**SUBMISSION TO THE ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON SOCIAL INTEGRATION BY THE INTERGENERATIONAL HOUSING NETWORK – SEPTEMBER 2019**

1. We welcome the APPG’s call for evidence on developing intergenerational housing in the UK as a way of promoting more mixing with a shared purpose between the generations.
2. The Intergenerational Housing Network was formally launched in early 2019 by Emma Garland following her Winston Churchill Felllowship and report on intergenerational housing schemes in the USA. The network was seed-funded by the Churchill Fellowship and is now supported and funded by United for All Ages. It aims to promote and support the development of more intergenerational housing schemes in the UK. Regular meetings of network members share news, ideas, lessons and evaluation from schemes in the UK and this submission draws on issues raised in these meetings.
3. While the idea of intergenerational housing has attracted interest in the UK amongst professionals, policy makers and the media, to date there are relatively few schemes that can genuinely be described as ‘intergenerational housing’ ie: where different generations live alongside each, can mix and share activities and experiences, with a common purpose. This is despite recognition of the potential benefits of such schemes – from addressing health and social needs to helping tackle the housing crisis and building stronger communities.
4. The lack of intergenerational housing schemes in the UK is one of the main barriers to promoting future development. We need more exemplars here to encourage developers, planners, architects, housing providers, funders and central and local government to back new schemes. We also need greater recognition that this is a ‘slow burn’ and it can take considerable time to translate ideas to reality in the housing world.
5. This submission flags up other barriers in the UK to the creation and development of intergenerational housing. It’s our view that in every part of the UK there are opportunities to develop schemes relatively swiftly, using under-occupied sheltered housing as the basis for older people living alongside younger people with a variety of needs and providing mutual support (see Cambridge, Haringey etc for examples). But there are also many other opportunities to develop schemes from the micro such as Homeshare to large scale developments and regeneration in our towns and cities.
6. In addition to the above, the barriers we have identified are:
* Silo working and culture
* Planning and lack of strategic approaches
* Regulators and funding
* Short-termism and ‘too difficult’
* Innovation and awareness
1. Inevitably intergenerational housing schemes aim to address multiple social and economic issues - not just housing needs. Unfortunately, policy and practice are still siloed – not just by age but also between housing, health, care, education etc. The lack of joined up working locally and nationally makes it difficult to progress schemes unless there is a champion prepared to lead the way. What is required at every level is a strategic intergenerational approach that sees bringing older and younger people together as fundamental to building stronger age-friendly communities, tackling division and addressing social need. That strategic approach would then inform policies for planning, economic development and commissioning as well as housing, care, health and learning. This could be strengthened by a national framework for developing intergenerational communities.
2. Such approaches also need to be backed by regulators and those responsible for capital and revenue funding. In the field of intergenerational care, developments have been positively supported by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. We need similar support from the Regulator of Social Housing and Homes England and their counterparts in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland – for both new and existing schemes. For example, where sheltered housing has been developed using public grants, we need flexibility in its future use to reflect changing needs and demands. Sustainability is also crucial as cohorts of young people move on from these schemes.
3. Developing new housing schemes or adapting existing schemes takes time. Too much of our public policy and decision making is short-term, going for quick wins. If we are to tackle some of these difficult social issues, we must be prepared to invest in the time and long-term funding required to make it happen. Innovation also requires support and recognition that schemes may need time to settle in and flexibility to change the way they work.
4. Similarly we must raise awareness about the variety of intergenerational housing schemes already out there, rather than reinventing the wheel. Homeshare could be scaled up. Every area has a sheltered housing scheme that could also house younger generations; or student housing that could share sites with retirement living; or an extra care scheme that could house adults of all ages with additional needs. Regeneration schemes should have intergenerational mixing as one of their key building blocks. Organisations such as the National Housing Federation, the Chartered Institute of Housing and the Royal Institute of British Architects could help increase awareness of the possibilities, for example by publishing a best practice guide and getting started checklist.
5. Finally the Intergenerational Housing Network itself has a key role to play in supporting and promoting the development of more schemes by providing a platform to share learning and exemplars. Currently the network is seeking funding to develop its work.
6. For further information, please contact Stephen Burke, Director, United for All Ages on behalf of the Intergenerational Housing Network – stephen.burke@unitedforallages.com