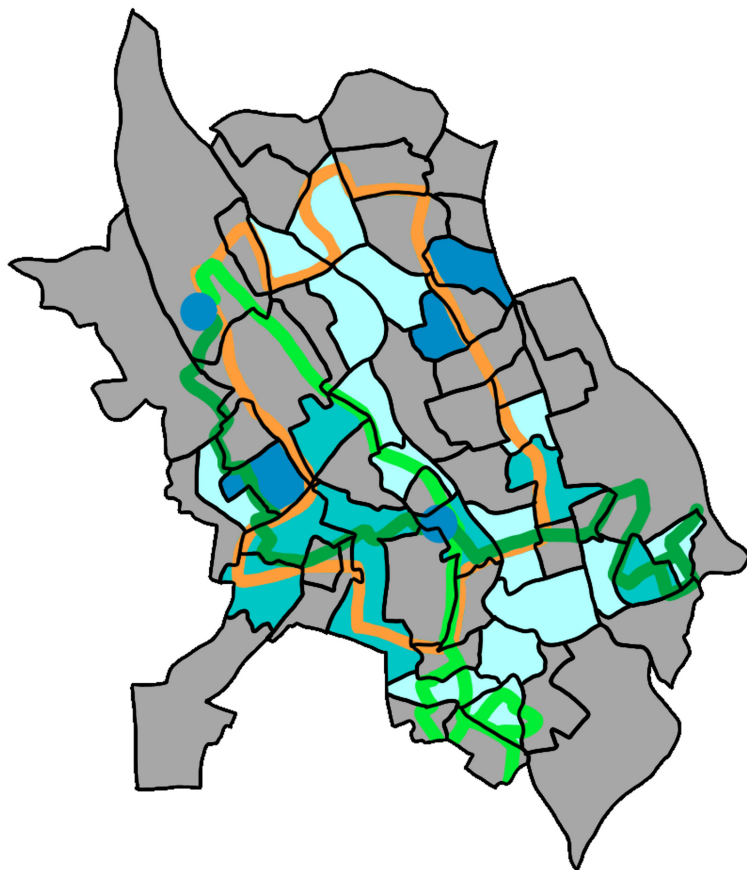
(Hamilton City Council, 2022)



Higher population of
Māori

Darker blue representing a higher
population

(Hamilton City Council, 2022)

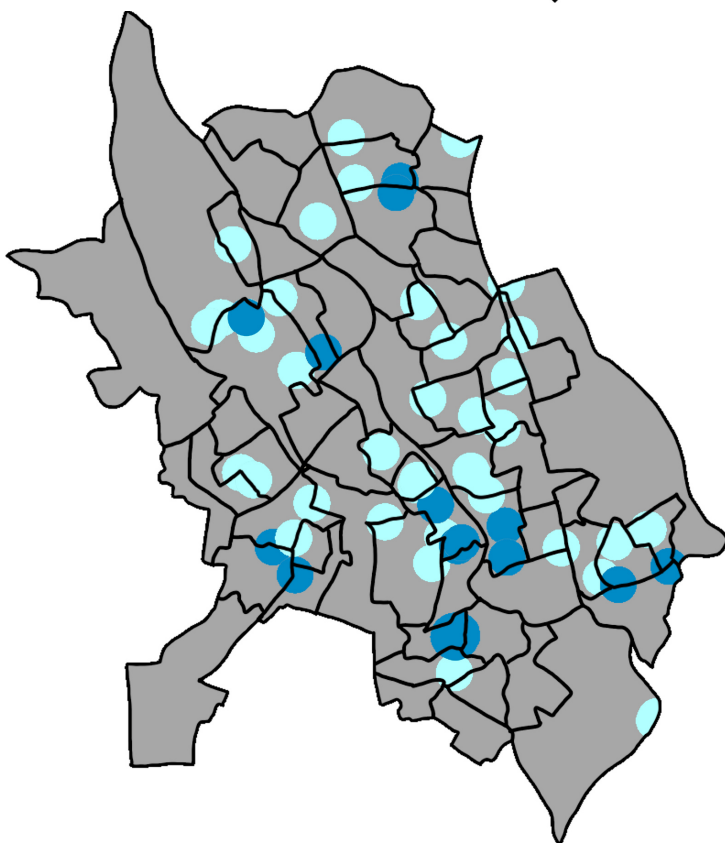


Suburbs with social housing
Includes public transport routes.

Transport Key

- = Orbiter
- = Meteor
- = Comet
- = Transport Hub

(Waikato Regional Council, n.d.)



Important locations:
libraries, churches,
medical centres

Darker blue representing a higher population

Based on these maps, there appears to be a discrepancy between where the senior and Māori population are living and where senior social housing is currently available. For example, Rotorotuna has a very high population of both seniors and Māori, but there is currently no social housing available in the area.



QUESTION THREE

What barriers exist to achieve appropriate social housing for seniors living in Hamilton?



BARRIERS TO ACHIEVING SUITABLE HOUSING FOR SENIORS

What barriers exist to achieve appropriate social housing for seniors living in Hamilton?

01

Properties in unsuitable locations

Seniors need housing that promotes social engagement to for wellbeing (Kim & Lee, 2022). Māori seniors require locations of housing to promote sense of connection and belonging (Boulton et al. 2021). If the available social housing is not in suitable locations, these needs will not be met.

02

Properties not specific to seniors

Properties that are open to those recovering from addiction, younger populations, or others are not always appealing to seniors and may compromise sense of safety and sense of community. Currently the major providers present in Hamilton (Kāinga Ora and Accessible Properties) are available to seniors are also available to these groups of people.

03

Properties that are not accessible

Older individuals are at higher risk of disability and falls (McIntosh & Leah, 2017). Housing therefore needs to be designed in a way that is accessible and reduces falls risks. Kāinga Ora has an explicitly stated Accessibility Policy, setting the standard for future builds.

04

Properties that are unhealthy

Over 84,000 older people in New Zealand experience poor quality, unhealthy housing. Individuals of Māori and Pasifika are disproportionately represented in the statistics of those living in unhealthy homes. (Ministry of Social Development et al., 2023)

BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SOCIAL HOUSING

01

Lack of Social Housing Information

There is currently a paucity of information regarding available social housing in Hamilton available for access. Without this information accessible, individuals face barriers to contacting and accessing the social housing they require.

02

Financial Vulnerability

It is known that 43 percent (15,400) of older people who experience financial vulnerability also experience housing vulnerability (Ministry of Social Development et al., 2023).

03

Inaccessible/Innapropriate Social Housing

Social housing for seniors that is not designed as such in terms of accesibility, location and social setting poses great barriers for older adults accessing appropriate social housing (Howden-Chapman et al., 2023).

QUESTION FOUR

What can we learn from social housing for seniors in other parts of New Zealand?



NEW ZEALAND HOUSING

What can we learn from social housing for seniors in other parts of New Zealand?

Given the growing concerns around rising homelessness in older populations across New Zealand (James et al, 2020) it is important to learn what other councils are doing and apply what is working to Hamilton.



Prioritise websites

Council websites that provide the following:

- Clear, easy to read with easy to access links
- Specific pages for seniors
- Obvious links to social housing for seniors

Specific to seniors

Some councils do not appear to have specific housing for seniors. It is important to consider the needs of 65+ and how these differ to other groups of people accessing social housing.





SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

Q1

What is the current situation of housing for seniors with special reference to social housing?

Hamilton has a rising senior population. All agencies currently offering social housing to seniors have waitlists with long wait times for those on the list. Some agencies are currently expanding or have plans to grow, however, most agencies are unable to or have no plans to expand at this point.

This current picture means that there is a deficit of affordable housing for seniors within Hamilton, which will continue to grow as the aging population increases over the next decade.

Q2

How does this situation align with the housing needs of seniors in this city?

Seniors need:

- Accessible homes: Agencies providing social housing claim that the current units are accessible for seniors who are able to live independently, without caregivers.
- Access to meaningful locations: Locations such as libraries, churches, places of cultural significance, parks, and other leisure centers should be accessible via footpaths or public transport.
- Housing that supports social interaction is key in promoting the health and wellbeing in seniors (Kim & Lee, 2022).

SUMMARY

Q3

What barriers exist to achieve appropriate social housing for seniors living in Hamilton?

Barriers to achieving appropriate social housing can be mitigated through working with the senior community and considering how the properties can be;

- In suitable locations
- Specific to the needs of seniors
- Accessible for walking sticks, walkers, wheelchairs and with appropriately weighted doors
- Healthy, well-ventilated and dry homes

Barriers to seniors accessing social housing can be addressed by:

- Ensuring social housing information is available and easy to access
- Ensuring it is financially viable for all seniors
- Accessible and appropriate social housing for seniors

Q4

What can we learn from social housing for seniors in other parts of New Zealand?

Local councils that provide clear, easy-to-follow specific information allow seniors to be able to easily gain the necessary information and help to ease the barrier of being unable to find appropriate information.

The growing aging population is impacting all locals of New Zealand and places that have considered the specific needs of their senior population are more likely to be able to have positive outcomes than those that have not.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a current deficit in affordable housing for seniors that will continue grow as the is not a growth in the housing situation to meet the growing population.

Having considered the questions above, we feel that there are some practical recommendations to consider in addressing some of the findings:



Website

Create a clear senior friendly page on the Hamilton City Council website that provides:

- Clear hyperlinks to different social housing agencies sites
- Links to other helpful information

Cohesion

We feel that greater communication and cohesion between the senior social housing agencies would ensure that the council and agencies working to fulfill this need have a clear picture of how it is being addressed.



Specific for Seniors

We feel that housing for seniors should continue to be kept separate than the social housing for the general population. The needs of seniors are different from those of other adults which could make social housing unpalatable for seniors

Information

This report was written with the information currently available in 2023. We recommend revisiting this with more current data gathered from the 2023 census when it is released in 2024.



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