

Accommodation Project: Staff Housing Needs Survey

Proposal & Options Paper

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Introduction

There is a need to conduct a Health & Care Housing Needs Survey (HNS) for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System (C&P ICS) to provide an insight and baseline view into the current housing arrangements for our workforce and how it impacts their daily life and what their aspirations are to live and work in the wider Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area. The information provided from the survey will support us in creating potential solutions to address the cost-of-living crisis and strengthen our case for truly affordable housing for key workers (both health and care) future proofing this provision in accommodation development.

The survey will ask about key worker's experience of accessing accommodation, as well as about their employment. The survey results will help obtain a clearer picture on demand and the range of staff affected.

Purpose

Available and affordable accommodation is nationally cited as one of the key blockers in delivering a successful International Recruitment programme. The cost-of-living crisis has now also exasperated the shortage of housing to the point that some IR recruits are not able to accept new roles within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and this is also impacting the retention and attraction of new and existing homegrown staff in both health and care.

Following receipt of funding in July 2022, two posts were recruited into the ICS Workforce team to support this area of significant challenge. A Band 7 1.0WTE Project Manager, specifically tasked with networking, scoping and identifying solutions to the issues being faced by all partner organisations, particularly those recruiting internationally and a Band 6 1.0WTE Project Support Manager who provides support and management to the accommodation project and the system's Recruitment and Retention enabling group.

The ICS accommodation project aims to address the accommodation challenges in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (C&P) in the following way:

1. Understand and identify the housing and accommodation need of its staff.
2. Consider what opportunities and options there could be across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to support key worker accommodation and underpin a sustainable staffing model for the future.

Following the appointment, the team has undertaken networking and scoping of the current accommodation landscape across all partner organisations in the ICS to identify what is happening at a local level and how it might inform the wider planning. However, as a system we require a baseline of understanding as to what the housing and accommodation needs are of all key workers (both health and care) so that we can evidence this against future opportunities and decision making moving forward.

In addition to assessing the position within the ICS, the team have engaged with organisations across England to gather intelligence about the issues, processes and potential solutions they are working through. It is clear that a number of organisations have undertaken staff accommodation surveys to help inform their decision making.

Context

We are recommending that C&P adopt a Staff Housing Needs Survey which has most recently been conducted by the South-West region and also Hampshire and Isle of Wight. We understand that this information and data is a moving landscape and that the information will be applicable only for the time of completion. However, we need this evidence so that we can align the specific needs of our key workers with the 2018 Diamond Affordability Housing Report and the upcoming 2022/23 edition of the report for Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and West Suffolk, identifying the gaps and changes that need to be made to the accommodation provision in the housing market. The Diamond Analysis Housing Report 2018 produced the following headlines for both Cambridge (see fig 1) and Peterborough (see fig 2) localities:

For Cambridge:

- There are households in every district who cannot afford even the lowest cost “affordable” housing.
- Based on average private rent levels, private rented housing does not reach as far “down” the income spectrum as might be imagined- polarised position between very low and high incomes.
- New-build, overall, provides a small amount of housing in proportion to existing homes and the turnover of existing homes.
- Private rented housing is also dominated by short term landlords, short term tenancies and (for residents) a lack of security and less of a feeling of “making home” in private rented housing.

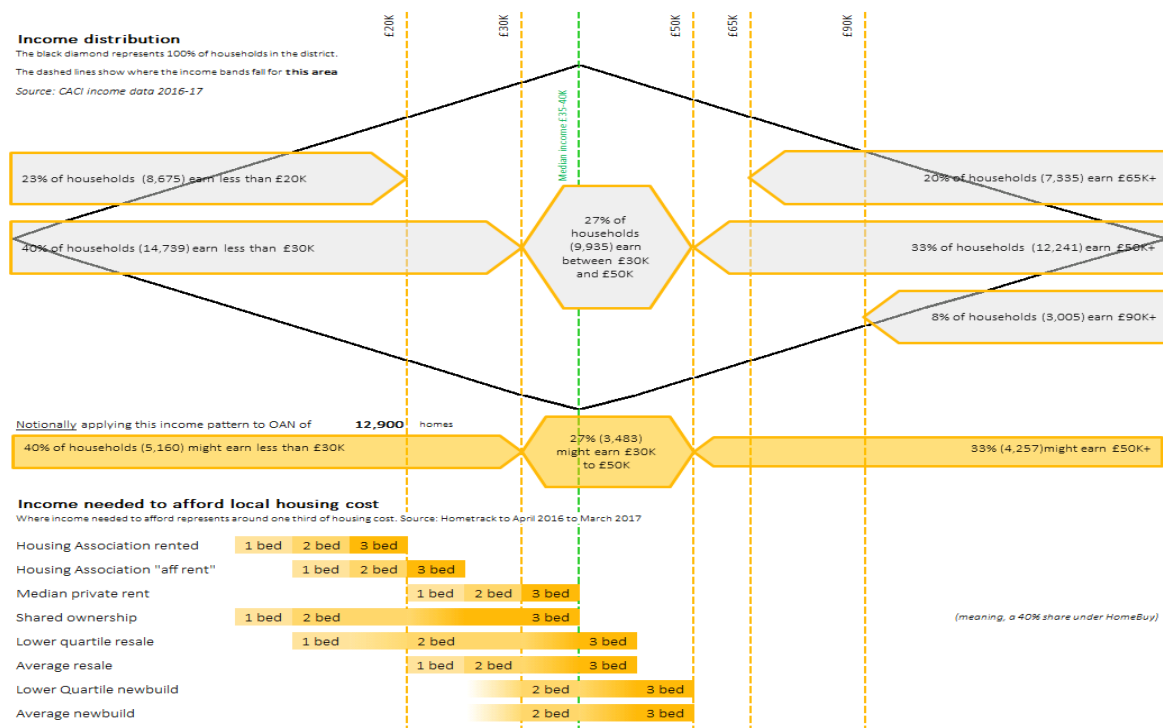


Figure 1

For Peterborough:

- A lack of housing options and supply for people on the very lowest incomes (15-20k).
- A middle market mostly provided for by private rented housing, which has a high turnover and low security but is often the only housing option available for those whose incomes are around the median income (30-50k).
- Marked gaps between the turnover of housing, the number of new homes built and the number of households in each income band.
- The reliance of some districts on private rented to meet housing needs in the middle of the market (30-50k pa).

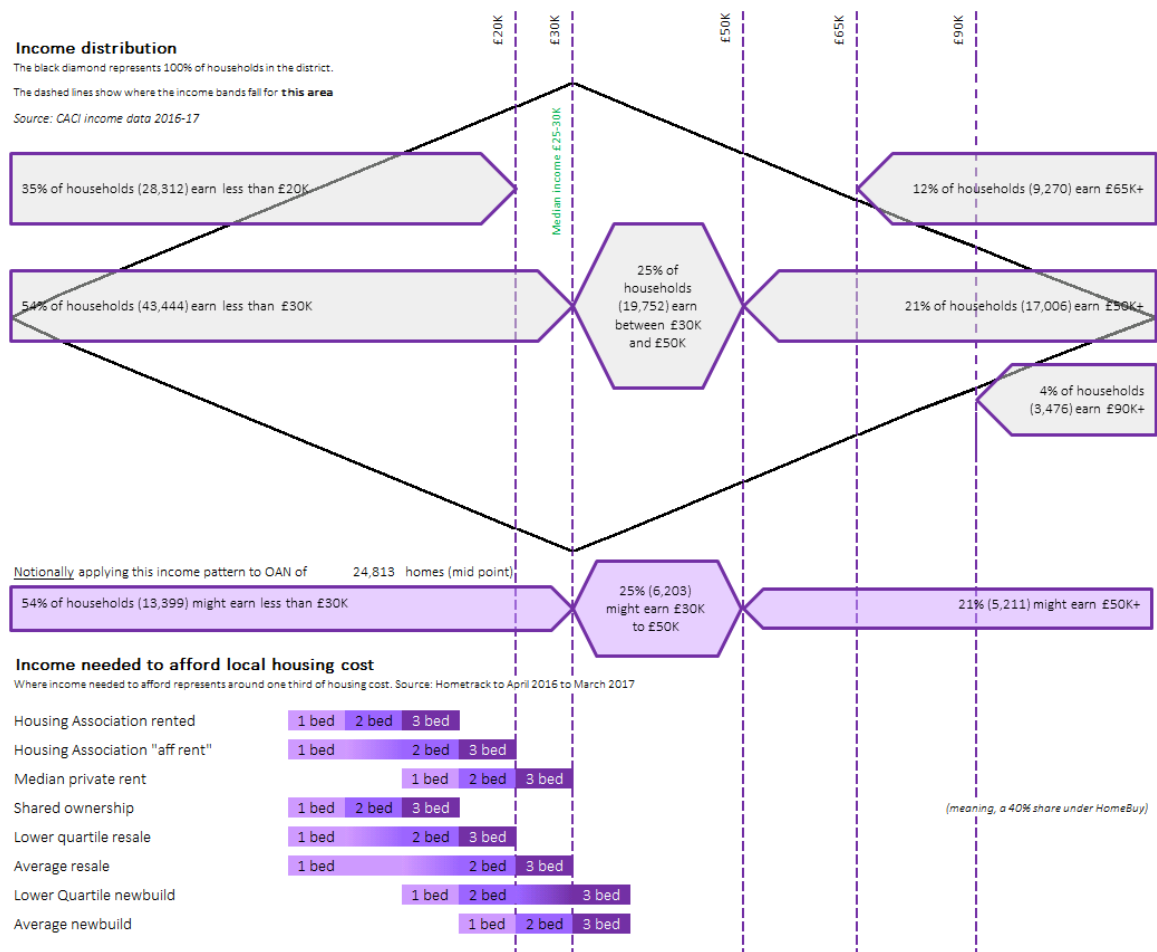


Figure 2

From discussions to date, the partners in the ICS are independently tackling the accommodation issue for their key workers. Addressing this from the perspective of the ICS will allow us to approach this collectively in a more efficient and cost-effective way, preventing duplication of effort and wasted resources.

Affordable and good quality accommodation forms part of the basic needs of an individual (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs). We as a system need to address the issue to protect and retain our one workforce, making C&P an attractive place to work. The accommodation project as a whole is referenced in the systems' Integrated Health and Wellbeing Strategy with one of the priority areas focussing on how to "Reduce poverty through better housing, skills and employment." (See fig. 3, pg 48 of the Integrated Health and Wellbeing Strategy). The strategy notes that by 2023, we as a system

will – “Work across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough with all our stakeholders to understand the challenges and work together to find solutions for suitable, affordable, and good quality accommodation for our workforce.”

4 Reduce poverty through better employment, skills, and housing

This especially recognises that the Health and Wellbeing Board/ICP partners are large employers within our local economy and the way we employ, treat our staff and commission services can have a big impact, as well as capturing work with wider partner organisations on the economy, employment, and health.

Local and combined authorities have a key role to play in improving housing across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough impacting the health of local people.

Better physical and mental health will improve employment for our local people.

By 2030 we plan to:

- Position our anchor institutions as employers of choice; inclusively providing local people with the right skills to work within their local community by commissioning services aligned to local community needs. These roles will deliver rewarding and sustainable careers to local people by local people investing in the local economy.

- Work across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough with all our stakeholders to understand the challenges and work together to find solutions for suitable, affordable, and good quality accommodation for our workforce.

We will achieve this by:

- Aligning workforce planning with population health needs. Proactively engaging with our stakeholders looking at the skills required for the future and inclusively providing opportunities to reduce poverty.
- Work with the local authorities and training providers to reach local communities to improve employment opportunities.
- Extend and adopt successful accommodation models across our Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area, learning from best practice and finding joint solutions.

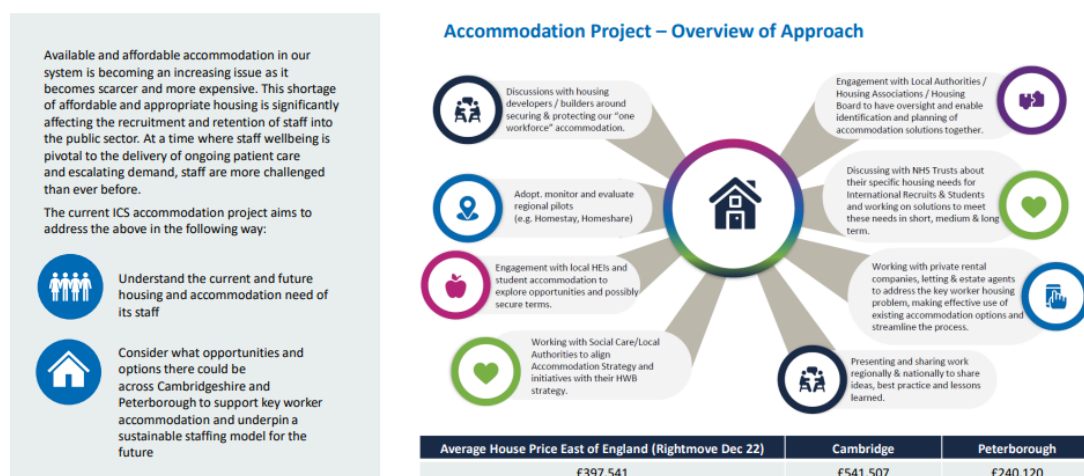
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Figure 3

In addition to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, key worker housing is also included in the system’s Estates Strategy, further evidencing the critical need to address the accommodation and housing issues we have as an ICS. (See Fig 4 and 5)

Workforce housing shortage – our response



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Figure 4

Overview

The availability of our system capital and revenue is challenged. As such, we need to use our resources wisely. Every estate decision we make has a direct impact on system costs. There is a need for us to be circumspect with our strategy, but this also be courageous in our innovation and collaboration and risk appetite in our approach to estate.

**Wider
One Public Estate**

We need to stop working as individual fragmented organisations when it comes to estates.

We must work together with a wider system mentality. This cannot be confined to just health partners, it needs to involve the wider public sector estate and in particular the estate of our colleagues in local authorities and blue light services.

**Leadership and
governance**

System leadership is underpinned by shared values and behaviours – via our Leadership Compact.

We also need greater emphasis on good governance and clear processes, workstreams and focussed leadership on estates.

An environment where we have an informed and focussed systems allows for well-considered decisions to be made.

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Quick Wins

We believe that quick win workstreams could be achieved with the right data and governance in place in terms of:

1. Reducing back-office accommodation
2. Identification of vacant surplus estate
3. Securing developer contributions and resourcing a focussed team to deliver the right property solutions for those contributions we have already secured.

Figure 5

It is vital that the accommodation/housing issues within our system are addressed, to ensure both our home-grown workforce and those recruited internationally, can afford to train, work and live in our system. The accommodation project will also align with the Green Plan for the ICS and its aspirations to go beyond the immediate health remit, looking into how buildings are constructed and managed but also starting to make the links between staff accommodation and economical, green staff transport options. The system is at risk of seeing workforce migrating across ICS boundaries if we don't get this right.

As part of the accommodation project, the Project Manager is now attending the Housing Board for Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and West Suffolk which hasn't previously had an NHS representative in attendance. The Housing Board is a senior officer group of local authorities, housing providers and partner agencies working collaboratively strategically and operationally. Since 2002 the Housing Board has worked collaboratively with partners to identify issues, gather data, explore solutions and implement change, sharing learning and experience across our housing market area around the Board's priorities. The Housing Board works to highlight the importance of housing and its pivotal role when issues require an integrated response across a range of organisations, areas and agendas. Our attendance in this space and having results from a system wide HNS will give us the opportunity to engage with providers and be sighted on upcoming developments and housing programmes ahead of time.

The results and analysis from the survey will help inform the overall Housing & Accommodation Strategy for key workers in the ICS. Reviewing our local authority / public health partners' housing strategies for their localities will allow us to create a strategy for the system that aligns with our partners independent strategies. These strategies need to complement one another and work in unison, for the benefit of our citizens and with the best interest of our 'one workforce' and the impact their living situation has on their wellbeing and the ability to care for the patients and citizens they serve. We will also be able to use the survey report in discussions with potential investors and developers, providing evidence of the system's requirements and encouraging the ICS to be considered for future opportunities.

Practicalities and Considerations

The following practical steps and considerations are required ahead of adopting the survey:

- The HNS has already been created by the South-west. The survey questions were communications, GDPR and EIA approved.
- The use of Microsoft Forms for the survey, enabling us to manage the survey and results and create a QR code to assist with engagement/responses.
- Engagement with ICB Communications Team and respective partner communications through the System's fortnightly Comms Cell meetings (support has already been agreed – details to be discussed.)
- Regular and consistent comms messaging across the ICS.
- Face to face engagement at partner organisation key sites (courtesy of the ICS workforce to team) to encourage responses. E.g., a stall in staff canteens, reception areas etc. QR code made available on lanyards for those working on the stalls.

Timeframe

The adoption of the HNS is still in the planning stages, however ideally the survey will be up and running from late Spring/early Summer. This is subject to the approval of this proposal and recommendation and also available funding/resource to support the analysis work, if not completed internally within the system.

Analysis

To reinforce the survey's value and for it to be referenced in future housing plans and developments for the system, the results of the survey will need to be analysed and reported. The information provided from the survey will support us in creating potential solutions to the cost-of-living crisis and strengthen our case for truly affordable housing for key workers (both health and care). This information will be used to support future proposals such as housing developments, corporate leases with private rental companies, relationship building with housing associations and estate agents and future planning such as modular housing.

We may require the survey responses and results to be analysed by subject matter experts. Work of this nature has been conducted recently by Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust (CUH) in 2019 and a report produced by Savills (one of the world's leading property agents) entitled "Assessing the Housing Need of Hospital Workers". The report combines information on the local housing market, as well as employment and survey data to understand current and future housing needs. At the time of producing the report, Savills' estimated the scale and types of housing need that exist within staff working on the campus. The intention was that this would enable the Trust to assess the feasibility of options available to assist their employees to find suitable housing.

There is the opportunity for the survey responses to be analysed internally via the Business Intelligence team in the ICB. Discussions have taken place with the Associate Director of Business Intelligence who is aware of the survey's intentions. This would be at no additional cost to the system. An agreement as to what the analysis would consist of would need to be reached prior to the analysis being conducted and report written. There is also the opportunity to procure a third-party supplier to conduct the analysis on the system's behalf. With the recent report produced by Savills for the survey implemented by CUH it may be beneficial to procure Savills to analyse and report on this wider survey data for the system. They would use the CUH data from the 2020 report combined with the new data collected in the 2022 survey for the rest of the ICS.

Early discussions have taken place with Savills and the initial quote for this work is between £30-50k. This would cover analysis of all partners taking part in the survey, including independent care providers across C&P. If the survey is shared to all care providers, this will open up the survey to our full workforce, estimated at approx. 50,000 staff members. The route for analysis will need to be agreed prior to the survey going live.

Benefits

Expected benefits and outcome of conducting the survey are having a better understanding and clarity on the ask for the system, which will enable us to approach the necessary partners, agencies, providers, developers as to what we need in terms of housing / accommodation provision for our staff.

Options for delivery

The following recommendations are put forward to the Recruitment and Retention Group, Supply Information and Planning and the ICB People Board for endorsement.

1. Adopt the South-west Housing Needs Survey with support of the ICB and all partner organisations. This will take place in two parts – the first part will be the survey itself, coordinated and facilitated by the ICS Workforce team with the support of ICB comms teams and partner comms. The second part will form the analysis and report of the survey results/responses. This may require funding for a third party to produce (e.g. Savills), or internal system resource may be able to analyse as part of the Business Intelligence team's portfolio of work.
2. Seek out the Housing Needs Assessments (HNA) being conducted by Local Authorities as part of their Housing Strategies and planning. HNA will identify housing issues and solutions that could be used to make strategic decisions related to the housing market. However, this approach is likely to take longer and will not provide a reflection of our workforce needs, only the geography for our population as a whole and the housing needs of all citizens, including the homeless and others on the register for affordable housing.
3. Not undertake the Health & Care Housing Needs Survey for the system. Partner organisations would use the housing market information available to predict and plan for their key worker accommodation needs without direct input and lived experience from their staff. Partners may continue to work in silos to address the accommodation challenges being faced.

The proposed recommendation for the system is Option 1. Conducting the HNS across both health and care partners in the ICS, will identify the scale and profile of housing need amongst key workers, providing evidence of where the pressures are greatest by work location, staff pay grade and job role and allow us to address what interventions could alleviate need, improving recruitment and retention, in particular the number, size and types of home required (and associated land requirement), and the necessary required discounts to current housing market prices.

Next Steps

Following decision from this recommendation report, the following steps will need to be taken:

- Engagement from all partners (both health and care).
- Timeline to be agreed for survey period.
- Survey to go-live, with communications support from ICB communications team.
- Approach to analysis and report to be agreed – third party supplier or produced internally with support from Business Intelligence.
- Confirmation of a lead within each organisation to drive staff engagement to undertake the survey
- Review of the questions to ensure they are all appropriate/required
- Confirmation that the results can be shared with 3rd party organisations as part of wider engagement.