

# Older people, poor housing and health



*What the data tells us*

Sue Adams, Care & Repair England



# Who?

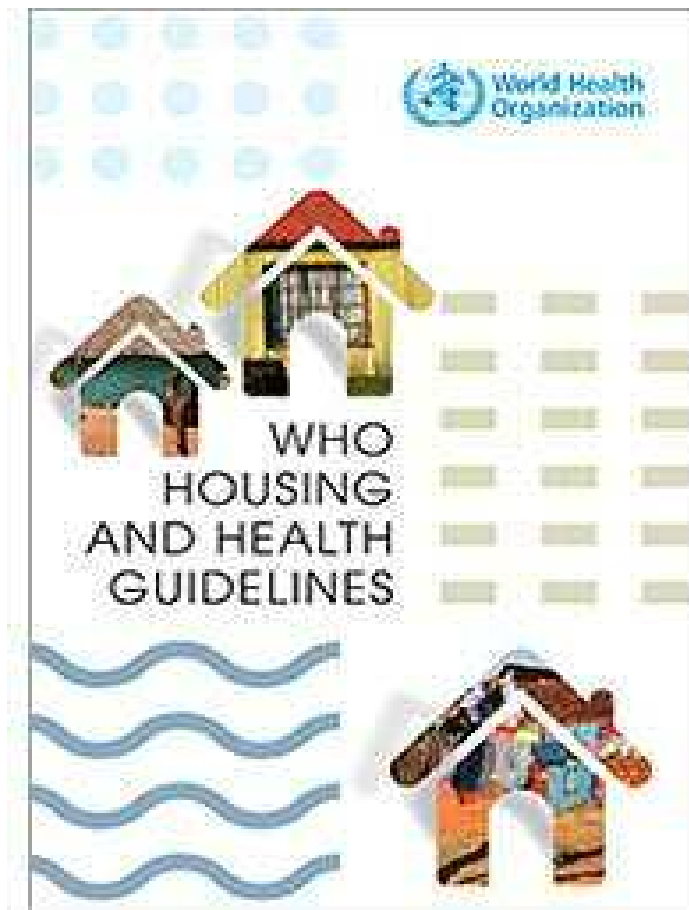
- ▶ *Care & Repair England (set up in 1986) – National housing charity aims to address poor and unsuitable housing amongst the older population, esp. low income home owners*
- ▶ *Pioneers initiatives over 30+yrs; Local Care & Repair services, Minor Works Grants, Handyperson, Housing Options Info & Advice, Healthy Homes, Older People's Housing Champions etc.*
- ▶ *Policy shaping: Older people's housing – Chair of Housing & Ageing Alliance & Home Adaptations Consortium; member of MHCLG, DHSC, NHS England etc. Cttees & Groups; LGA Specialist Adviser etc...*

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# Housing underpins health: WHO



*‘Improved housing conditions can save lives, prevent disease, increase quality of life, reduce poverty, and help mitigate climate change.’*

# Health impacts of poor housing



*Poor housing costs the NHS £1.4 billion p.a. in first year treatment costs alone.*

# Ageing in poor homes: NHS costs

- Poor housing costs the NHS £1.4billion pa\*
- £625m costs = older people

\**BRE*



# Growing North South divide?



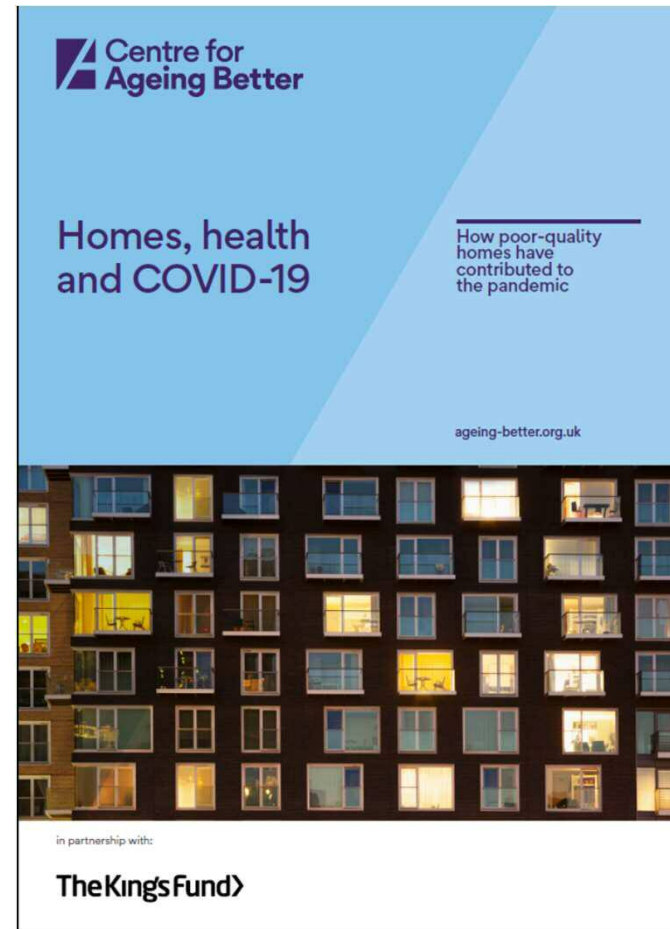
- ▶ Quantified health costs of poor housing in the North
- ▶ *Identified older home owners as most likely occupants of poor housing*



# Homes, health and COVID-19

*‘Poor quality housing has a profound impact on health’*

- ▶ *The condition of homes, insecure tenure and wider neighbourhood characteristics all have considerable effects on health and wellbeing*
- ▶ *The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed and amplified housing-related health inequalities*
- ▶ *[Those groups] more likely to live in poor housing are often the same groups who are vulnerable to Covid-19 [older people, those with LTCs etc]*



# Older people, poor housing & health

## » Key data



# Health impacts: Simplified list

## *Causes/exacerbates long term conditions*

- ▶ Respiratory
- ▶ Rheumatism and Arthritis
- ▶ Cardiovascular

## *Mental health impacts*

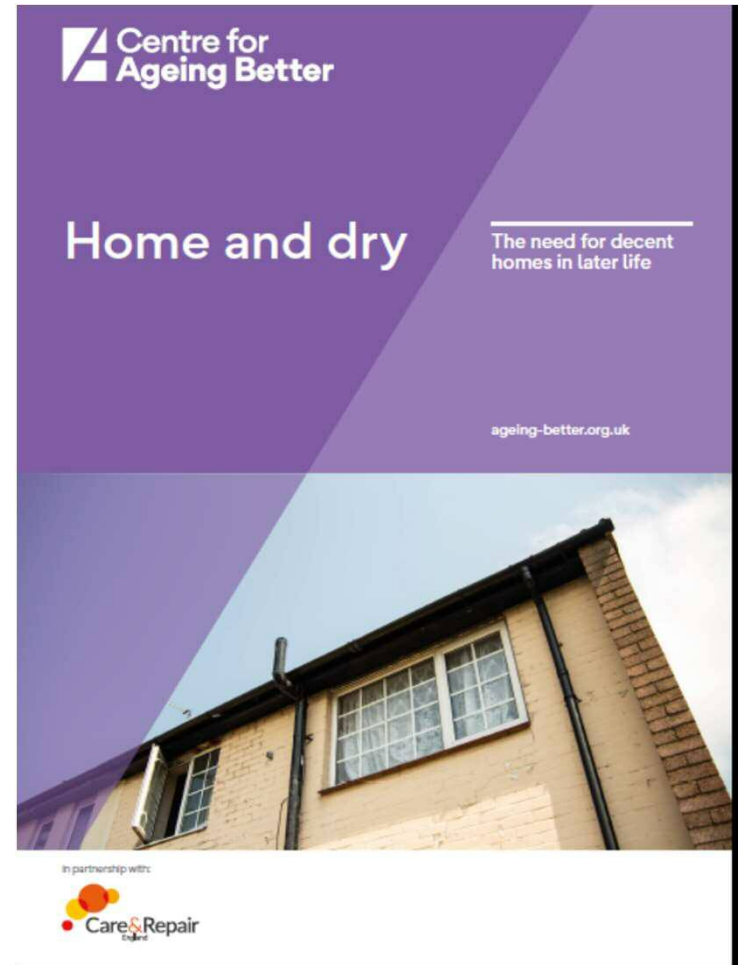
- ▶ Stress
- ▶ Isolation
- ▶ Depression

## *Increased risks*

- ▶ Falls
- ▶ Accidents
- ▶ Electrocution
- ▶ Carbon monoxide poisoning
- ▶ Hypothermia
- ▶ Infection

# Analysis of EHS Data

- ▶ C.10m people living in 4.3m non-decent homes
- ▶ 2m older households
- ▶ Main reasons homes are non-decent = hazards to health:
  - *Falls risks*
  - *Cold*



*No PSHR policy or funding since 2010*

# 10 million people are living in non-decent homes across England



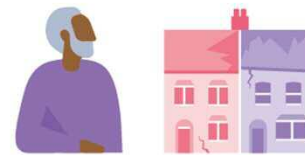
**4.3 million**

homes in England are classed as non-decent – a shocking 19% of all homes.



**10 million**

people are living in conditions that may create or worsen health conditions and reduce their quality of life.



**2 million**

of these non-decent homes are lived in by someone over 55.



**Nearly 1 in 5**

18% of households where someone has a long-term illness or disability live in a non-decent home, and 15% of all wheelchair users live in a non-decent home.

## Homes are classed as non-decent for four reasons:

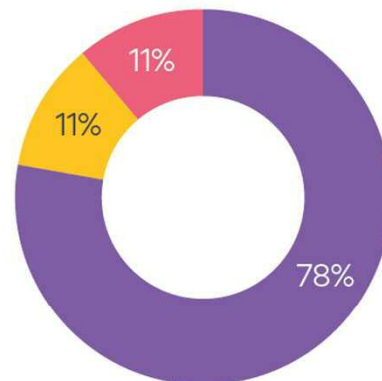
- The presence of a serious hazard (called Category 1) which poses a risk to the health of the occupant(s)
- Not providing a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (not having effective insulation or efficient heating)
- Being in disrepair
- Not having sufficiently modern facilities – e.g a bathroom more than 30 years old or a kitchen more than 20 years old

## Older homeowners are particularly at risk

**Poor housing is a particular concern for older home owners with low incomes or fixed pensions because of their ability to pay for repairs.**

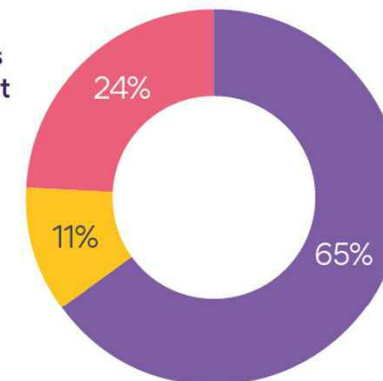
Tenure types of households headed by someone 55+ living in non-decent homes:

- Owner occupier
- Social rented
- Private rented



Tenure types of households all ages living in non-decent homes:

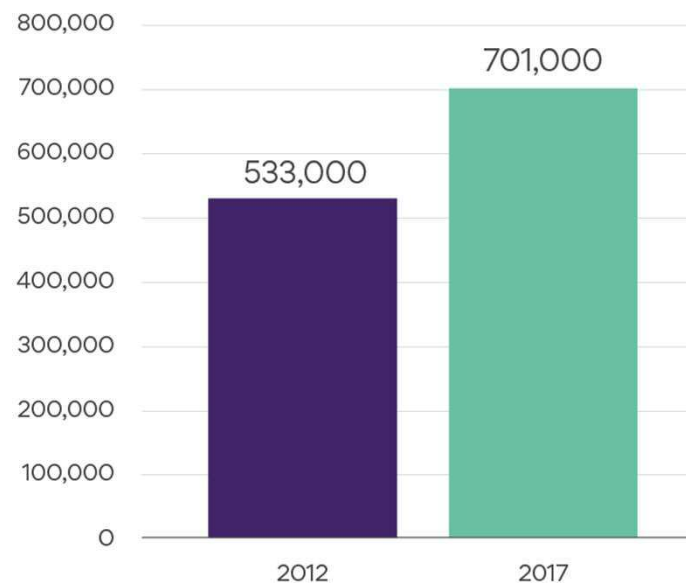
- Owner occupier
- Social rented
- Private rented



Single person households of all ages are also more likely to live in a non-decent home compared to multi person households (22% v 17%). The level is particularly high for those who are in the 55-64 yrs age group (26% vs overall average of 17% and for multi person household in the same age group 16%).

## The number of over 75s in non-decent homes has risen

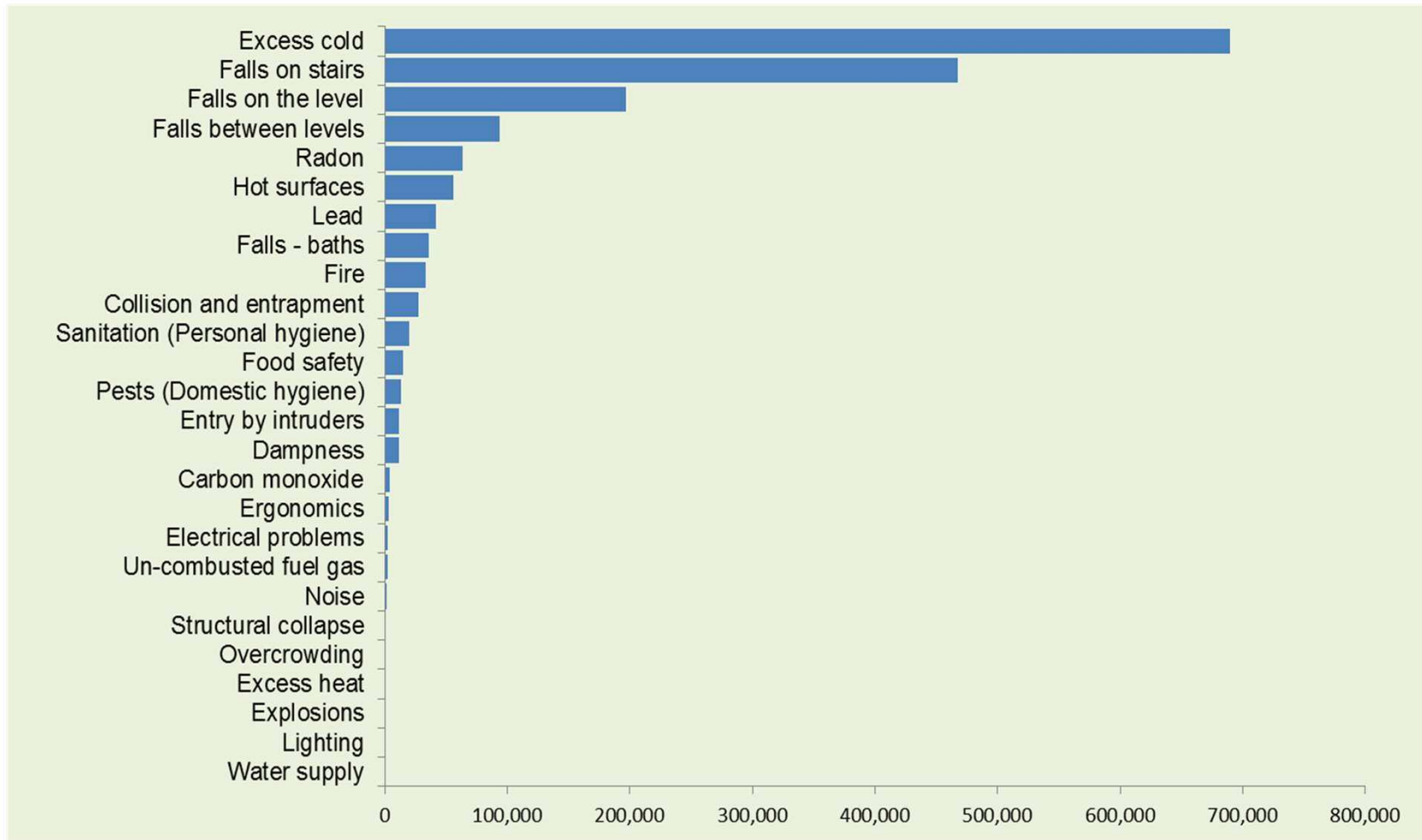
### Over 75s living in non-decent homes



Households headed by someone aged 75 or over are disproportionately likely to be living in a non-decent home, with more than 1 in 5 of these households living in a non-decent home. Worryingly, the number of over 75s living in non-decent homes rose from 533,000 in 2012 to 701,000 in 2017.



# Falls risk and cold homes





# Top Cat 1 Hazards: Falls

## *Quantifiable link – falls and housing characteristics*

Falls are reason for

- ▶ Over half of hospital admissions for accidental injury
- ▶ 10–25% of ambulance call-outs for older people
- ▶ Hip fractures cost £2b+ pa/£6m+ each day

# Top Cat 1 Hazards: Cold

## *Quantifiable links*

- *Respiratory illnesses*
- *COPD*
- *Heart disease*
- *Stroke risk*
- *Mental health*
- *Falls risk*

# Action to improve current homes

» Critical to health  
improvement

# Why improve existing homes?

## REALITY

- ▶ *Where most people live in later life (96%)*
- ▶ *Where most wish to live in later life (94%)*
- ▶ *Where some have no choice but to live*





# 80% of 2050 homes already built



# Diversity and inequality



- ▶ Geographical
- ▶ Financial
- ▶ Social





# Life expectancy (LE) & healthy LE

Where you live has a major effect on life expectancy, and number of years lived without ill health and/or disability (healthy life expectancy)

(ONS DATA 2019)

The life expectancy gap between the least and most deprived areas of England:

- ▶ *9.4 years for men*
- ▶ *7.4 years for women*

Healthy life expectancy gap:

- ▶ *19.1 years for men*
- ▶ *18.8 years for women*



# Top Cat 1 Hazards: Cold

## Potential Solutions

- ▶ CO reduction retrofit plans – *opportunity to make homes healthy & safe (remove other Cat 1 hazards esp. falls)*
- ▶ Job Creation & ‘levelling up’
- ▶ Digital health – *systems to monitor patient health also monitor homes for exacerbating factors & trigger a remedial response?*



# Top Cat 1 Hazards: Falls

## Potential Solutions



- ▶ NHS Prevention Plans, Anticipatory Care and Falls Prevention Pathways include housing interventions which home improvement agencies can offer e.g.
- ▶ *Holistic 'safe at home' assessment + remedial measures*
- ▶ *Handyperson for small works*
- ▶ *Fast-track adaptations*
- ▶ *Essential 'repairs for health' assistance*
- ▶ *Info, advice & help for self-funders*
- ▶ *Pro-active awareness raising - 'future proof your home'*

# Thank you for listening

*(and let's try to  
make a difference)*



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