

NEWS



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Deeds not words are what is required

"You are strong on intention and fine words, but you are short on delivery." This was the

damning accusation recently directed at the Chief Exec of the HS2 project by Bernard Jenkin MP. Having just read the Government's new Planning Practice Guidance – Housing for older and disabled people (published on 26th June 2019) – the same accusation could be equally applied here. Personally, I prefer the pithier "Gimme Action, Action, Action, not words" as demanded by Def Leppard on their classic Pyromania LP in 1983, but the meaning is the same.

We seem to be living through a time of hot air rhetoric just now, whether it's 'The Donald' with his 'fake news' and notoriously short attention span or Boris and his many and varied Brexit pronouncements. At a time when we crave some detail and some action, we get the latest offering from the Government on housing older people. It says all the right things, but stops woefully short of actually doing anything. It begins by recognising that

In mid-2016 there were 1.6 million people aged 85 and over; by mid-2041 this is projected to double to 3.2 million. Offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems.

Okay, good start... So what are we going to do about it? Well the PPG says that

Plan-making authorities should set clear policies to address the housing needs of groups with particular needs such as older and disabled people.

Yep, we got that bit...but what are we actually going to do? Well, it offers the following advice:

Where an identified need exists, plans are expected to... bring forward an adequate supply of accessible housing... It is up to the plan-making body to decide whether to allocate sites for specialist housing for older people.

So, Local Authorities should set out clear policies for the type and number of specialist housing units that should be provided via the Local plan process. They can then monitor how the supply is faring against the predicted demand and they can suggest adaptations and more stringent accessibility criteria for the new houses above that set out in Building Regs. That's great – but who's going to volunteer to provide this new housing? If there are no firm policies to actually designate areas or

a Government directive to actively allocate certain ratios of elderly housing across Local Plan allocated Housing sites, how will this ever be delivered?

Take the demand for well-designed, well-located bungalows for the elderly for example. That is at an all-time high. However, when the competition for buying the land to build them on comes from volume housebuilders, how can any developer derive enough site value from a spacious, low rise development of bungalows against a typical, modern, shoe-horned scheme of 2 and 3 storey townhouses to outbid a national housebuilder? If housing sites remain unallocated or ratios remain unspecified, which developer is going to build one bungalow instead of 3 or 4 townhouses offering ten times the saleable square footage?

Local Authorities should be made to go much further in helping specialist developers to deliver this type of housing. Until Local Planning departments actually look at the huge demand for elderly accommodation and actively plan for it and allocate sites with elderly housing ratios – rather than merely facilitate its delivery – this problem will keep on growing.

We all know there is a huge need for more housing generally across the UK but we have to get much more sophisticated in how we deliver it. If we just leave it to the volume housebuilders to keep buying farmer's fields and then structuring the delivery of new housing around their construction capacity and manipulation of demand to keep prices high then the problem won't get solved. By allocating proportions of sites in certain areas to accommodate a percentage of low-density, single-storey housing and apartments for extra care and/or retirement living, then the houses currently occupied by single elderly people or couples can be freed up to provide family housing which already exists, albeit under-occupied.

As an industry we are not taken seriously enough by Central Government when we talk about the impending crisis facing elderly accommodation and care. I'll leave the final word to the philosophers Def Leppard:

*Is anybody out there?
Anybody there?
Does anybody wonder?
Anybody care?*

Danny Sharpe, Director
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Recognition for Go Apply with Business Excellence Award for Innovation

Go Apply are delighted to be winners of the Observer Business Excellence Awards for Innovation 2019.

Managing Partner, Steve O'Brien said "I am so proud of the team in achieving this important recognition for the services we have developed." Regarding client focus he highlighted "There is such a need for our services, organisations addressing the staffing issue now will be ahead of the game in coming years, and with our support be more profitable!"

The award for innovation was based on our new angled focus for supporting care homes and social care organisations arrest the rising industry internal vacancy levels. The problem will not improve as all the latest reports highlight. Bringing new people into the sector is proving to be a challenge and the overspend on temporary agency staff is on the rise according to the latest CQC State of Care report. Attracting a younger demographic is important in order to replace those who will retire in the next few years. This is made even more vital when you consider that a further 650,000 job places will need to be filled by 2035 to cope with the care needs of an ageing population.

These clear reviews and official warnings prove that solutions are essential. By offering an innovative alternative to traditional temporary staff agencies and permanent placement agencies we can significantly reduce costs and damaging agency reliance, offer improved continuity of staff, plus a legacy to our clients for the future. This is also a service that we guarantee based on results.

The Go Apply objective is to support healthcare organisations across the UK with innovative internal recruitment solutions and pursue the following client goals:

1. Reduce agency spend / reliance
2. Reduce internal vacancies
3. Improve the candidate hiring experience

For more information visit:
www.goapply.co.uk