

The role of the planning system in delivering housing choice to older Londoners (Sarah Monk and Gemma Burgess)

In the context of an ageing society, concerns have been raised that insufficient specialist housing for older people is being provided in the UK. Existing schemes in the social sector are out of date and poor quality, leading to decommissioning in some cases. New provision is restricted because of a shortage of public funding, and local authorities are increasingly looking to the planning system to deliver additional capacity. In the private sector, developers complain that specialist housing is more expensive to develop than general needs housing and in areas of high housing pressure, schemes such as retirement villages are not viable. In particular, viability is affected by the need for private developers to make contributions towards education, traffic management and affordable housing under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This paper draws on some recent research into the role of the planning system in delivering specialist older people's housing to explore the barriers to increased delivery and make recommendations for change.