

Research about collaborative housing and innovative practice in social care

The *Collaborative Housing and Innovative Practice in Social Care* project (CHIC, for short) is a two-and-a-half-year study funded by the National Institute of Health Research School for Social Care Research. The project began in March 2021, and its aim is to explore the ways in which different kinds of collaborative housing might help to meet the care needs of older people. Supporters of collaborative housing (by which we mean a wide range of different communities that includes cohousing, housing co-ops, self-managed retirement communities and more) believe that it might be a more supportive and caring environment to live in as we get older, when compared to other later life housing options. However, there is a lack of good quality research to back this up.

We are interested in working with your community as one of the six case in-depth case studies that will form our research, which – subject to residents’ agreement – would take place over a few days in summer / autumn 2021, with a similar follow-up visit in 2022.

The project is led by Professor Karen West at the University of Bristol, School for Policy Studies, working with a research team whose members have a long-term commitment to researching different kinds of collaborative housing, as well as research on housing and care. You can find more information about the project and the research team at: collabhousingcare.blogs.bristol.ac.uk/

How will the research be done?

Our two researchers would visit over a few days and carry out a number of interviews with individual residents, hold some small focus groups (of 8 to 10 people) and if possible also experience the shared life of the group by coming along to meetings, social events, communal meals and so on.

Each of these things would take place only with the clear agreement beforehand of the community as a whole, as well as with every individual who chose to take part. Because of the focus of our research on later life and care, our priority for who to include would be: those over 60; older adults with care needs or carers; and as far as possible an equal number of men and women. Where applicable, we might like to also talk to the family and carers of members of the community.

What will happen to the research?

The findings of this study will be reported to our research funders, the National Institute for Health Research School for Social Care Research, in academic journals, at conferences and in short videos. While your community will be named in this material, individual names will not be used.

What should I do next if I’m interested in taking part?

In the first instance, please contact who has offered to be our initial point of contact for the research. Or for further information, please contact:

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