

PRESS INFORMATION

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EXTRA CARE HOUSING COULD SUPPORT CALL TO FREE UP FAMILY HOMES

A report published by new campaign group the Intergenerational Foundation has called for government to explore ways in which older homeowners could be encouraged to downsize their homes in order to free up family-sized properties for the growing number of people unable to get onto the housing ladder. And, according to healthcare intelligence provider Laing & Buisson, the slowly growing model of extra care housing could provide some solution.

In its report, *Hoarding of Housing*, the Intergenerational Foundation states that around one-third of all British homes - a total of 8m residential properties - are now 'under-occupied' meaning that young families are increasingly squeezed into small flats and under-sized houses.

Acknowledging that property has for a long period been seen as a 'store of value', the report suggests that various government actions could be made to address this including an exemption from stamp duty for people aged over 60 year who are moving to a smaller property.

Responding to the report, Laing & Buisson consultant Philip Mickelborough said that the specialist residential model of extra care housing could also represent a solution if it were better understood among older people who fear letting go of any equity they may have in a large home.

There are an estimated 35,000 extra care units across the UK. Residents can typically purchase the lease of an apartment within a specialist development, therefore protecting their capital assets, and are then able to make use of on-site care facilities as and when they need them under separate contracts. Care packages will usually consist of a carer entering a resident's apartment to deliver personal care services such as washing and help with getting dressed if required. Additional facilities generally found on extra care developments include communal lounges, libraries and IT suites, cinemas, restaurants and other leisure facilities.

Mr Mickelborough said: 'Whether renting or living in their owned home, older people frequently do not wish to leave the home in which they may have lived for many years, to which they have become accustomed and may well have raised a family. The consequences, however, are that they may live in a house they cannot afford to heat, run and maintain, may be unsuitable for them when they become ill or frail and that leaves empty rooms that could be utilised by a younger family.'

He added: 'Extra care housing, however, is so attractive to older people that many would happily make the move if they knew more about it. The benefits include having flexible care available on-site when they come to need it, company if they want it but not if they don't, and for owner-occupiers the preservation of their housing equity.'

Author of the recently published *Extra Care Housing UK Market Report 2011** added that as well as a means by which older people can maintain their status as property owners, extra care housing is a method by which they may be able to protect themselves against any further moves later in life as they develop more complex care requirements.

He said: 'Even more important to most older people, however, is that making their home in extra care housing will minimise the risk of having to move out into a care home as they become disabled. And with extra care now tending to be two-bedroomed flats, there is still space for their family to stay in the spare room or a guest suite in the block.'

- END OF RELEASE -

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**Extra Care Housing UK Market Report 2011 is available now priced at £795 for hard copy and £1,150 for hard copy and PDF. To purchase contact Laing & Buisson, 20 Angel Gate, City Road, London, EC1V 2PT. Tel: 020 7833 9123. Fax: 020 7833 9129. www.laingbuisson.co.uk*

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Founded by William Laing in 1986, Laing & Buisson is the UK's leading provider of information and market intelligence on the independent health, community care and childcare sectors.

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