

Information and advice to help people to move home

FirstStop Advice is a service providing information and advice about care and housing options in later life for older people, their families and carers. Almost half of all callers to the FirstStop information and advice telephone helpline (47%) are seeking help with housing related issues.

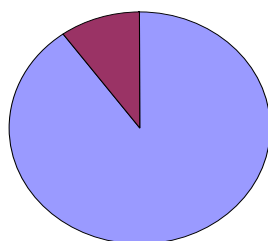
The Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research at the University of Cambridge is undertaking an independent evaluation of the FirstStop service. A questionnaire was sent to 1000 people who had used the FirstStop service. Emerging findings suggest that 29% of people who contacted FirstStop were looking for information and advice about moving home. Of these, 55% said that they were looking to move to sheltered housing and 45% said that they were generally looking to move to a more suitable home.

"I'm 78 and quite fit but have arthritis in my knees; I've had one knee replacement and have another booked for next year. I live in a three bedroom semi-detached house with stairs which I manage at the moment but I am thinking about the future. I rang FirstStop to talk about my options and they told me I could sell my house and buy a more suitable property. I'm not ready for sheltered accommodation but if I lose mobility I wanted to know what it was. Who knows what the future will bring?" Mrs F, homeowner

Of the survey respondents who received information and advice from FirstStop across the whole range of care and housing issues:

- 89% said that the way in which the information and advice was provided suited them.
- 73% said that the information and advice FirstStop gave them made them feel more confident about making decisions.
- 73% of the older people who received information and advice were homeowners when they or their family contacted FirstStop.

"It is a big problem as my husband is 84, disabled and really not very well. We have a large house and a large garden. We were looking at all our options to move so we applied to FirstStop for a catalogue which had all the options such as sheltered housing. It was very good as it gave us all the information about what was on our doorstep". Mrs G, homeowner



90% of the people who contacted FirstStop for information and advice said that they would recommend that someone with a similar problem contacts FirstStop.

"We help people with Choice Based Lettings to bid online as it is difficult for older people and take them to view properties. For example, a man was living in a three bedroom property and needed carers three times a day. The project helped him to move to a more suitable flat which already had adaptations and this reduced his need for a carer to one visit per day". Local FirstStop Project: Somerset West.