



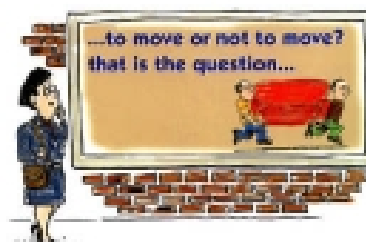
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Housing Options for Older People (HOOP)



**Report on a developmental project to
refine a housing option appraisal tool
for use by older people**

Frances Heywood, Anne Pate, Robin Means,
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Purpose of the project

This report concerns the testing of an option appraisal tool designed to help older people who are considering whether or not to move house. Housing Options for Older People (HOOP) was developed during an earlier pilot phase as a way of making a thorough and holistic assessment of a person's current housing situation. (Heywood and Means, 1997) The purpose of the second phase was to test the HOOP tool in genuine advice situations with a sufficient range of older people to establish whether it could help them make complex housing and support decisions and clarify the information they needed.

To move or not to move: the problem for individuals

In 'young' old age, some people may make moves for a whole range of positive reasons and subsequently enjoy many happy and fulfilling years in their new homes. It is in 'older' old age that the real pressures come for the majority, as people are faced with reduced physical ability, static or reducing income, bereavement, loneliness and growing vulnerability to crime and accidents in the home. All these are factors which may push older people into looking for a move to somewhere which will be cheaper and easier to run, more suitably designed or located and offering more human company, more security from crime and reassurance in case of an accident.

It is not easy for people to make housing choices in later life because of the uncertainties around personal circumstances and the availability of support. The rich literature that existed around this issue nourished the idea of

producing HOOP: see, for example, Steinfeld (1981), Oldman (1990) Ellis (1993) Suffolk and Mid Suffolk (1993) McCafferty (1994) Bradford, Mares and Wilkins (1994) Langan, Means and Rolfe (1996) Clark et al (1996 & 1998). Decisions may be made in response to a crisis and without adequate information or time to reflect. For some people it is also physically difficult to go and look at the possible options, and they may have to depend on someone else to take them. Potential problems include whether the sort of property they require exists, whether it is affordable and whether they can find out about it. Finally, there is the key issue of whether the move solves their problems or turns out to be a mistake.

Benefits to society

It is in the interests of society to improve housing options for older people. Good housing can reduce care and health costs and improve the quality of life for older people and for their families. Housing providers who have a good understanding of the needs of older people will minimise the costs of 'hard to let' properties. Those of us who are not yet old may also be glad in future that we established improved mechanisms for helping older people to identify and realise the best possible housing and support option for them.

The HOOP development project

The Housing Options for Older People (HOOP) development project involved the appointment of a researcher/housing advice worker for one year part-time, based in the national advice charity, Elderly Accommodation Counsel.

During the project HOOP was used with 58 older people, a pilot of 10 followed by a further 48 interviews after adjustments had been made to the tool. The sample represented different income, tenure, location, age, race, gender and household composition groups (see Appendix A for a full profile). The project was funded by the Housing Corporation and was run collaboratively by the School for Policy Studies (University of Bristol), the Faculty of Health and Social Care (University of the West of England) and the Elderly Accommodation Counsel. An Advisory Group drawn from agencies

working with older people was established to advise the development team and monitor the project.

The objectives of the project were:

- To learn more about common issues and preferences affecting housing choices amongst older people; and amongst younger people who are looking ahead to their old age.
- To establish whether a tool of this kind would be helpful to older people and advisers.
- To use HOOP with a sample of older people to enable them to:
 - consider and articulate what their key housing requirements were, both for the present and the future (recognising emotional and aesthetic factors as well as the purely practical);
 - measure how well their existing housing met these requirements;
 - identify what information they required to enable them to assess alternative housing options from a sound knowledge base;
 - appraise the available options against their requirements.
- To further refine HOOP in view of learning from the above.
- To assist information and advice providers to identify deficiencies in either the scope or the accessibility of services.

Anne Pate, the researcher/advice worker employed by Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC), conducted the majority of the advice sessions, but interviews were also conducted by Frances Heywood (University of Bristol), David Wagstaffe (EAC), and three interviewers employed on a sessional basis.

The project has built on the work of many other agencies and, as will be seen, has not come up with any ‘magic wand’ solution. We would rather HOOP was seen as another small step in improving our understanding of the issues and in developing more sensitive and appropriate services. We hope other people will take up what is valuable in HOOP and carry it forward in a variety of new ways.

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Chapter 2

Helping older people make housing and support decisions

Housing agencies in general have a long history of being aware of and attempting to provide for the housing needs of older people. When an older person needs help about their housing, however, they may have difficulty in knowing where to start or in getting the information they need. Alternatively the situation may be more complex than at first appears. The following two examples, which are compilations based on real cases, illustrate these two points and some of the reasons why housing decisions facing older people may be particularly difficult.

Example A: Mr S

Mr S is a 68 year old man who lives alone in a small ninth floor flat which he has rented from the council for the last 35 years. He has lived in the area since he was 20, and apart from a brief spell living in digs' after the war, he has always been a council tenant. Mr S has no family locally, having divorced when he was 33. He has worked intermittently in a variety of labouring jobs during his life, but since a road accident when he was 50 he has lived on benefits. He recently had his left hip replaced, and is hoping to have an operation on the right hip soon as it is very painful and his mobility is suffering.

Mr S is increasingly isolated as he is not always able to go out. The building has lifts which do not always work and are not repaired quickly when broken; Mr S cannot manage the stairs. He relies on a friend of his, Mr F, to bring him shopping when he needs it, but Mr F is himself experiencing stress due to looking after his wife, who recently had a stroke.

The general practitioner (GP) is concerned that Mr S is becoming depressed and lonely, so he has contacted social services on his behalf. A social worker has visited Mr S but he did not want to attend the day centres suggested, and was told that help with cleaning, which he does want, is no longer provided by the council. The social worker did say that if no-one else is able to do Mr S's shopping they might be able to arrange a home help, but when she explained about the charge for the service Mr S decided to continue relying on his friend. He is disgusted that he is being asked to pay, and says he thinks social services are a waste of time.

The GP has also written to the council housing department asking them to arrange a transfer for Mr S to ground-floor accommodation, preferably in a sheltered flat. Mr S is keen on this idea but the GP has warned him that it may be some time before he can move, as the waiting list is so long. The council have not yet visited Mr S to discuss the application for transfer.

Meanwhile, Mr S has been wondering if there are any other ways he could find alternative accommodation. He has been thinking about moving back to his childhood home of Kent, where several of his cousins and their families still live. However, he has had no contact with them for many years.

Mr S is having difficulty washing and dressing himself, but no-one has told him he might be eligible for Attendance Allowance, which would be a great help financially. Mr S is becoming increasingly desperate to move. He is often unwell and he recently had his phone cut off as he could not pay the bill. He finds day-to-day living so exhausting that he cannot face making further enquiries about his housing, and he does not know where to go to seek help.

Example B: Mrs J

Mrs J is 76 year old woman who has lived alone since the death of her husband three years ago. Mrs J has lived most of her married life in her 4-bedroom 1930's house located in a suburb of a northern town. She brought her family up there, and was born in a village less than five miles away.

Now that she lives alone Mrs J is finding the house too big for her. She has difficulty in keeping it clean and affording the bills. She has a state pension and a small private pension and has to budget carefully. She is in generally good health but has arthritis in her knees which makes climbing stairs hard work. Recently she was ill with influenza which meant she could not get out to the shops. Neighbours surprised her by helping out, but Mrs J knows that they all lead busy lives, and does not want to have to ask for their help again.

Mrs J has two sons – one lives in Australia, and the other, Mark, lives in London. Mark is an accountant who works long hours; he visits his mother every three months for the weekend and they speak on the phone regularly. Mark is worried about Mrs J and how she is managing, and she is feeling guilty about this. Since Mrs J's illness Mark has been suggesting that she considers selling her house and buying a sheltered flat nearer to where he lives. He has even started to make enquiries and has offered to take her to visit a scheme which he says she will love.

Mrs J is really confused about what she should do. She is very attached to her house and particularly to the garden, although she is finding it hard to manage. In fact, she often feels upset about the state it is in compared to its former glory. She has tried without success to find gardening help she can afford.

Mrs J's friends in the area are less frequent visitors now. One of them recently moved into a residential home; others have died; and her closest friend is unable to go out unless taken by car. Mrs J visits this friend when well enough, but she misses the active social life she used to enjoy. Until two years ago Mrs J went regularly to evening classes, but after having her bag snatched in the street she has stopped going out after dark.

Mrs J has not talked to any advice agencies about her housing situation. She is worried that if she does this will be committed to taking action, and anyway she does not know who would be the best people to talk to. She has told Mark that she will go and look at the sheltered housing scheme, because she

thinks that refusing to do so would be ungrateful after all his efforts on her behalf. However, she has also told him that she thinks she can manage where she is and that she does not want to move. He hopes she will change her mind when she sees how pleasant the sheltered scheme is.

Despite telling Mark that she does not want to move, Mrs J keeps thinking that perhaps she should. She has talked to one or two friends about this, and has received mixed advice. One friend said that at their age it was the best thing to do, just in case she needs help at any stage; another has a cousin living in a sheltered flat who has never liked it and wishes she had not moved. Mrs J does not know whose advice she should follow, and she really is not sure what she wants herself.

On the one hand, Mrs J thinks it would be nice to have someone available to call on if emergency help was needed; she also assumes that the warden would do her shopping for her if necessary. Also, she is a sociable person and the company of other tenants would be good. Finally, she would like to see more of Mark, who has promised that he would be able to see her much more often if she did move.

On the other hand, Mrs J is realistic and knows that Mark is often working, sometimes abroad. She thinks she might not see him quite so often as he says. Also, she has lived in the same area all her life, and cannot imagine living anywhere else. The main reason for her doubts, though, is the thought of the emotional and physical upheaval which leaving her home would involve.

Mark knows that his mother might need persuading to do what he believes is in her best interest. He is more worried about the practicalities, as property in her area is hard to sell and he has been warned to be careful about lease arrangements when buying sheltered housing. He has not yet discussed these issues with his mother as he does not want her to worry, but he has talked to a friend who recently helped her father move into sheltered housing.

Discussion: The housing problems of old age

These two examples show different aspects of issues which affect thousands of older people and their families every day. They show how hard decisions can be, not just in terms of choosing between imperfect options but because so often there are elements of uncertainty: aspects of the future which cannot be known and aspects of life where it is hard for people to know what they feel and what they want. Why, then, do so many decide to move? List 1. shows some of the 'push' factors towards considering a move in terms of the deficiencies of their present accommodation.

- housework problematic
- maintenance problems
- cold and damp
- too far from family
- problems with stairs
- loneliness, after bereavement
- no longer being able to drive
- neighbour nuisance
- garden problematic
- disrepair
- high costs
- inaccessible baths
- crime or fear of crime
- anxiety about ability to cope in case of accident or illness
- not wishing to become burden on friends or relatives

List 1. 'Push' factors for older people to move

However, older people often perceive moving to different accommodation in more positive terms – these are 'pull' factors for older people in terms of the perceived attractiveness of alternative housing options (List 2).

- Closer to relatives
- More company
- Pleasant area to move to
- Support available when ill
- Crime free
- Pleasant surroundings
- Releases equity
- no garden (or smaller one)
- nearer bus routes
- nearer centre of town
- still robust enough to re-settle
- smaller and so more manageable
- more accessible for older people
- Affordable

List 2: 'Pull' factors to alternative accommodation

However, it is also known that many older people are reluctant to move in later life. These are because of the 'pull' factors in terms of 'staying put' (List 3).

- retaining independence
- deep attachment to the home and/or garden
- sense of achievement
- memories associated with the home
- fear of the unknown
- liking more space than other people consider 'necessary'
- cost of moving
- retaining status
- sense of security in the home
- home owned outright
- comfort in a place tailored to suit
- attachment to furniture
- desire to keep the possibility of family visits 'home'
- lack of energy to move

List 3. 'Pull' factors to stay put

Even when an older person is clear about the need to move or stay put, the way forward may be highly problematic. For those wishing to move, there may be a shortage of properties of the right size and design at affordable prices in the right locations. For those deciding to stay put, there may be real difficulties in accessing support services.

Meeting housing and support needs in later life: the policy and practice framework

Practical services

Over the last forty years, there has been a series of important initiatives responding to the housing and support needs of older people living in their own homes (Means and Smith, 1998). The development of HOOP needs to be understood in this context. Early developments included the provision of home helps and meals on wheels: both bringing intensely practical help (housework, shopping and hot food) to people's own homes. In addition the generous and broad ranging provisions of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 made a wide range of support services potentially available including the provision of telephone and of adaptations. Another major development was the rise of sheltered housing, with the concept of a 'good neighbour' warden on site who would help out in emergencies. There has

been the growth of home improvement and home adaptation grants such as home repair assistance and disabled facilities grants. Then there was the creation of home improvement agencies (often called 'Staying Put' or 'Care and Repair') to help older people carry out such repairs and improvements by drawing upon this grant infrastructure and other sources of financial help. Technological developments have led to the introduction of entry-phones, smoke detectors, security measures and alarm pulls or pendants linked to a central control.

If all these measures were available to any older person who needed them, many of the problems identified in the two case studies could be solved. But provision has never been in proportion to the scale of need, and in the course of the 1990s the provision of housework services by local authorities to those who do not also need personal care has been much reduced. Home help resources have been prioritised to provide much needed home care for people who in the past would have had no choice but to go into residential accommodation. Other types of support such as disabled facilities grants are only available after long delays. Many services are confined, through lack of resources, to the very poorest and/or the most severely impaired, leaving a great swathe of older people without help or support, left to sink or swim as best they can. Other services such as sheltered housing have evolved so that they now often offer support to those with much greater levels of frailty and ill health than used to be the case.

Information, advice and advocacy

Just as various imaginative practical services have developed over time, so there have been responses, mainly from the voluntary sector, to older people's need for information or advice on issues relating to housing (Parry and Means, 1999). Apart from the long established Citizens Advice Bureaux, important sources of help may be Age Concern groups, or home improvement agencies. The Elderly Accommodation Counsel was set up specifically to help people looking for information on nursing and care homes, but now has an ever broader national database on a great range of accommodation for older people. Individual housing associations have prepared some excellent information materials. For example Hanover Housing Association linked

theirs to a roadshow that has toured the country offering advice and information. Local authorities also offer information, either in housing offices or at more all-purpose neighbourhood offices and often also in leaflets and through their library services.

However, to outline this impressive array of advice services can easily obscure the key questions about their relationship to the housing and support needs of older people. Are such services available throughout the country? The answer is of course no. Are older people aware of the services that are available and are they successful in accessing them? Are existing advice services geared to meeting the housing and support needs of older people? Do advice services have adequate knowledge of all the options? Do they have the time and the expertise to help older people to think through how they understand their present situation and how they want to move forward.

Recent research has confirmed a situation of both scattered good practice but also uncertainty about what kind of agency is most efficient at delivering housing advice to older people (Parry and Means, 1999; Minter and Russell, 1999). Minter and Russell confirmed the low usage by older people of general housing advice services while older people's agencies often lacked detailed housing knowledge. They call for a wide range of local agencies to work much more closely together with the aim of providing services which span information, advice, support and advocacy.

Our own awareness of deficiencies in existing advice services suggested the need for an option appraisal approach and hence the development of HOOP. More specifically it was hoped that an option appraisal approach could incorporate the following central elements:

1) a holistic assessment of current housing, not distorted by concentration on a problem

The HOOP tool was designed to help people think through their housing situation carefully and get the information they need to enable them to make the best possible housing choices. It begins by asking them to make an holistic assessment of their current home. One of the key points of this

is that they should record what is right with their house as well as any problems. This is to give recognition to staying put 'pull' factors and encourages both the older person and the interviewer/adviser to consider what they stand to lose by moving and whether a new housing option would be as satisfactory overall as their existing home.

2) A means of communicating to relatives and professionals

Not all older people need help in clarifying to themselves how they feel about their housing. One of the characteristics of old age is that there is plenty of time to think and we found that many people interviewed had been thinking about their housing situation for months or often years. The potential of HOOP is to enable them to make their views clear to relatives and professionals especially where these disagree about what is best for the older person.

3) Structured time to understand complex housing situations in complex lives

The examples at the start of the chapter illustrate what all the agencies working with older people know: that people's lives are very complex and that housing problems and decisions are mixed up with the complexities of family life, money, deep issues concerning relationships, identity, security and other factors not normally included in an assessment of housing need.

In the example of Mrs J, the perspective of the son is easily understood. The house is too big for his mother, she can't manage the garden and she's obviously lonely. What could be more simple than a move to sheltered accommodation nearer to him? He envisages a friendly helpful warden to help out with little jobs, and built in companionship from the other residents. Unacknowledged in his mind may be his own feelings of forlornness when he visits his childhood home and sees it so empty and increasingly shabby. He may also have a growing sense of the weight of responsibility for his mother's safety and well-being, combined with guilt that he doesn't go to see her more often.

Unrecognised by him may be his mother's deep attachment to the area and the closeness she feels to her husband in the house and garden they worked on together.

The idea of HOOP is that it will give time and space for her to explain some of these things, or to express them through the scores given.

The situation could, of course, be the other way round. The son might be assuming that his mother is too attached to her home to want to move, whilst she in fact is finding it all too much but cannot quite tell him so.

It is to assist older people in getting help in these difficult situations that HOOP has been devised. The way in which it works is explained in the next chapter.



Chapter 3

The revised HOOP tool and a guide to using it

In the light of what we learnt from the development project, we have revised the hard copy version of the HOOP tool. **This chapter presents the tool in its improved version** and gives guidance on when and how to use it. Chapter 4 shows the computer version as it was during the development. The main changes we have made are explained in Chapter 8. Chapter 8 also includes more ideas for use of the computer version of HOOP.

When to use HOOP

During the development project, a range of referral sources were used, in order to reach a wide variety of people at different points in the process of seeking advice and making decisions. From this it emerged that it is important to identify people who were likely to benefit from the HOOP questionnaire, ensure that people interviewed understand its purpose and not use it inappropriately.

The essential purpose of HOOP is to clarify the housing and support needs of older people for themselves (and for agencies), and to identify their information needs. This may be an unusual concept for many people, more accustomed to forms which determine eligibility for services or benefits. In some cases interviewees decided not to proceed once they realised what was being offered was an overview of their housing situation rather than a form assessing their eligibility for services.

In the light of this experience we have introduced the page headed “Will HOOP be useful to you?”. This invites the enquirer to consider for themselves where they are on the spectrum of decision making and to decide whether or not to proceed.

It also introduces the idea that HOOP is to be used flexibly – with not all parts relevant to all people.

How to use HOOP:

Sending out forms in advance

The advice worker at EAC carried out some initial pilot interviews. The first seven respondents had not seen HOOP before the interview, which made the interview feel somewhat like a test rather than an opportunity for reflection. All the subsequent interviewees therefore had the appraisal tool sent to them in advance and had the option of completing it themselves prior to interview.

The content of the interviews therefore varied depending on whether the interviewee had already completed the appraisal tool, which itself depended on such issues as literacy and eyesight as well as inclination.

Time taken

Most interviews took around 90 minutes, including time spent summarising the person's information and advice needs, and meeting these needs at least in part. Where necessary the interviewers sent additional written information to interviewees after the interview. The option of a second interview for further discussion of options was offered where the interviewer felt it might be helpful. Only one person was visited more than once, but there were a number of telephone queries to the Elderly Accommodation Counsel seeking further information – including one four months after the interview.

Interviewing couples

A number of couples were interviewed for the project, and in each case they were offered the option of completing separate appraisal forms. None of the couples opted to do this; some nominated one person as the sole or main interviewee, whilst others answered together. This sometimes resulted in differences of opinion and quite animated discussion.

Flexible use

Although HOOP is a structured appraisal tool which proceeds through a number of categories and questions in an ordered way, the interviewers found it could be used flexibly. For example, the sections on looking to the future and on ranking categories in terms of priority were often omitted by interviewees – the former because some people did not want to confront these issues, the latter because in many cases all categories were seen as equally important.

Furthermore, many people in answering the questions supplied information relevant to questions which would be asked later in the interview, and clearly the interviewers could note these answers down for future use. Also, sensitivity to the situation of individuals was very important; for example, one man spoke during his interview about how he felt unable to cope, and the questions about managing, particularly the overall category score, were difficult for him. It is to be expected that there will quite often be painful aspects to these interviews as a person's identification with their home may be very deep [See for instance, Gurney and Means 1993, *The Meaning of Home in Later Life*].

HOOP step by step

The reader will now be taken through the HOOP questionnaire section by section, with explanatory notes where necessary.

The pages enclosed with a border are the questionnaire; the plain pages are additional commentary included for the purpose of the report.

Housing Options for Older People (HOOP)

The Questionnaire

New Version March 1999

Purpose

This questionnaire is designed to help people who are trying to decide whether or not to move home in later life.

When someone is asked whether or not they like their home, it can be difficult to answer. They may love the house or flat, but no longer like the neighbourhood. They may like the big rooms and garden but find them expensive to heat or keep up, or hard work to manage. Could something be done to deal with the problems, or is a move the answer?

The questionnaire invites you to look at nine different aspects of your home, one by one, to help clarify which things are right and where there are problems.

Its purpose is to help you think through the good and bad points – the ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors about moving or staying – and to find out more about available options that are relevant to your situation.

What you have to do

‘Do it yourself’ or ‘interviewer service’ – the choice is yours.

This form is designed for you to fill in yourself, at your leisure, *if you would like to do so*. If you would rather wait and have the interviewer fill the form in with you, that’s fine too. The choice is yours.

If you are doing it yourself ...

1. Go through Sections 1 to 11 in turn

After a few introductory questions, each section is about a different aspect of your home: the size of it, the condition it’s in, the location and so on.

Fill in ‘Yes’, ‘No’ or any comments for each question. There are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers. What you choose to put is entirely up to you.

You will then be asked to give the score out of ten to show how you feel about each particular aspect of your home. If you are not sure about the scoring, please see the explanation at the back of the questionnaire.

2. Fill in the Chart at Section 11 with all your scores.

At this point you will have completed the assessment of your current housing. We hope this will be a useful starting point for thinking through what choices you have, or what information would be helpful.

3. You can then do any of Sections 12 to 16 you think are relevant to you, or leave them and the interviewer will go through them with you. The questions in Section 15 and 16 particularly concern the options you have and information you might want.

If you have any trouble with the questionnaire, don’t worry about it! The interviewer will be happy to go through it all with you if this is what you prefer.

Commentary: Will HOOP be useful to you?

This section has been introduced to ensure that interviews start off on a sound footing, with misunderstandings avoided. The interviewer should use the section to come to an agreement with the respondent about where to start.

If for example the person has put themselves in category A:

“Mind is made up: information relevant only to this choice is wanted” they can, as suggested, just give a few key facts about themselves and turn straight to the issue of what information they want, at Section 16.

It is possible that a person in this category may have suffered from lack of full information when they made their decision, and there may be a chink of hesitation which ought, for their sake, to be explored. However, on the whole our experience with this group is that if people have gone through a long, painful decision making process and have finally made up their minds, they do not want to be dragged through it all again.

If they are in category B:

“Just gathering information at this stage, not necessarily going to take action at present, the interviewer can negotiate with the respondent about how much of HOOP they want to use.

People in category C:

“Facing a housing dilemma, but uncertain and open minded about the solution” – are the group for whom HOOP is most suited. This includes those who may be being pushed by someone else into making a decision before they themselves feel ready to do so. Even though the whole process should be useful, the interviewer may still judge that its best to encourage the respondent to state the problem in their own terms to start with (see *Commentary: Section 1 / Introduction / Thinking about moving*, below).

This process of starting where the client is even more important with those who put themselves in category D:

“Issue not primarily about physical aspects of housing” – need to talk and may need support; may need different, non housing kinds of information.

This development project confirmed the findings of Minter and Russell (1999) on the importance of the last group and hence on the need to offer help which spans information, advice, support and advocacy. Housing issues do not exist in isolation; they are bound up with the most intricate complexities of peoples lives and it may be that attention has to be paid to a non housing issue before or at the same time as a housing issue is addressed.

We hope this whole section will enable interviewers to use their skill to judge, in consultation with the respondent, whether HOOP will be useful and which parts of it to use or whether to use a different approach altogether.

A more detailed taxonomy of potential types of enquirers, which may be useful to advice workers, is given at Appendix B.

Will HOOP be useful to you?

Before you go any further, please read these descriptions and look to see which best fits you. The notes below will indicate whether or not HOOP is likely to be helpful.

A. You have made up your mind to move, or you have to move for some reason, and want some information to help you achieve this.

If this is you, the questionnaire will probably not be helpful or appropriate for you. Please just fill in questions 1–11 of Section 1 (Introduction) and Section 16.

B. You are not planning any action just yet, but want to gather information about housing options now so as to be prepared for the future.

Filling in the questionnaire may be helpful if you want to clarify your thoughts – or you could just give a score out of ten for each category in the chart at Section 11. Otherwise Section 16 – and perhaps Section 13 may be all you need at this stage.

C. You have thought about moving but cannot make up your mind. Or perhaps another person has suggested it, but you're not sure. You would like to talk the issue through with someone.

If this describes you, you are in the group of people for whom HOOP has been chiefly designed – to fill in and talk through with an interviewer.

D. You have a problem but housing is only part of it. You need to talk the problem, including the housing issue, through with someone.

Filling in the questionnaire may be helpful if you want to clarify your thoughts – or you could just give a score out of ten for each category in the chart at Section 11. Otherwise Section 16 – and perhaps Section 13 may be all you need at this stage.

Commentary: Section 1 / Introduction

Basic questions

HOOP begins with straightforward factual questions about the type of property, tenure and so on in which the person currently lives; how long they have lived there; who else is in the household; whether there are pets, a garden, a car; whether they have help in the home; whether they need extra room for activities or visitors.

This section gives the interviewer a broad brush picture of the person in their home and enables them to have a better understanding of answers given later, and to make more appropriate prompts where necessary.

Thinking about moving

The next section asks what has caused the person to think about moving, whether it is their own idea or they have felt under pressure from anyone else and whether they are already wanting to move or are planning for the future.

It is important for the interviewer to understand early on both what the main "push" factor is, if there is one, and whether there is pressure from elsewhere. It may also be a relief for the interviewee to be invited to consider this question honestly.

This is a very important stage in the interview and the respondent is likely to bring out all the key issues, if they have not already done so. It may take 20 minutes or so, but the interviewer should recognise the importance of what is being said, not be impatient and be ready to pick points up later on.

Section 1

Introduction

A few basic questions about your home:

1. How long have you lived here?	
2. What type of property is it? (e.g. a 2-bedroom flat, 4-bed terraced house)	
3. Do you rent it (council, housing association, private) or own it? (freehold/leasehold – outright or with a mortgage)	
4. Is there a garden?	
5. How many people including yourself, live in your home?	
6. Do you have any pets?	

And about yourself

7. Your age?	
8. Do you have a car or access to a car?	
9. Do you have any paid help in the house? (window cleaner, home help, help with the garden)	
10. Do you have any interests or activities that require extra space in your home?	
11. Has retirement increased your need for space at home?	
12. Is it important to you to have room for family or friends to stay?	

And about moving

13. What has caused you to think about a move?	
14. Is it basically your idea, or have you felt under pressure (however slight) from others?	
15. Is it the present situation which is making you think about moving, or is it more because you are looking to the future?	Present <input type="checkbox"/> Future <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(If you have ticked 'future', there are some more detailed questions later at Section 13)</i>

Commentary: Sections 2 – 10

The older person is asked to make a subjective assessment of how well their home suits them in each of nine categories. The categories are:

- size and space
- condition of the property
- comfort and design
- location
- managing
- costs
- physical security and safety
- independence
- well being and quality of life

These nine categories were developed during the earlier pilot stage (Heywood and Means, 1997). They cover key aspects of housing and the factors that make people accept or refuse a housing offer or cause them to move. Most are applicable to all age groups, but the category of "managing" has been included because this is the aspect of housing that becomes more difficult as people get older. An inability to manage may threaten much cherished independence. There is no category dedicated to the intangible factors such as 'memories or 'relationships'' because it was felt that to ask direct questions about such things would be too intrusive, but there are places where such things may be said if anyone wants to say them.

Under each category heading, there are a number of sub questions. For example, under the heading "comfort and design", there are separate questions about warmth, sunlight, layout, furniture, decoration and having an accessible bath or shower. In the trials, interviewees were asked to score 'a', 'b' or 'c' for each of these questions before giving a score out of ten for the category as a whole. We now think that the sub-scoring is unnecessary unless you wish to interview a whole group of people to determine common issues: questions can be answered with a simple yes or no or the recording of a comment, but the scores out of ten remain important. This score is entirely subjective but there

are guidelines about what scores mean. The person is being asked to say how well that aspect of their housing suits them, from their point of view. They are advised that a score of 6 means 'just ok' and a score of 5 'just not ok'. 10 is 'perfect' and 1 'terrible', with scores in between according to taste. They are also asked whether any one thing has particularly affected the score they have given.

This is the core of the HOOP methodology; going systematically through the nine categories and establishing a holistic view of the person's view of their home. The sub questions are designed to help the interviewee consider what the category includes before they give a score. The scoring out of ten allows the interviewee to weight the various factors. An individual may thus complain at length about neighbour nuisance but still give a very high score in the general category of 'location', indicating that the neighbour problem is not after all so important. Or they might give a very low score despite liking many aspects of the location, and explain that it is this one factor that is making the area unbearable to them. The scores out of ten are also an effective check against an interviewer's assumptions. The division between 5 and 6 is asking people to decide whether in that category their home is tolerable or not.

Section 3

Condition of the property

What condition is the property in and how does it affect you? Is it in good repair, does it need some attention or are major repairs needed? Please put *Yes* or *No*, and any comments.

<i>Are the following items in good condition</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1. The roof?		
2. The structure generally?		
3. Ceilings and plaster?		
4. Gas supply, electric wiring and water supply?		
5. Plumbing and drains?		
6. Heating system (including insulation)?		
7. Windows and doors?		
8. Gardens walls or fences?		
9. Is the property free from damp?		
10. Are there any other problems with the condition of the property?		
11. Is the condition of the property causing you any stress, or physical ill health?		
12. Weighing these different things up, what score out of 10 for condition would you give overall?		
10 Perfect	9	8
7	6 Just Ok	5 Just not Ok
		4
		3
		2
		1
		0 Terrible
13. Is there any one thing which has particularly affected the score?		
14. Is there any information which might be useful to you?		

Section 4

Comfort and Design

How do you feel about the design of your home? Can you live in it comfortably or is there anything which makes it awkward or uncomfortable to live in? Please put *Yes* or *No*, and any comments.

	<i>Yes/No</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1. Do you like the look and feel of it generally, and feel happy with it as your home?		
2. Can you keep as warm as you want to?		
3. Is it as light and sunny as you wish?		
4. Is the design of your home convenient for you? (For instance can you reach cupboards and switches and manage all the steps and stairs)?		
5. Is it decorated and furnished as you like?		
6. Have you got an accessible bath or shower you can use if you want to?		
7. Have you generally got things arranged in a way that suits you, with room for your possessions?		
8. Other important points to do with comfort and design?		
9. Is the design of your home causing any stress or any physical ill health?		
10. Weighing these different things up, what score out of 10 for comfort would you give overall? 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0 Perfect Just Ok Just not Ok Terrible		
11. Is there any one thing which has particularly affected the score?		
12. Is there any information which might be useful to you?		

Section 5

Location

Does the location of your home suit you? Do you like the district? Is it near the people or things you want to be near? Again, what is important is your own point of view on these issues, not what anyone else might think. Please put *Yes* or *No*, and any comments.

	<i>Yes/No</i>	<i>Comments</i>																						
1. Is your home convenient for shops, transport, clubs or other regular activities?																								
2. Is the area familiar to you – so that you know your way about and are known in the area?																								
3. Do you feel safe in the street?																								
4. Do you like the neighbourhood?																								
5. Is it as quiet and stress free as you want?																								
6. Is it a healthy environment (air quality/traffic/green spaces/cleanliness)?																								
7. Is your home a suitable distance from family or friend(s) (however near or far you want to be)?																								
8. Is help available when needed (from neighbours, family or friends)?																								
9. Other important points about the location (please give details)?																								
10. Does the location of your home ever cause you any stress or physical ill health?																								
11. Weighing these different things up, what score out of 10 for location would you give overall?																								
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> <td style="text-align: center;">9</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> <td style="border-left: 1px solid black; text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Perfect</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Just Ok</td> <td style="border-left: 1px solid black; text-align: center;">Just not Ok</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Terrible</td> </tr> </table>			10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Perfect				Just Ok	Just not Ok					Terrible
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0														
Perfect				Just Ok	Just not Ok					Terrible														
12. Is there any one thing which has particularly affected the score?																								
13. Is there any information which might be useful to you?																								

Section 6

Managing

How well do you feel you are able to manage in your home? Please put *Yes* or *No*, and any comments.

<i>Are you able to manage</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>	<i>Comments</i>																						
1. Keeping the house clean (including things like changing curtains, cleaning windows etc.)?																								
2. Having a bath or shower?																								
3. Shopping?																								
4. Doing the laundry?																								
5. Cooking?																								
6. Carrying out minor repairs and maintenance jobs? (mending things, changing light bulbs or fuses)																								
7. Decorating?																								
8. Looking after the garden?																								
9. Answering the door and phone?																								
10. Getting up and down stairs?																								
11. Having visitors?																								
12. Do you feel confident that more support will be available if and when you need it?																								
13. Other points about managing?																								
14. Does the issue of managing your home ever cause you stress, or make you physically ill?																								
15. Weighing these different things up, what score out of 10 for managing would you give overall?																								
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> <td style="text-align: center;">9</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> <td style="border-left: 1px solid black; text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: left;">Perfect</td> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Just Ok</td> <td colspan="3" style="text-align: center;">Just not Ok</td> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: right;">Terrible</td> </tr> </table>			10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Perfect				Just Ok		Just not Ok			Terrible	
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0														
Perfect				Just Ok		Just not Ok			Terrible															
16. Is there any one thing which has particularly affected the score?																								
17. Is there any information which might be useful to you?																								

Section 7

Costs (N.B. You are not asked to give any financial details)

How do you feel about all the costs involved in living in your home including maintenance costs and costs of energy for heating and cooking, as well as rent or mortgage costs? Please put **Yes** if you can manage the cost, **No** if the item is too expensive, and any comments.

<i>Can you afford, with reasonable comfort, the following items</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>	<i>Comments</i>																							
1. The mortgage or rent?																									
2. Looking after the property – repairs, insurance, decoration etc.?																									
3. Energy (hot water, heating, cooking etc.)?																									
4. Other household bills (council tax, water bills, telephone)?																									
5. Transport to places you need/want to go?																									
6. Costs of help in house or garden including service charges if you pay them?																									
7. TV licence?																									
8. Other? (please describe)																									
9. Does the issue of meeting housing costs ever cause you stress, or make you physically ill?																									
10. Weighing these different things up, what score out of 10 for costs would you give overall?																									
<table style="width:100%; border:none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align:center;">10</td> <td style="text-align:center;">9</td> <td style="text-align:center;">8</td> <td style="text-align:center;">7</td> <td style="text-align:center;">6</td> <td style="border-left:1px solid black; text-align:center;">5</td> <td style="text-align:center;">4</td> <td style="text-align:center;">3</td> <td style="text-align:center;">2</td> <td style="text-align:center;">1</td> <td style="text-align:center;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4"></td> <td style="text-align:center;">Perfect</td> <td style="border-left:1px solid black; text-align:center;">Just not Ok</td> <td colspan="5"></td> <td style="text-align:right;">Terrible</td> </tr> </table>			10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0					Perfect	Just not Ok						Terrible
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0															
				Perfect	Just not Ok						Terrible														
11. Is there any one thing which has particularly affected the score?																									
11. Is there any information which might be useful to you?																									

Section 8

Security and Safety

This section includes everything from burglars to fire escape. Please put *Yes* or *No*, and any comments.

	<i>Yes/No</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1. Would your home pass a safety check as being free of the hazards that can cause accidents? (e.g. worn carpets, poor lighting, loose banisters)		
2. If you had a fall and could not reach the phone, do you feel confident that help would reach you?		
3. Do you feel reasonably safe from burglary or attack when inside your home?		
4. Do you feel the house is reasonably secure if you go out or away?		
5. Do you feel happy with whatever precautions you have in your home in case of fire?		
6. Any other points relating to safety?		
7. Does any aspect of the security of safety of your home cause you stress, or physical ill health?		
8. Weighing these different things up, what score out of 10 for security and safety would you give overall? 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0 Perfect Just Ok Just not Ok Terrible		
9. Is there any one thing which has particularly affected the score?		
10. Is there any information which might be useful to you?		

Section 9

Independence

This is a word which means different things to different people, but includes the idea that you make the decisions (and bear the responsibility) for running your home, and that any help you get is on terms you control and are happy with. Please put *Yes* or *No*, and any comments.

	<i>Yes/No</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1. Do you feel secure in the possession or tenure of your home (safe from repossession or eviction)?		
2. Are you free to make decisions about it and live in it as you please?		
3. Are you happy with the amount or responsibility you have for the property?		
4. Do you feel as independent as you wish to be of your family and friends?		
5. Any other issues to do with independence?		
6. Does anything about maintaining independence cause you stress or affect your health?		
7. Weighing these different things up, what score out of 10 for independence would you give overall? 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0 Perfect Just Ok Just not Ok Terrible		
8. Is there any one thing which has particularly affected the score?		
9. Is there any information which might be useful to you?		

Section 10

Well-being and Quality of Life

Just four initial questions this time about whether you think your home is good for your general well-being. Please put *Yes* or *No*, and any comments.

	<i>Yes/No</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1. Is your home a good base for your activities and interests?		
2. Do you have as much human company as you need and not feel lonely?		
3. Do you feel you can live here in peace of mind for as long as you wish (and won't have to move again)?		
4. Anything else to do with how the house/flat affects your quality of life?		
5. Does anything in this section cause you stress or affect your health?		
6. Weighing these different things up, what score out of 10 for well-being would you give overall? 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0 Perfect Just Ok Just not Ok Terrible		
7. Is there any one thing which has particularly affected the score?		
8. Is there any information which might be useful to you?		

Commentary: Section 11 / The Bar Chart

When all nine categories have been completed, a bar chart can be filled in which gives an at-a glance picture of how well the person's home suits them, what aspects they are happy with and where the problematic areas lie (see Figure 5).

This is a useful quick way for another person to understand the gist of the older person's housing situation. Bar chart assessments of any rehousing options might also be completed for purposes of comparison.

Commentary: Section 12 / Priorities

The interviewee arranges the categories in order of their importance

This gives another opportunity to the older person to consider what matters most to them in a home, and/or to demonstrate this to the interviewer. The exercise is not essential to the methodology, and many people demur, saying that all the categories are important (which is indeed the premise on which HOOP is based), but in certain cases it has elicited important extra information. For example, one person had a very low score for physical security and safety but ranked this category very low down. This was on the grounds that as an older person in a violent world, she would feel threatened wherever she lived.

Section 11

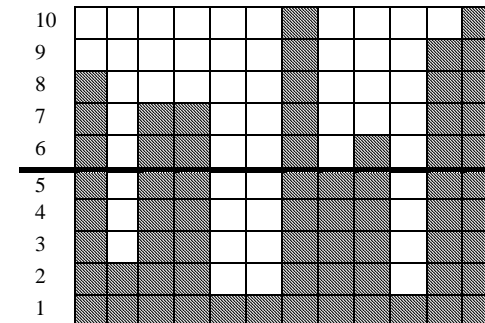
The Chart

Fill in your scores from each section for an 'at a glance' picture of how well your home suits you:

	SIZE & SPACE	CONDITION	COMFORT	LOCATION	MANAGING	COSTS	SECURITY & SAFETY	INDEPENDENCE	WELL-BEING		
PERFECT	10									10	PERFECT
	9									9	
	8									8	
	7									7	
JUST OK	6									6	JUST OK
JUST NOT OK	5									5	JUST NOT OK
	4									4	
	3									3	
	2									2	
TERRIBLE	1									1	TERRIBLE

When you are ready, fill in your priorities (if any) from the next page:

	SIZE & SPACE	CONDITION	COMFORT	LOCATION	MANAGING	COSTS	SECURITY & SAFETY	INDEPENDENCE	WELL-BEING
PRIORITY ORDER									



Example:

Section 12

Priorities

This form has covered the nine categories listed below. Could you arrange these in order of their importance to you, if you were moving house?

Please put (1) beside the category which would matter most to you and arrange the rest in order down to a (9) for the category which would matter least to you:

	<i>Priority</i>
Size	
Condition	
Comfort	
Location	
Managing	
Costs	
Safety/security	
Independence	
Well-being	

Note: If you feel that all are of equal importance, or several are of equal importance, just use the chart to say this. The question is included for the sake of those who have some clear priorities, or who want to think them through.

Commentary: Section 13 / Looking to the Future (optional)

This section invites the older person to confront the worries they have about whether their home will be suitable in the event of various life changes associated with old age.

This section was inserted on the advice of an early interviewee whose counsel was that 'looking to the future' is the reason for many moves in later life, and that if we only asked about present suitability we would miss the most crucial issue for some older people.

Commentary: Section 14 / Moving

This simply asks whether the interviewee feels they could face the process of moving (in a range from 'unthinkable' to 'no problem at all') and if so whether they would need help to accomplish this.

A simple question which adds more useful information about the advisability of a move and the care or help that might be needed.

Section 13

Looking to the Future (for those who like to look ahead)

It is impossible to know what the future will bring. This section is just to help you to think about some of the possibilities.

Do you think that your current housing would still suit you? ...

	Yes	No	Maybe	N/A
If you were left on your own?				
If your health was worse?				
If your "partner's" health was worse?				
If you had less help (from any source) than you have now?				
If your income were smaller?				
If you could no longer drive?				
If you could no longer climb stairs?				
If you wanted or needed someone to come and stay with you?				
If you wanted to spend more time at home than you do now?				
Any other issues?				

If you have put one or more 'NOs' does this mean you want to plan a move now?

.....

.....

.....

Section 14

Moving

1. Apart from the issue of whether one house or flat might suit you better than another – how do you view the prospect of moving at all: the whole process of organising it all, packing up, and making a new start in a new home?

Unthinkable

Very daunting

Hard, but would do it if necessary

Not too bad

No problem at all

Or you can use your own words

.....

.....

.....

.....

Tick boxes as applicable

Yes	No	Maybe
-----	----	-------

2. Would you need physical help to sort and pack?

--	--	--

Do you think you would need any other support?
(For example, emotional support in sorting your things or coming to terms with moving)

--	--	--

If yes, what might this be?

.....

.....

.....

3. If you are not planning to move immediately, what might make you decide to do so?

.....

.....

.....

Commentary: Section 15 / Possible Action

In this section people are asked to recap on what they think are their main housing problems and consider whether these could be helped in the various ways listed.

These questions serve to elicit which way the interviewee is really leaning. If they have talked at length about draughty windows and damp, but are not interested in work on the house, it is probably a good indicator that there is more to their desire to move than physical problems which could be solved. They may be weary of the responsibility, not want to endure the upheaval of repairs or have some other major reason they do not choose to mention. The questions are another useful check on interviewer or agency assumptions and offer the interviewer an opportunity to introduce information (see Chapter 5).

Section 15

Possible Action (for a first look at the options)

1. Could you recap here what you think are your main housing problems?

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

2. Do you think these could be solved in any of the following ways . .

2.1 By some work on the house? Yes No Maybe

Comments

2.2 By getting some help? Yes No Maybe

Comments

2.3 By moving? Yes No Maybe

Comments

2.4 By getting some information now about options for the future?

Yes No Maybe

Comments

2.5 In any other way

.....

.....

3. Is there any information you need to help answer these questions?

.....

.....

Commentary: Section 16

Information Required

Interviewees are asked whether they would like information relevant either to moving or to staying put in greater comfort. The options include 'accommodation to rent' 'accommodation for sale' 'financial information', 'services in the home', and 'help with repairs'.

One of the reasons for the development of HOOP was earlier evidence about the difficulty for older people in obtaining information about housing options so that they may make well-informed choices. For many interviewees, therefore, this final section of the interview is crucial. This section may require skill on the part of the interviewer to convey what kinds of information exist that would be relevant. Excellent agency backup in terms of information will also be needed. The issue of information is so important that it is considered in more detail in Chapter 5.

Ethnic Identity

These will be useful if HOOP is being used with a group of people rather than with isolated individuals. The categories are those that were used in the 1991 census, and local users may want to alter them.

Commentary: Explanation of scoring

This is just for clarification of the scoring system.

Section 16

Information Required

Would you like information about any of the following . . .

Tick boxes where applicable

- Accommodation to rent?
- Accommodation for sale?
- Financial information?
- Ways of reducing housing costs?
- Ways of increasing income?
- Help in getting repairs, improvements or adaptations done?
- Services in the home – including gardening?
- Retiring to another country?
- Other? (please give details)

And finally, what ethnic group do you feel best describes you? (please tick)

- Bangladeshi
- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Black Other
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- White
- Other (please give details)

Explanation of scoring

Sections 2 to 10 of this questionnaire cover different aspect of your home.

These are:

- Size
- Condition
- Comfort
- Location
- Managing
- Cost
- Security
- Independence
- Well-being

In each section you first answer Yes, No, or other comment for the detailed questions, then decide a score out of ten for the section as a whole.

In this scoring system '10' is a perfect and '1' is terrible. There is a dividing line between '5' and '6' '6' is 'Just Ok' and '5' is 'Just not Ok'.

So, if the size and space in your home is acceptable to you, you can choose '6' (just Ok) or '10' (perfect), or 7, 8, or 9 for something in between.

If, for instance, the size suited you well on the whole, but the kitchen was too small, you might choose a score of '9'. If there were other problems as well (e.g. over-large garden, no parking space), but it was still acceptable, you might give a score of 6 or 7.

Similarly, if some aspect of your home (it might be the cost) is unacceptable, you can choose any score between 5 (Just not Ok) and 1 (terrible) – depending on how bad it seems to you.

Example:

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Perfect				Just Ok	Just not Ok					Terrible

Someone has given a score of 8 for the size of their home, indicating that it's pretty good but not perfect.

What score you give is entirely up to you.
It's your own view of your home you are recording.

Commentary: Conclusion

HOOP is designed to elicit a very thorough picture of a person's housing situation. It should discover the reason why a person is considering a move (the merits and defects of their existing home) and the kind of housing, they hope to move to, in what location and with what expectations. It should reveal what kind of information or support the person requires. This may be directly related to housing or may be in another sphere entirely. The understanding that comes from the interview should be the starting point for a more down to earth discussion of options. This would have to be realistic and full of compromises, but it would be based on an acknowledgement of the full, true picture. The structured approach and scoring system are checks on assumptions that interviewers may make and a protection against a person failing to mention something of great importance that they may take for granted. It should also help professionals who are less experienced in interviewing older people. The completed HOOP form should be useful as a benchmark for considering options. For the system to work well, however, it needs to be part of an all round service with first class information, advice and follow-up support.

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Chapter 4

The computer version of HOOP

An integral aim of the Project was to develop a computer version of the HOOP tool, capable of being used by both agencies and individuals.

As developed to date, the computer tool follows the format of the paper version, with a series of screens replacing the sections of the paper questionnaire. Through these, interviewees' responses are entered into an underlying database. The scope which this method of recording answers affords for subsequent analyses, as well as for development into a much more interactive experience for older people, will be considered briefly later.

At present the computer tool offers primarily an alternative means of recording interviews. However even so, it quickly became apparent that the computer format was capable of bringing an immediacy to the visual representation of responses to questions. For example a simple bar chart offers an immediate representation of the overall score awarded in each category, and a composite chart summarises all scores awarded along with the interviewee's ranking of the priority s/he attaches to each category. Screens can of course be simply printed out to provide a legible transcript of an interview, and one which an interviewee might readily take away to contemplate.

During the course of the HOOP developmental project we did not test out the computer tool in 'live' interview situations. Our decision here reflected a desire not to add a further variable into an exercise designed primarily to test out and refine HOOP's basic methodology. However we did transcribe all handwritten interview data to it after each interview, and much of the analysis presented in Chapter 6 draws on this.

This prototype computer version of HOOP will be made available to individual users and to information and advisory agencies as an alternative to the printed version (see also Chapter 8 / Computer options: The potential of an inter-active program).

Screen shots below illustrate the computer tool.

HOOP Introduction

Title: Ms
 Forenames: Elizabeth
 Surname: M
 Address: [redacted]
 PostTown: London
 PostCounty:
 PostCode: NW6
 Phone No: C

Property Type: 1 bedroom
 Owner: rented (local authority)
 Garden:
 No of Occupants: 1
 Pets:
 Years In Home: 19
 Car:
 Help:
 Interests:
 Retirement Space:
 GuestRoom:
 Move Cause:
 Move Idea:
 Move When: Now Later

Size and Space

- Condition
- Comfort and Design
- Location
- Managing
- Costs
- Security and Safety
- Independence
- Well-being
- Priorities/Future/Moving
- Action/Info Required
- Scores Chart

Yourself

Age: 60
 Gender: Male Female
 Ethnic Group: White

Your Partner

Age:
 Gender: Male Female
 Ethnic Group:

Record: 1 of 48

Size and Space

The first set of questions is about what you feel about how much room you have in your home inside and out - whether you have got too much or not enough. What is important is not how the property would seem to anyone else but how it suits you, from your point of view. Please give a, b or c for each point:

a) means very satisfactory
 b) means satisfactory but not perfect
 c) means not satisfactory

Score	Comments	Info wanted
b	would prefer separate kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	good size but design is poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
c	10 foot only in front; back garden useless as no steps	<input type="checkbox"/>
c	not enough cupboard space; utility room is full of posse	<input type="checkbox"/>
b		<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there one thing which has particularly affected the score you have given ?

Information which might be useful ?

Score: 5





Condition of the property

Score	Comments	Info wanted
Roof:	not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>
Structure/plaster:	some of plastering was not done properly when flats we	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gas/Wiring/Water:		<input type="checkbox"/>
Heating:	too hot and no ventilation; only need the radiators on w	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damp:		<input type="checkbox"/>
Windows/Doors:	new recently - but heavy to open	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garden wall/fence:	own fence - children vandalise it	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:		<input type="checkbox"/>

Score: 5

Score Reason:

Useful Info:





Comfort and design

Score	Comments	Info wanted
Look and Feel:		<input type="checkbox"/>
Temperature:	too warm!	<input type="checkbox"/>
Light:		<input type="checkbox"/>
Design:	switches too low down; some cupboards too high or to	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decoration:	needs doing - poor ventilation means walls very dirty	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shower/Bath:	cannot use bath due to risk of epileptic fit; cannot inste	<input type="checkbox"/>
Place for things:		<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:		<input type="checkbox"/>

Score: 4

Score Reason:

Useful Info:

Location: where the house is





Score	Comments	Info wanted
Convenience:	but if disabled (recently on crutches) the hills to the stre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Familiar:		<input type="checkbox"/>
Feel Safe:	a lot of muggings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neighbourhood:		<input type="checkbox"/>
Environment:		<input type="checkbox"/>
Distance:	little contact with family, but near to friends although m:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help:	sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:		<input type="checkbox"/>

Score: 3

Score Reason: mainly the safety aspects, also the local children vandalise, and people play very loud music

Useful Info:

Peaceful:

Priorities/Looking to the Future/Moving

22 **Priority Order**

Size 6 Cost 5
 Condition 8 Safety/Security 3
 Comfort 1 Independence 4
 Location 2 Well-being 9
 Managing 7

Looking to the Future

	Yes	No	Maybe	
On Own	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	[=]
Smaller Income	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	[=]
Drive Car	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	[=]
Climb Stairs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	[=]
Money other than Home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	[=]
Time away from Home	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	[=]
Other Issues	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	[=]
Health Worse	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	[=]
Health Worse Partner	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	[=]
Less Help	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	[=]
Want Carer	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	[=]
Time at home	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	[=]

Plan move now: Yes

Prospect Of Moving

Unthinkable Or in your own words

Very Daunting

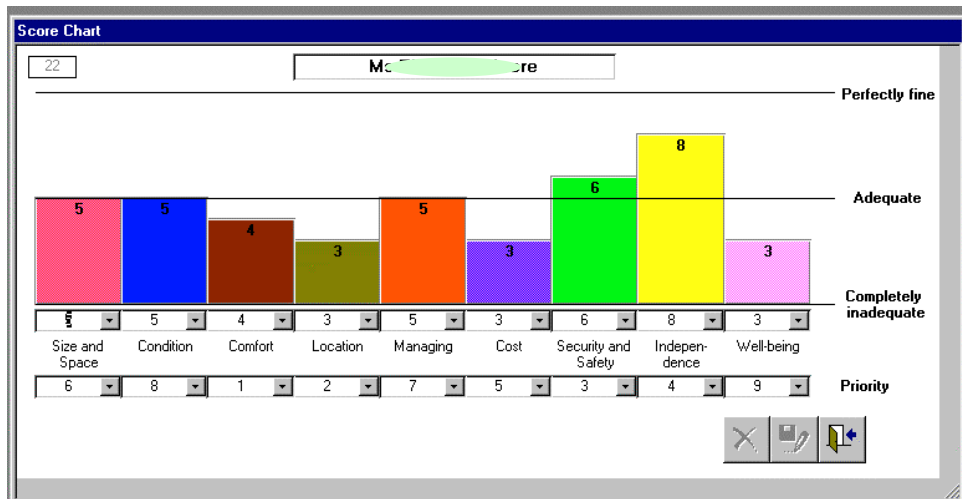
Hard, but would do

Not to bad

No problem at all

Help to Sort and Pack

Other Support **What Kind**
with moving costs



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Chapter 5

Discovering information needs and supplying information: A key challenge

Comments from interviewees who took part in this development project such as :

- "When I moved in, I was desperate for a place, so I accepted it" or,
- "I just had to accept this flat: there was nowhere else to go"

illustrate how choices are constrained by what is actually available at a given place and time. Many older people, in all tenures, have never really had much choice about where they live. Choices are also constrained by the information a person has, and by the limitations of knowledge or imagination of those from whom they seek advice. It is a crucial function of the HOOP tool to discover what information is wanted, and a key task for any agency using it will be to be able to link the enquirer to the information they need.

Determining information needs

The approach of the HOOP tool to discovering what information an older person may require is two pronged: asking a number of direct questions but also teasing out possible information gaps by inference.

Direct questions

In each of the nine housing category sections, there is a question: "Is there any information which might be useful to you?" Occasionally, someone writes something in at this stage, or mentions it if the interview is being done orally, but mostly the question is ignored at this stage.

At *Section 15, "Possible Action"*, the interviewer, having been given a picture of where the person stands, moves onto the question of what the person might want to do. They ask whether key problems might be solved by some work on the house; by getting some help; by moving; or by getting information now about options for the future?

This is the point at which the issue of information arises seriously, and gives the interviewer the opportunity to raise the idea of getting help as an alternative to moving, or of moving as an alternative to repair work.

A final, "Is there any kind of information you feel you need in order to help answer these questions?" leads on to *Section 16 "Information Required"*. In this section

people are asked "would you like information about any of the following..?" and invited to tick boxes for "accommodation to rent", "help in getting repairs done", and so on, as described in Chapter 3.

This is the section where a direct request for information is most likely to be made. It is clearer than "is there any information you need that would help you to make the decision?", and less threatening because it is just a list from which you can select at leisure.

Eliciting information needs by inference

All the way through HOOP, there are opportunities for observing and picking up clues about a person's needs that should trigger off ideas about information that might be relevant to them. This might be about services or provision that exist but which are not known to them. The first key question comes in the introduction, when they are asked, "What has caused you to think about a move?". The answer to this question, when the interview is taking place, may take a long time, because a person is quite likely to give a summary of their life history. This is extremely helpful in assisting the interviewer to understand the person, and in terms of information needs it is also important because it gives the factors that lie behind the possible solution they may be

considering. It is therefore a useful starting point for considering all options and what extra useful information the interviewer might be able to offer.

In the 9 category sections, there are again opportunities for noticing points made where information might be helpful, where people give low scores for items the interviewer believes could be remedied, if this is what is wanted. In *Section 15 (Possible Action)* the opportunity for suggesting there might be alternative relevant information may be lost if the questions are just asked bluntly. More or less skill will be needed depending on the person being interviewed.

All in all, the HOOP interview is an opportunity for dialogue where the interviewer needs to be aware of assumptions being made (for instance, about the level of support a warden can give, or the availability of support in the home) and to offer to check or supply information in addition to that which the person has originally asked for directly.

Supplying information

It is one thing to ask what information people need, quite another to supply it. During the development project, information was most commonly sought around four main topics:

- alternative housing (this was the largest group)
- help with housework, personal care and/or gardening
- help with repairs or adaptations.
- financial information and advice.

Within these broad categories were a wide range of complicated, detailed enquiries and there was also evident need for information on entitlements and possibilities of which people were largely unaware. These included:– whether older people can get a mortgage, details of shared ownership and whether owner occupiers can move into sheltered rented accommodation. Checking assumptions was a key part of information giving: unrealistic expectations of warden services were the most common example. On the other hand people

needed encouragement to apply for benefits, housing grants or social services help, where their expectations were perhaps too low. The interviewers supplied suggestions, names and phone numbers. One woman said that talking to the interviewer had “opened her eyes to some of her difficulties and given her more knowledge on how to deal with them”. Providing information on the range of topics listed to the depth of detail needed, is a pretty formidable task. This is one of the issues that has to be most seriously addressed in any follow up to this project and is further considered in Chapter 8.

People need general information like the factsheets produced by Age Concern England and like Hanover Housing Association's booklet, '*Options for older people*' which is an attractive and useful publication that gives a broad view of the possibilities and pointers about where to seek further help. They also need local information like the directory Westminster City Council have recently produced (It is also called '*Housing Options For Older People*') which lists all the sheltered rented housing in the borough. However, such detailed local information is not readily available for most areas; hence the importance of the national accommodation database run by the Elderly Accommodation Counsel. For information on legal or financial issues enquirers may consult a solicitor or independent financial adviser, (including those who give advice on radio phone ins) or they may go to the CAB or an advice centre. For housing repairs or adaptations, people might seek help from an architect or surveyor. Home improvement agencies and disabled persons housing services are two excellent sources of advice in these areas, but such voluntary agencies are not available in every locality, and even when they are, lack of resources may restrict the people they can help or the amount of help they can give. Even more problematic is how to identify the availability of low level preventative services such as gardeners, handypersons and housework schemes whether run on a for profit or voluntary basis. Social services departments supply lists of agencies, but are not allowed to recommend any in particular. Research by Clark et al (1998) confirms the difficulties people experience in this area.

The Need for Help and Support

In *Section 14, "Moving"*, people are asked whether they would need physical help to sort and pack, and whether they would need any other kind of support.

In *Section 15, "Possible Action"*, they are asked if their problems might be solved by "getting some help", and, if so, what kind of help. Practical help is what is mainly envisaged in this section, but it is open to people to mention other things if they wish.

In *Section 16, "Information Required"*, they are asked whether they want information on "help in getting repairs, improvements or adaptations done". It is phrased in this way because the process of arranging building works is one where people particularly value support rather than just information

A number of questions in the nine categories enable a skilled interviewer to infer whether someone may be feeling in need of help and support. Questions in the categories on managing, independence, well-being and costs are perhaps particularly relevant, but the dialogue of the whole interview is also likely to bring out this need

Several people spoke of the need for emotional support if they had to face a move. Perhaps the most powerful evidence of the need for this emotional support, however, came from the sheer outpouring of all kinds of things that began many of the interviews, and the fact that so many people said that what they valued was having someone to listen, someone to talk things over with. One person interviewed in Sheffield, when asked the question in the managing category "Are you confident that more support will be available if and when you need it?" replied, "Yes, now I know Stay Put". This person was lucky. We feel that one of the major findings of this development project, reinforcing the work of Minter and Russell (1999), is the urgent need for a nationwide network of agencies offering information, advice and support on housing and related issues to older people and their relatives.

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Chapter 6

Does HOOP work? Two case studies and a summary

The above discussion of how to use HOOP begs the question of whether it works for a reasonable number of older people. This section presents two case studies: one where HOOP was greatly appreciated and one where it was not, and a summary of its strengths and weaknesses which draws upon our experiences of using HOOP with the full sample of 58 people. It should be stressed that this chapter draws upon the version of HOOP that preceded the version outlined in Chapter 3. The March 1999 version has responded where possible to weaknesses identified during the development work. However, this has represented ‘fine tuning’ rather than fundamental changes.

Mr and Mrs E

Mr and Mrs E were a couple in their early eighties who telephoned an agency requesting information on sheltered schemes to buy in their area. They lived in a 4-bedroom house which they owned, in a pleasant suburban area of London. Although they had lived in the house for forty-nine years and did not want to move, they were making enquiries into alternative housing options with a view to the future. Specifically, they had seen friends’ health decline to the point that existing housing has become unsuitable, and wanted to be prepared for any possible problems. They also mentioned not wanting to be a ‘burden’ on their family.

Mr and Mrs E were very interested in the HOOP questionnaire and interview when contacted by the researcher, and completed the questionnaire

themselves before the interview. They did this carefully, each going through it separately and then discussing their answers together to confirm them. They both felt that the resulting answers represented their individual opinions fairly.

Mr and Mrs E were in reasonable health although both had back problems which limited their mobility. However, they were both still able to go out and to drive, and take care of all their domestic and personal care needs. Initially during the interview the couple were very anxious about the possible future scenarios which could happen to them, and they had made enquiries about residential care as well as sheltered housing.

The long and comprehensive HOOP appraisal tool enabled the couple to think through all the aspects of their current housing and housing needs in a calmer and more focused way. The process of the interviewer going through their completed questionnaire with them also meant that the interviewer gained a very rounded picture of their situation. This process also focused the discussion on which options might be appropriate for the couple, and enabled the interviewer to identify gaps in their knowledge which might hinder their ability to balance 'stay put' and 'move on' options.

For example, Mr and Mrs E were unaware of the amount of support which social services may be able to provide in the event of them needing help with personal care. The interviewer was also able to explain more to them about sheltered housing and the need to be realistic about expecting sheltered housing to offer 24 hour all-round support should their health deteriorate badly.

Similarly, the interviewer was able to focus on the couple's fear that if one of them became unable to climb stairs the house would be unsuitable, and supplied information on arranging adaptations. Another very good outcome of the HOOP process for Mr and Mrs E was that they realised more fully just how much potential support they already had from friends and neighbours, who had helped out when needed in the past. Towards the end of the

interview, Mrs E suddenly said that in effect they are already living in a sheltered situation due to this extensive network.

HOOP also helps clarify at what stage people would consider a move. Mr and Mrs E said that having thought the situation through in this way they were more confident that their decision is to stay put for now and wait for a crisis rather than moving 'just in case'.

Both Mr and Mrs E confirmed that HOOP and the interview had helped them to clarify the issues involved in making a decision about their housing, as well as resulting in them being better informed about both moving on and staying put options.

Discussion

There were a number of reasons why the HOOP questionnaire worked well for Mr and Mrs E. First, Mr and Mrs E were very committed to the process, completing the questionnaire before the interview. This meant that the interview time could be spent summarising and discussing issues in more depth than might otherwise have been the case.

Second, there were gaps in the couples' awareness of services which the interviewer, through her existing knowledge and through reference back to the advice agency, was able to identify and to fill in. This meant that Mr and Mrs E were able to see their situation from a different perspective and knowledge base. Third, the couple were initially very worried about a number of possible scenarios, the likelihood of which were unpredictable. The structured appraisal tool helped them to focus on exactly what their fears were, enabling a calmer consideration of options.

Completing the HOOP questionnaire therefore meant that the couple were better informed about their options and thus more likely to frame any future requests for advice or services in ways appropriate to them. The process enabled them to say with more confidence that the home which they love is where they want to stay for as long as possible.

Mrs K and Ms N

There were a number of people for whom HOOP appeared irrelevant, or sometimes unwelcome. The following case study illustrates how for some older people HOOP may not be appropriate. (We should add however that the revised format of the questionnaire is designed to prevent it being used on such a case in future).

Mrs K and Ms N were sisters in their early seventies who lived in the north of England in a former council house which they had bought. They volunteered to be interviewed after discussion with staff at the home improvement agency of which they were clients.

Mrs K had severe arthritis and osteoporosis, and Ms N was her carer. They were thinking of moving to more supported accommodation because Ms N was finding it increasingly difficult to look after her sister alone, and also because she had recently hurt her back. This underlined to them how dependent they were on Ms N remaining well.

The interviewer completed the questionnaire with both sisters together; Mrs K answered most of the questions, sometimes after discussion with Ms N. In general the interviewer observed that the sisters were unwilling to say anything to an outsider which might be construed as being critical of their home. They gave high scores for nearly all categories, often contradicting negative answers given to the specific questions within the categories.

The interviewees saw some of the questions asked as intrusive; for example, the section on costs, which they misinterpreted as being a request for actual figures, whereas its purpose is to assess how affordable particular outgoings are without ever asking for detailed financial information.

The interviewer also noted that Mrs K and Ms N avoided issues which were uncomfortable in any way and tended to gloss over difficulties; for example, when asked in the introductory section whether there was any pressure on

them from anyone else, Mrs K said her daughter ‘harped on about her moving’, but said there was no pressure on them.

Mrs K and Ms N both told the interviewer that HOOP had not been helpful to them in any way, saying that they did not see how it could be useful for anyone

Discussion

There were a number of possible reasons why the HOOP process was not helpful for Mrs K and Ms N. First, the interviewer felt that Mrs K did not really want to clarify issues and to think analytically about her current situation. Mrs K may have decided to be interviewed in order to help the home improvement agency which had asked for volunteers. It is also possible that she had not understood the purpose of HOOP before the interview. The HOOP tool requires considerable motivation from interviewees, due to its length and the issues it covers.

Second, Mrs K appeared unwilling to make explicit the difficulties which she and her sister were having in their home, which meant it was difficult for the interviewer to know how to advise them. It is possible that this would have been a problem even with an unstructured discussion with an advice worker.

Evaluation of HOOP: Strengths and weaknesses

The interviews carried out during the development project indicate that HOOP was helpful to many older people making housing decisions, whilst for others it was unhelpful. The following discussion will look more closely at the strengths and weaknesses of the version of the HOOP appraisal tool which was used in the development project. In doing this it should be remembered that no assessment approach is ever going to work for all older people faced with difficult housing and support decisions.

Strengths of HOOP

The value of HOOP for older people

1. Many of the older people interviewed for the project said that completing the questionnaire had helped to **confirm or clarify their thoughts** about their current housing and future options. For example, Mrs W (P.9) was very attached to her 3-bedroom rented flat, but had been having doubts about whether she should stay there because her friends and family all thought it was far too big for her. After completing the appraisal form she said she now realised that she did not mind the size and the amount of cleaning involved, because so many other factors such as the location and the costs were ideal for her.

2. The above example also illustrates the potential of HOOP to **empower** older people. Many of the people interviewed spoke of the pressure they felt from family and friends, however well-intentioned this was (see Example B in Chapter 2). Some felt intimidated and confused by this; for example, one woman said that her son 'kept going on at her to move and that she felt quite unnerved and unsettled. Completing the tool helped her to feel more in control and to assess what her own views were, in the presence of a skilled interviewer'.

3. HOOP would be of limited use if older people found it hard to understand, but the majority of the people interviewed found it fairly **user-friendly**. The nine categories seemed to correspond well with the issues people commonly identify as significant, and allowed interviewees to give considerable detail on the areas which were particularly relevant to them. The questionnaire could be completed either in full or partially by the interviewee on their own. The scoring systems used were understood by most people, and most of the questions asked were perceived as relevant and sensible.

4. HOOP is **neutral with respect to moving or staying put** options, and is able to act as a springboard for advice on all of these. The fact that the appraisal form does not seek to push people towards a particular option, but

allows them to develop their own thinking as they answer the questions, is also very positive.

5. The questionnaire **allows people to retain privacy on emotional issues**, and to set their own boundaries. Although HOOP asks a lot of questions, it does allow people to answer as briefly as they wish, without comment, and also to miss out sections seen as inappropriate. Equally, though more rarely, in some interviews, openness was forthcoming beyond what one experienced interviewer felt were the usual, more restrained levels.

6. HOOP **may be useful for some people who are in a current state of crisis**, as it allows a calm and considered ‘pause for reflection’. For example, a woman who faced eviction from her flat following the death of her mother, who held the tenancy, told the interviewer that it had been very helpful to her to talk through the issues in such a structured way.

7. Finally, HOOP **can be used by older people to assess their housing situations at a number of points in the decision-making process**. It appeared particularly useful for people who described themselves as ‘looking ahead’ rather than contemplating a move in the near future, helping them to clarify their fears and identify what information would help them. However, it was also helpful for people who were expressing a desire to ‘move now’ but who were often still very unsure about this decision.

The value of HOOP for advice workers

1. The comprehensiveness of HOOP means that **housing needs are looked at in a detailed and holistic way**. This means that instead of focusing on the one or two issues identified as problems by the client, the advice worker develops a more balanced picture of the person’s housing situation.

2. The comprehensive nature of the tool also **prevents the advice worker from jumping to conclusions about a person’s preferences**. For example, Mr and Mrs O were living on the top floor of a dilapidated house; neither of them could cope with the stairs, and they initially expressed a strong desire to move. However, the process of going through HOOP revealed that for

emotional and practical reasons they were far more attached to their home than the interviewer had assumed, and were interested in staying put if adaptations could be arranged. Similarly, some advisers from the Asian communities felt that the questions relating to size, comfort and condition would not be relevant to their elders, whose needs were relatively simple and expectations low. In practice, Asian elders interviewed complained of inadequate space, poor heating and awkward stairs and gave low scores in these categories as often as they gave high. This is not to deny the cultural wisdom completely – average scores from the Caribbean respondents on these points were lower than those from the Asian groups – but it does illustrate the danger of making assumptions, even within cultural groups.

3. The HOOP **focus on information needs** allows interviewers to identify gaps in people's knowledge of services and thus to correct any misunderstandings they may have. For example, several of the people interviewed felt they were managing less well than previously and assumed that the only way they would receive support would be to move into sheltered housing. Although this may have been a very good choice for some, for others it was clear that they would prefer to stay where they were and simply lacked knowledge about social services support and about the adaptations which can be provided.

Mrs U for instance, had very high expectations about the level of support provided by sheltered housing wardens, and no knowledge of community care services. The interviewer encouraged her to make very careful enquiries at sheltered schemes before committing herself, and to request a social services assessment to see if she was entitled to any assistance in her current home. Mrs U was therefore in a better position to make informed decisions about her housing.

4. HOOP **sets the issue of housing need in a broad context**, asking a range of questions which recognise people's emotional needs. It allows the interviewer to assess the relative significance of housing and to recognise when a person is in need of a non-housing related solution. For example, many of the people interviewed during the project were very lonely and would

have benefited from better access to transport, more appropriate leisure provision and other services.

5. HOOP allows advice workers **to work with and respond to the decision-making style of the older person**. Some of the people interviewed placed great value on gathering information in advance of a crisis, finding the pursuit and the possession of information helpful in themselves in re-establishing a sense of control. The HOOP interviews demonstrated how widely people varied in their tendency to plan ahead, with some being very reluctant to look ahead at all, while others thought of every conceivable future event and planned how they would respond to them.

The issue of when to move was resolved very differently by people in similar situations, with some deciding it would be wise to move before their health declined, whilst others felt they would wait until a crisis arose. The concept of push-pull factors is also relevant here, as most of the people who were 'waiting for a crisis' were very happy with their current homes, whereas those making a move before a crisis were often unhappy for reasons which were not solely connected with ability to manage.

Finally, HOOP **gathers information** about how older people view their current accommodation and about what their priorities are, in an accessible assessment format which agencies can use to understand the needs of individuals and of communities. This can inform the forward decision processes of "providers" – see Chapter 7.

Weaknesses of HOOP

Issues which have been addressed

Some of the weaknesses identified during the development project have been addressed in the changes now made to the format. These included:

1. confusing people by having two scoring systems, asking them to score the sub questions as 'a' 'b' 'c' and the whole category out of 10. The 'a' 'b' 'c'

questions have been replaced with 'yes' 'no' or other comment, so there is now only one kind of scoring.

2. interviewing people who had not understood the purpose of HOOP and who were expecting an application form for sheltered housing. The new page headed "Will HOOP be useful to you?" should help prevent its inappropriate use.

3. forcing people to answer all questions even if some are not relevant to them. Again the new page headed 'Will HOOP be useful to you (and associated guidelines) should improve this situation.

4. in the Section 6 'Managing' People were asked how well they managed "with the help they had". This confused many respondents and has been removed. People are still free to say, "I'm fine because I pay someone to do that for me".

5. to make the section on priorities clearer, we have changed the wording so that it asks what the person's priorities would be if they were to move house.

Weaknesses which remain or which have been only partially addressed

1. Some of the people interviewed said that they were daunted by the **length** of the appraisal tool and therefore felt they could not complete it themselves. Even with the help of an interviewer, some interviewees found the completion of HOOP tiring. This detracted from the value of HOOP for some people who might otherwise have found it useful. Certainly the tool demands considerable commitment, both from older people and advice workers/interviewers, but we believe the yes/no format will make it quite a lot easier.

A short 'scratchcard' version was also produced during the development in response to the problem of length. This although (it is still in the old 'a' 'b' 'c' format) is included at Appendix H.

2. Another difficult area was the **section on priorities, which many respondents found impossible to answer**, saying that they could not differentiate between the categories in this way. It has been retained because it is useful to some, but it can be left out.

3. **The section on costs was also sometimes assumed to be asking for details of specific costs**, whereas its intention was to focus on how well people felt they could afford particular outgoings without asking for any figures. This misunderstanding cause some people to become defensive, and was damaging to the interviewers relationship with them. We have added a line making this point at the top of this section. Interviewers are urged to stress the point as well, when conducting the interview, and it could additionally be stressed in any letter that goes out with the form.

Another possible weakness of HOOP is the **assumptions** it contains. HOOP may appeal to a particular type of person who seeks to solve problems by careful analysis, and alienate others who do not think in this way. It may also contain cultural assumptions which mean it will not work equally well with people from different minority ethnic and cultural groups. HOOP was used with 14 respondents from ethnic minorities. Despite language barriers and some awkwardness because of cultural differences, each of these interviews revealed a great deal about the person's housing needs. The issues raised cover everything from poor repair to the need for help with gardening and the excessive wait for adaptations. Specifically within the Asian community, the interviews revealed the vulnerability and loss of desired independence of some men living as lodgers with family or friends, but too fearful of loneliness to move out.

The main difficulty was not so much cultural inappropriateness as the need in some cases for interviews to work through interpreters, with all the added times, loss of shades of meaning and loss of privacy, and the difficulties for interpreters when there was no equivalent word in the other language. It would be better to use interviewers who speak the right language, have a translation made of the form (even if there are some literacy problems) and take the opportunity to consult some elders as to what should be added,

omitted or re-thought. Cultures are constantly changing, and we would be wary of narrowing the HOOP form down too much for any user, or not leaving the possibility for even workers from the same community to be surprised.

5. Also, assessing the value of HOOP requires a **consideration of how it might be used by agencies**. The use of scoring systems is a convenient shorthand but may lend itself to abuse by agencies or individual workers using it to generate quick `results – i.e. on the basis of these scores this person should or should not be considered for sheltered housing. Perhaps an even bigger issue is the resources required to take people through a HOOP interview and to pull together the required information. Most advice agencies are unable to allocate this amount of time to individual clients, although when you consider how important the decision is, it might be considered time well spent to prevent inappropriate lettings.

Finally, there is one point which is both weakness and strength. **The back-up of information needs to be very good**. Although skill in interviewing is clearly important with HOOP, the advice-giving both during and post-interview must also be of a high quality. The tool can be seen to raise high client expectations, (especially at Section 16) and these must, both within and after the face-to-face interview, be delivered. (Failure to deliver would be all the more damaging due to the high level of expectations raised). The advice worker, for example, must always be conscious that the tool may be seen by the client as “answering or solving” problems whereas, in reality, its role is to identify issues and promote thought about solutions in the client.

The support any advice worker receives is important; with a HOOP advice worker this is even more important because of the “face to face promises” implicit in the exercise! The advice worker needs good management in terms of information support as well as frequent opportunities to discuss the processes. Currently, agencies may feel their workers are not sufficiently well informed to give the help needed. If, however, HOOP acts as a spur to enhance an agency's information base and widen training, this should be beneficial to all.

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Chapter 7

Using HOOP to explore overall housing and support needs of older people

The primary aim of developing the HOOP appraisal tool was to help individual older people make housing decisions with the support of a skilled advice worker. However, the objective of the development project also included the hope that it might identify service gaps and hence be an aid to planners. Because the older people who took part in this development project were extremely heterogeneous and geographically scattered (see Appendix A) the sample does not provide a base for generating reliable insights into the relationship between priorities/concerns and service availability.

However, we are of the view that HOOP could be used in a much more targeted way in certain circumstances, for example as part of an estate regeneration process. Such an exercise would help not only to clarify the preferences of individual older people but also to provide valuable planning information. The potential for this is illustrated in this chapter by looking at different ways of analysing scores.

Analysis of scores

Using the computerised version of HOOP that was used in the development phase, there are several ways of carrying out numerical counts in order to gain statistical information about the housing needs of those interviewed. These include analysing the 'priorities' chosen; looking at average satisfaction scores; looking at scores under six (that is, below the level of minimum acceptability) and analysis of 'a', 'b' and 'c' scores (with the revised version it

could be ‘yes’ and ‘no’ scores). Given the small, heterogeneous sample no attempt has been made to cross reference these ‘scores’ against household composition, but housing authorities and others might find such correlation very useful as part of a housing needs exercise.

Analysing priorities

Counting how often categories were chosen as top priority would be a useful exercise for housing providers planning development or refurbishment. We have excluded our own analysis because the wording of the question during the development was not absolutely clear, and the results are therefore unreliable. The wording has been changed now, and this could therefore be useful in future.

Average satisfaction scores

Within each category, interviewees were asked to give a score out of ten indicating their satisfaction with their housing in that category. 47 of the interviewees completed this scoring and if averages for each category are calculated, it is possible to see what aspects of older people's housing are most and least satisfactory in their view. Again, our sample was very mixed, but the results are shown in Figure 1.

Category	Average score (n = 47)
Independence	7.53
Location	7.40
Security	7.06
Comfort	7.02
Size	6.98
Well-being	6.96
Condition	6.74
Managing	6.62
Cost	6.34

Figure 1. Order of satisfaction with different aspects of housing, as determined by average scores given out of ten.

What this tells us clearly is that the people in this sample were more worried about costs than anything else, with managing and the condition of the property as other areas of concern. Levels of satisfaction with independence and location were higher and security is also surprisingly high.

Scores under six (below the minimum level of acceptability)

One of the key points of the HOOP approach is to have separate categories in order to be more precise about people's housing problems, and to ensure that serious issues are not masked by general 'satisfaction' levels, or by the levelling out which the use of averages tends to cause. Despite knowing this in theory, the development team have still been taken aback to discover that 65 per cent of those interviewed gave a score under six in at least one category. This is especially surprising because a number of people were giving interviews in order to help the development project or because they had misunderstood the purpose, or because they were looking ahead and gathering information. This reinforces the importance of looking at scores of '5' ('just not ok') and less. Even the sisters who are given as our example of an inappropriate use of HOOP (case study two in Chapter 6) and who say that they "won't call (that is, criticise) their own home", give a score of 4 in the independence category and say that they "feel very frustrated, not independent at all, and don't like it" This would be important knowledge for anyone continuing to work with them.

Of the eight interviews where a score under 6 was given in just one category, 3 were for cost, 2 for managing, 2 were for independence and 1 for size (this was a person living in sheltered accommodation which was too small).

Of the total, the number of times the various categories were given scores of 5 or less are shown in Figure 2.

Category	Times given score of 5 or less (base 40)
Cost	13
Managing	12
Well-being	9
Comfort	8
Safety / security	7
Condition	7
Size	7
Independence	5
Location	5

Figure 2. Problematic Housing Factors
(numbers of times a score of 5 or less was given for each category)

This is solid evidence of the most serious problems affecting our particular sample of older people. Whenever there is a score under six, care should be taken to read that section of the interview and understand more clearly what lies behind the low score.

Analysis of 'a', 'b' and 'c' scores

With the version of HOOP we used, which used 'a' 'b' and 'c' instead of Yes/No, once the data had been entered on a computer program, it was possible to count how often a particular question was given a 'c' score, (indicating a serious problem) or a 'b' score, (indicating only moderate satisfaction).

This analysis could be carried out for each separate category and for all the categories together. It could count just the 'c's or the 'c's and 'b's added together. (or if you were looking for what was good, you could count the 'a's or 'a's and 'b's). For example, within the 'size and space' category in the sample, the proportion of people answering who gave a 'c' score for the detailed questions are shown in Figure 3.

Detailed question	% of respondents giving 'c' score
Size of rooms	06
Parking	19
Size of garden	21
Storage space	24
Number of rooms	25

Figure 3. Most serious problems in the 'Size and Space' category

In interpreting this information, a look at the appraisal form showed that the problem with the number of rooms was that some respondents had too many and others had too few. In this sample, size of rooms was a major problem for only a tiny minority, whilst all the other factors were affecting between a fifth and a quarter of those interviewed.

When, however, 'b' scores were added to the 'c's, the results were as shown in Figure 4.

Detailed question	% of respondents giving 'b' or 'c' score
Size of rooms	48
Parking	51
Number of rooms	52
Storage space	56
Size of garden	58

Figure 4. Percentages giving 'b' or 'c' in response to questions in the **size** category, arranged from least to most serious

These figures are so close together that they would not suggest any priority, but it is interesting that when the 'b's, which represent background worry rather than immediate major problems, are added in, the size of gardens becomes the most serious issue in this category.

All categories: 'c' scores only

Putting all the questions together and then sorting the percentage of 'c' scores given to each it was possible to get a perspective which took all the categories into account and showed which were causing the least trouble and which were concerning the highest proportion of older people. The whole list is given at Appendix C. The highest 'c' score was for being able to manage decorating. That 40 percent gave a 'c' score for this item surprised the project team, but it presumably showed up a considerable unmet need. Other items such as managing stairs, bathing, being able to keep the house clean, which were given 'c's by around 25 per cent of respondents were more predictable, reinforcing what is already known about the high level of need in these areas. But even more people gave 'c' scores for the cost of repairs and insurance, the ability to manage the garden, confidence that they would be able to stay in their home and not have to move and confidence that help would reach them in the event of an accident. The cost of the television licence was another major item, and so was loneliness.

All categories, 'c' and 'b' scores together

Appendix 'D' sets out the combined 'b' and 'c' score picture. The striking point in this list is how financial issues rose to the top when the 'b' scores were included. A 'b' score in the cost category indicated 'can manage', whereas 'a' was 'can afford with ease'. Even for the wealthy people we interviewed, it seemed be there was a sense of underlying anxiety about incomes which were static or shrinking in a world of ever rising costs. Against this, some older people might have been keen not to boast about their finances in which case 'can manage' may not have been indicative of concern. The substitution of 'yes' or 'no' should clarify which way people are leaning. Another noticeable point is that the great majority of those interviewed thought their homes were free of hazards, even though the accident rate for older people in their own homes is sufficiently serious to be part of one of the key Health of the Nation targets. The wording of this question has now been altered slightly (see the questionnaire, Section 8.1).

If the most serious items from the “c’ scores only list” and the “b and c’ combined list” are compared, there were some overlaps and some differences for our sample. The five items which featured among the ten most serious problems in both lists were:

- having enough company
- being confident of more support in future
- the cost of repairs and insurance
- being able to manage the gardening and
- being able to manage the decorating.

Overall, it is likely that the 'c' scores were more reliable as indicators of serious problems. However, it was useful to be aware of the 'b' scores, both as an indicator where people may have been reluctant to admit a problem and as suggesting items which were perhaps causing background anxiety.

With the new version ‘Yes’ will equal ‘a’ and ‘No’ will equal ‘c’. Anyone wanting to do a more subtle analysis might choose to revert to the ‘a’ ‘b’ ‘c’ method, but it is not quite so user-friendly and the ambiguity of ‘b’ scores can be problematic. We have not yet tested the ‘yes’ ‘no’ approach, except that the majority of the questions were already in a format so close to this that people were already saying “yes – oh, I mean ‘a’” or “no, c”. We believe it will work and be simpler, but we welcome feedback.

Use of written comments and oral comments during interaction with interviewer

HOOP is not meant to be a mechanical, purely numerical system, which is why we have recommended that the amount of scoring should be reduced to just 'yes or no' for the sub questions and scores out of 10 for each category. Anyone using the method to discover the views and wishes of a particular group of older people must go beyond the numbers to look at the written comments that give reasons for particular scores or explain what is an issue or what information is required (see Appendix E for a profile of these comments and the computer print out in Chapter 4 for an example of one interview).

The question in each category, for instance, that asks, "Is there any one thing which has particularly affected the score?" can be very enlightening. One person, giving a '9' score for well-being has said that it was because of her fruit trees, which she had grown from seed. Another, scoring '3' for security and safety, explains that this is because of floorboards upstairs which were damaged when central heating was installed and which now constituted a real danger which she could not afford to have repaired. No-one looking at the generality of scores could guess at details like these without the written explanations, and they are obviously important in understanding the rich complexity of both need and resource issues in older people's housing.

There are also many comments written down beside particular sub questions as people thought about what score to give. One 85 year old man who went daily to a club has said, in the well-being category, "No visitors at home: feel sad and lonely" An 80 year old woman in a small one-bed flat in a sheltered housing complex writes against the basic introductory questions, "I like to have friends for a meal, but there is no room. We cannot have anyone to stay. Visitors have to leave by 10 p.m. and we cannot stay out late without a pass".

In terms of the expressed views of older people, the most common problem stated (19 cases), is both about people wanting smaller properties (9 cases, including two who stated explicitly that this was in order to reduce costs) and about others wanting more room than they would be offered if they moved.(10 cases) People were concerned about the size of rooms being too small (kitchens and bathrooms were specifically mentioned) and wanted two bedrooms rather than one (4 cases), or extra room for the family to come and stay (3 cases). Two people said they would want rooms big enough for their furniture and a third that a move would necessitate the purchase of new, smaller furniture, something which they were willing but could not afford to do. [See the computer printout on 'Size' in Chapter 8].

The second category concerned help with housework and/or gardening (13 interviews) while 11 people raised issues of their need for help in arranging affordable repairs, including small jobs of plumbing or gas fitting, decoration and adaptations. Problems with bathing affected 9 people, including those

who lived in sheltered housing. A full list of the housing related needs that analysis of the questionnaires revealed is given at Appendix H.

The need for expert advice, advocacy and support

Reading all the detailed appraisal form comments and the interview summaries, one is struck by one other key issue. This is the need for more advice, advocacy and support services for older people and hence this project confirms the findings of other Housing Corporation funded initiatives (Minter and Russell, 1999; Parry and Means, 1999). Even if not explicitly stated it was implied in the requests for practical, ongoing help in many of the interviews. Where we worked through local Age Concern groups, it was clear that they were overstretched and seriously under-resourced for the scale of the task they are expected by society to undertake. The expansion and increased funding of home improvement agencies is also a need underlined by these interviews. Overall we were struck by the lack of these agencies in many areas, and the fact that they are not able to help the many better off people who clearly still needed the kind of support they offer.

One of the purposes of the HOOP approach is to discover what information people need in order to make good housing choices. One finding of the development project is that what is most wanted is advice tailored to the individual's housing situation: ideally an interview with a knowledgeable person who will:

- allow the interviewee to talk things through
- help the person discover particular and detailed information they already know they need
- make suggestions or give relevant information that they believe the enquirer may need even though they had not sought it.

For those who know what they want, (the first type of enquirer described in Chapter 5) the duty of agencies is to be able to supply both the information and the necessary support. These are very important issues, not adequately met at present.

Sometimes, however the issues are more complex, and this is likely to be so when the HOOP interview is used appropriately with someone who is uncertain about what to do, when the process begins with the worker obtaining information *from* the older person in order to learn what information may be needed.

The HOOP development project has shown that the housing needs of many older people are often bound up with personal relationships. This was one of the findings of Hawes (1997) when he examined the growing problem of homelessness in old age. In this project, the interviewers tried but had no official brief to help the older person talk about their relationships with their children or their feelings of loss at the deaths of husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, friends and sometimes children. Very old people are survivors. We expect young people who have survived when many of their friends have been killed, in war or disaster, to be traumatised, but perhaps do not see older people this way. Yet they have often seen not only the death of those they love, but the agonies of physical and mental decline that precede it.

It may be that this project has shown that counselling is what is needed by a significant number of older people as much as information. The generation over 75 is not so used to constant introspection as are younger people, but these interviews showed up a need for help to people in coming to terms with traumatic change, and a need for help in understanding their instinct to rush towards their children for comfort whilst desperately resolving, "not to be a burden", "not to be on their doorstep" (sometimes because they remembered what it had been like when they had been the children). Once or twice we should perhaps have tackled the deeper issues that underlay a desired housing move. This, again, was beyond the brief of the development project but we certainly saw the need.

Conclusion

This chapter has set out to demonstrate how HOOP can be used to discover the overall housing and support needs of older people, and to give some of the

findings from the development project. Because our sample was, deliberately, extremely varied and scattered, we have not carried out the kinds of cross tabulation that the tool makes possible and that might be really useful with a more homogenous sample. We hope, however, we have given enough evidence to show the richness of possible understandings the systematic collation and analysis of HOOP data could offer to housing providers and planners.

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Chapter 8

Developing HOOP in the future

Context: Rich profusion of experimental projects

The HOOP development project has taken place in the context of an explosion of innovative projects relating to older people's housing issues funded through the Housing Corporation's programme of research, innovation and good practice, often in partnership with other major funders of housing research. Many of these are closely related to the issue of how older people make housing choices, the information they need and in what ways existing provision fails to meet needs. Projects of particularly direct relevance include:

The work of Hanover Housing association in looking at information sources for older people and their relatives (their excellent publication on Housing Options is referred to elsewhere)

The investigation by Age Concern England and the Housing Associations Charitable Trust into older people's use of housing advice (Minter and Russell 1999) and separate study carried out by Parry and Means (1999)

Housing 21's 'aspirations of older people' project, which researched the most effective ways of communicating with older people in the community about housing choices available to them.

Beyond these directly related projects are a whole swathe more where interaction with the kind of information HOOP can produce is likely to be beneficial. These include a range of projects looking at different aspects of sheltered housing, especially where it is hard to let. Local authorities are in

the forefront of much of this work and many are making serious attempts to review and improve their provision of sheltered and supported housing. Wolverhampton MBC and the London Borough of Redbridge are two examples of this. Housing associations are also widely tackling these issues. It is also true of the good practice in prevention project, undertaken as part of a wider programme with Anchor, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Department of Health and others, and which includes the University of Salford's multi agency pilot project to develop preventative services to older people.

Ways in which HOOP might be used and developed

By housing providers and agencies, to assist individuals

We believe HOOP could be used by a range of housing agencies, including both Registered Social Landlords and local authority housing offices, following the model used in the development project – where the older person is given the option of completing the questionnaire by themselves, but whether they do so or not they are offered an interview with a skilled advice worker. The role of HOOP within these agencies will differ but should always include an emphasis on the empowerment of the older person.

Possible advice worker options include:

1) By advocacy schemes, housing advice agencies and general advice agencies for older people

HOOP has an obvious place as one of the tools available to any organisation which is likely to be approached by an older person with a housing dilemma, as something to be offered in these cases which seem appropriate. It should not be forgotten that, in these circumstances, filling in a HOOP should not be a substitute for the one to one human contact that people desire, but a way of providing a structure to enhance the quality of the meeting. The Elderly Accommodation Counsel, who provide over-the-phone housing advice on a national basis and who have been partners in pioneering the use of HOOP, intend to continue to use and develop it to enhance the quality of the advice

they give. It is also our hope that it will be used by some local Age Concern advocacy groups, home improvement agencies and a wide range of other independent advice services. At a locality level, this might involve the use of HOOP by a partnership of existing local advice agencies along the lines advocated by Minter and Russell (1999) or it might involve its use within new one stop agencies where older people can go for a whole range of housing and other related advice.

2) *Within mainstream housing offices (local authority and housing association)*

The pressure on most housing offices is such that staff would not normally be able to give anything like 90 minutes to going through HOOP with a single client, as they would have to carry out the normal procedures of their organisation as well. On the other hand, bad assessments may mean people turned away who should not be or unsuitable lettings which turn into expensive voids. In this context, the fact that appropriate clients can be asked to complete HOOP on their own in advance is a real advantage. An officer reading a completed form could in 5-10 minutes (even less if they simply looked at the chart) gain a very full picture of the housing situation of the person they are going to interview and have a much more useful interview as a result.

3) *By Departments of Public Health or others who are required to make assessments for rehousing on medical grounds*

In every local authority, there are thousands of applications for transfers or rehousing on medical grounds every year, mostly from older people and most of them assessed by a doctor from the Department of Public Health. The use of the HOOP form, especially now that the health questions which were part of the original prototype have been restored, might be of considerable benefit to those carrying out these assessments, and help the housing officers to perceive whether a solution other than transfer might be possible where no suitable transfer properties were available.

4) *By social services assessment staff*

Social workers carrying out community care assessments are required to include an assessment of the housing situation. The use of the HOOP approach could certainly enhance the quality of this part of the assessment, and skilled social workers would be able to recognise and tackle some of the non housing issues that the tool brings out.

5) Within the context of Primary Care Groups

Many older people move home partly on the recommendation of their general practitioner. Other staff, such as district nurses and health visitors see older people at moments of crisis when housing problems are evident. Counsellors or housing professionals linked to the new primary care groups might be in an ideal position to make use of the HOOP tool to help patients of the Group.

By individuals

HOOP in its present form offers a genuine self-appraisal tool to enable older people to clarify their own views on their housing. The questionnaire could be made widely available to older people through doctors' surgeries, libraries and other general leisure facilities as well as being promoted by advice agencies.

Its residual weakness, for self-appraisal use, is its inability in itself to help the user meet the information needs they identify (see Chapter 6 / Weaknesses of HOOP). However, EAC has agreed to play the lead role in promoting and distributing HOOP, and to put its advisory and information resource, and its extensive knowledge of and links to other agencies, at the service of individual users. Care & Repair England has offered to take similar responsibility for ongoing work with users.

It is our hope that other organisations represented on the HOOP Advisory Committee, or who choose to participate in the proposed HOOP User Group (see Chapter 8 / Conclusion), will assist in developing a signposting matrix, along the lines outlined at Appendix H, which could be incorporated in future versions of the HOOP questionnaire. The matrix would include both information sources and advisory / counselling services willing to help HOOP users evaluate the information they acquire.

Another possible way forward is to develop a much shorter and simpler version of HOOP for self appraisal purposes where the emphasis is very much on the bar charts and not the detailed questions. A prototype of this is presented in Appendix 'G'. This short self-assessment version could be a mechanism to help older people to decide if they need to refer themselves for specialist housing advice rather than attempting the full holistic assessment on a self appraisal basis.

Computer options: The potential of an inter-active program

The concept of a computer version of HOOP as outlined in Chapter 4 needs to be examined further to identify how in practice it might contribute to enhancing the several outputs from the basic tool.

Using a computer keyboard and screen to record live interview responses is a possibility but might be a distraction to interviewee and interviewer alike. On the other hand post-recording of interview data, even of our limited sample, led to trial analyses which appeared to offer illuminating insights into priorities, concerns and general outlook of our sample, as outlined in Chapter 7.

Those graphical representations of scoring which we did explore immediately suggested others, which some would find helpful – for example, an ability, at will, to re-order the final scores chart either by the respondent's own priorities or by score given.

But it will probably be in relation to the *information needs* of respondents that computer technology will in future add most significantly to the HOOP tool. At each stage of the interview, and therefore on each page of the paper questionnaire, respondents are asked if they have a need for information; in Section 16 they are asked very specifically whether they would welcome information on any of a range of subjects. Whether self-administering HOOP, or working with an interviewer, a break now occurs whilst the older person or interviewer goes away to try to gather the information required.

HOOP on computer could offer immediate access to its own integral databases, whether of local gardening services or sheltered housing in a distant town, whilst pre-programmed connections to selected internet sites could enormously expand the range of data available.

Whether through the internet or stored locally, there is also wide scope for experiential as well as factual information to be called up at will. 'Virtual reality' simulations may be best known through fun-fair car racing fantasy rides or interactive battling with marauding medieval armies – but they may be equally effective in introducing older people to the day to day realities of life in sheltered housing or the latest in domestic stair lift technology.

In many ways, a computerised HOOP could offer valuable *links* to information sources, images and simulations, human services and even alternative decision making techniques, all with an immediacy which would enhance its capacity to achieve its over-riding aim of empowering older people.

For some, of course, this scenario will not appeal. Minter and Russell (1999) conclude that 'most older people would prefer to receive fact to face advice and support (regarding housing options)'. No matter; most is not all, and times and the capacities of older people to make beneficial use of new technology are changing fast.

In a few years time, a majority will probably feel they know in principle how to do their supermarket shopping through their television, even if many still prefer to make the outing on foot. By then they will surely feel comfortable in using the same technology to glean hard information about, or introduce themselves to broad options around housing, care and support services.

The HOOP Development Team's initial contribution to HOOP's future evolution into *Interactive HOOP* is to offer the computer version 'bundled' (optionally) with EAC's National Database of Housing for Older People on CD. Supported also through the Housing Corporation's Innovation & Good

Practice Programme, this enables users to easily identify all housing developments which match their specific requirements.

EAC has offered to provide a copy of its National Database free of charge to individual HOOP users who are willing to offer feedback to help refine the best way of packaging the HOOP tool with sources of information. It will also offer the Database to members of the proposed HOOP User Group at substantially reduced subscription rates.

We very much hope that within an ongoing HOOP User Network of housing & care providers and information & advice services, and through promotion of the HOOP tool to commercial providers of services to older people, it will prove possible quickly to add further functionality to a tool which has proved itself so promising even in its comparatively low-tech form.

By agencies as part of housing needs assessment and to inform planning generally

As already demonstrated in Chapter 7 of this report, the structured format of HOOP means that it has the potential to provide really useful information to inform planning within housing or social services, and even more appropriately in the kind of 'joined up' approaches between health, housing and social services that are now being encouraged (Department of Health, 1998; Means et al, 1997). The health questions that are now included make this approach all the more relevant in Health Action Zones and for Health Improvement Plans or Primary Care Group planning. A jointly funded survey with a sample of older people (all tenures) in a particular area, using just the main parts of the questionnaire that relate to assessment of current housing situation, with agreement to act jointly on the findings, could be one approach.

Changes and variations to the design of HOOP

Amendments

On the basis of the experience gained during the development project we have altered some elements of the questionnaire (see Chapter 3). The choice of 'a' 'b' or 'c' in response to each sub question has been replaced with 'yes/no' answers. A question on health has been added to each section. Wording which appeared to cause confusion has been altered. Questions on laundry, ceilings and plumbing have been added.

More fundamental restructuring, facilitating a 'pick and mix approach'

We have introduced the page headed “Will HOOP be useful to you?” to enable it to be tailored more specifically to the needs of individuals. We expect this will allow people to identify at the start of the questionnaire which categories are of particular relevance to them, and permit them to focus solely on the questions within these categories if they wish. The questionnaire would still be available in its entirety for people wishing to take advantage of the comprehensive approach. The disadvantage of this idea is that it compromises one of the essential features of HOOP, which is to persuade people who are identifying their housing need in terms of several specific problems, to look at the entirety of their situation and to consider more fully what the advantages of their current accommodation are. This comprehensiveness is particularly useful for interviewers, but has also been revealing for some interviewees. However, this revelatory effect is unusual as most people are already aware of the push and pull factors in their housing situations. Since we are trying to design a questionnaire useful to older people, it would seem appropriate that they themselves choose whether they wish to complete all or part of it. A compromise would be to ask people to give a score out of ten for each of the nine categories, without the detailed questions, and then to focus discussion on whatever topic(s) they chose (or reverse the order, and ask for the scoring after the main issues have been discussed)

Form or framework?

Another question which needs to be answered is whether HOOP is a form to fill in, or a framework for discussion. The development project findings indicate that it is most appropriately viewed as a framework for discussion, and not as an inflexible end in itself. The crucial question for future users of HOOP will be how rigid this framework should be, and how to incorporate the framework into agency procedures.

Conclusion

The HOOP approach offers a very thorough, user-centred housing assessment. The key characteristics are that it is holistic, making sure that good points are considered as well as problems; that it recognises the need to distinguish between different aspects of a person's home in order to understand what action is needed or possible; and that it asks people to decide for themselves whether each aspect reaches a minimum level of tolerability. In terms of giving information, it offers the chance for people to ask directly for information, and also gives opportunities for the interviewer to perceive information gaps.

The development project has revealed much about the processes by which older people make housing choices (very varied); the information they require and the gaps in services and provision. People who do not want to move may be forced to do so for lack of timely adaptations or repairs, or lack of domiciliary help. People who do want to move are prevented from doing so by cost or tenure or lack of acceptable alternatives. There is much unhappiness because there has been no proper choice. Sometimes, at least, this could be prevented by better information and counselling, and HOOP can help achieve this.

The importance of using a tool like HOOP at the right moment also became clear. An organisation seeking to take preventative action to help older people would need to advertise in places where people go before they reach the point of approaching an agency. An interactive computer model available

in libraries or doctors' surgeries would be one way of achieving this for some users.

The role played by third parties (sons and daughters, doctors, friends) in persuading people to a course of action has been confirmed (see also Burholt 1997). In this respect a key function of HOOP has turned out to be clarifying the older person's position not to themselves but to others, including also those trying to advise them or offer services.

Finally, as far as housing associations, housing departments, social services and primary and community health services are concerned, HOOP reveals with stark clarity the need for better services and housing provision all over the country, including services which can respond more flexibly to the up and down nature of older people's health. It could have a valuable role to play in assessing the needs of a population, with the findings collated through use of the computerised version.

Within this general approach, there is room for a great deal of flexibility, and we envisage that agencies may adapt the main idea to suit the needs of their particular clients, or their staff. We are hopeful that a HOOP Users' Group may be formed to continue to develop the tools in different ways.

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Appendix A

Profile of the Sample

After an initial 10 pilot interviews, a further 48 interviews were completed during the development project. Percentages given are out of these 48. Table 1 overleaf enables the interested reader to see the correlations between factors.

1.	Age		
	55-64	11	(23%)
	65-75	22	(46%)
	76-89	15	(31%)
2.	Ethnic Origin		
	White	32	(67%)
	Afro Caribbean	9	(19%)
	Indian	3	(6%)
	Pakistani	1	(2%)
	Chinese	1	(2%)
	Not known	2	(4%)
3.	Geographical location		
	London	17	
	Wolverhampton	12	
	Sheffield	9	
	Bath	5	
	Derbyshire	3	
	Gloucestershire	2	
4.	Tenure		
	Owner occupiers	27	(56%)
	Council tenants	11	(23%)
	Private tenants	5	(10%)
	Housing association (sheltered)	2	(4%)
	Other*	3	(6%)

- * one renting from relative
- one paying rent for room in daughter's council house
- one renting room in friend's house

5. **Household Composition**
- | | | |
|--------------------------------|----|-------|
| Single women | 23 | (48%) |
| Married couples | 15 | (31%) |
| Single men | 6 | (13%) |
| Larger households (4–6 people) | 3 | (6%) |
| 2 siblings | 1 | (2%) |
6. **Property types** (n = 40 – full information not available for all interviews)
- 6.1 General overview
- | | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Houses and bungalows | 24 |
| Flats and maisonettes | 16 |
- 6.2 Detailed breakdown
- | | |
|---------------------------|----|
| 3 bedroomed houses | 10 |
| 1 bedroomed flat | 8 |
| 4 bedroomed houses | 6 |
| 2 bedroomed houses | 4 |
| 2 & 3 bedroomed houses | 3 |
| 2 bedroomed flats | 3 |
| 1 & 2 bedroomed bungalows | 2 |
| 5 & 6 bedroomed houses | 2 |
| 4 bedroomed flat | 1 |
| Bedsitter | 1 |
7. **Referral sources**
- There were ten different referral sources, including lunch clubs, day centres, advice centres, a home improvement agency and a pensioner’s club.
8. **Interviewers**
- Besides the main researcher interviewer, Anne Pate there were five other interviewers – 4 women and one man (all white). All had some experience of work with older people, but only some were professionals in the field.

Appendix A. Table 1.

Sampling Table

	Tenure	Age	Location	Referral Source	Inter-viewer	Ethnic Origin	No.
1.	Owner-occupier	78	London	EAC	AP	White	1
2.	Owner-occupier	72	London	EAC	AP	White	1
3.	Owner-occupiers	81 & 82	London	EAC	AP	White	2
4.	Part owners with relative	68 & 64	London	EAC	AP	Black (Caribbean)	2
5.	Owner-occupier with mortgage income plan	80	London	EAC	AP	White	1
6.	Owner-occupier	75	London	EAC	AP	White	1
7.	Owner-occupier with mortgage	65	London	EAC	AP	White	1
8.	Council tenant	73	London	Kilburn lunch club	AP	White	1
9.	Council tenant	60	London	Kilburn lunch club	AP	White	1
10.	Owner-occupier	70	London	Barnet day centre	AP	White	1
11.	Private tenant	86	London	EAC	AP	White	1
12.	Council tenant	66	Bath	Age Concern lunch club	AP	White	1
13.	Private tenant	80	Bath	Age Concern lunch club	AP	White	1
14.	Private tenant	78	Bath	Age Concern lunch club	AP	White	1
15.	Rents from relative	80	Bath	Age Concern lunch club	AP	White	1
16.	Council tenant	70	London	Advisory Group	AP	White	1
17.	Owner occupier	64	London	Barnet day centre	AP	White	1
18.	Rents room in friend's house	72	Wolverhampton	Asian day centre	AP	Indian	4
19.	Pays rent to daughter who is council tenant	64	Wolverhampton	Asian day centre	AP	Indian	6
20.	Tenant of housing association (sheltered)	77	Wolverhampton	Asian day centre	AP	Indian	1
21.	Council tenant	61	Wolverhampton	Day centre	AP	Black (Caribbean)	1
22.	Owner-occupier with mortgage	71	Wolverhampton	Day centre	AP	Black (Caribbean)	1
23.	Council tenant	82	Wolverhampton	Day centre	AP	Black (Caribbean)	1
24.	Owner-occupier	65	Wolverhampton	Day centre	AP	Black (Caribbean)	2
25.	Council tenant	72	Wolverhampton	Day centre	AP	Black (Caribbean)	1
26.	Owner-occupier with mortgage	63	Wolverhampton	Day centre	AP	Black (Caribbean)	2
27.	Private tenant	62	London	EAC	AP	White	1

28.	Owner-occupier	62	Sheffield	Stay Put	VW	Pakistani	4
29.	Owner-occupier	76	Sheffield	Stay Put	VW	White	2
30.	Council tenant	85	Sheffield	Chinese centre	VW	Chinese	1
31.	Owner-occupier	71	Sheffield	Stay Put	VW	White	1
32.	Council tenant	68 & 73	Sheffield	Age Well	VW	White	2
33.	Owner-occupier	71 & 73	Sheffield	Stay Put	VW	White	2
34.	Owner-occupier	72 & 77	Sheffield	Stay Put	MM	White	2
35.	Owner-occupier	69	Sheffield	Stay Put	MM	White	1
36.	Owner-occupier	62	Sheffield	Stay Put	MM	White	2
37.	Owner-occupier	68	Lewisham	Lewisham Pensioners	None	Not known	2
38.	Council tenant	76	Lewisham	Lewisham Pensioners	None	Not known	1
39.	Housing association tenant (sheltered)	82	Bath	Age Concern lunch club	FH	White	1
40.	Council tenant	60	Wolverhampton	Day centre	SR	Black Caribbean	1
41.	Owner-occupier	79	Wolverhampton	Social services	SR	White	1
42.	Owner-occupier	66	Wolverhampton	Day centre	SR	Black Caribbean	2
43.	Private tenant	71	Gloucestershire	EAC	FH	White	2
44.	Owner-occupier	89	Gloucestershire	EAC	FH	White	1
45.	Owner-occupier	56	London	DW	DW	White	2
46.	Owner-occupier	75	Derbyshire	DW	DW	White	2
47.	Owner-occupier	71	Derbyshire	DW	DW	White	2
48.	Owner-occupier	61 & 65	Derbyshire	DW	DW	White	2

Appendix B

Situations facing older people who seek information on housing choices

A. Decision already made

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. No choice | this includes all those who have no choice about moving, for whatever |
| 2. Mind made up | those who have taken themselves through the decision making process and do not want to do it again. May need information about rehousing options. |

B) Facing a housing dilemma but uncertain and open minded about the solution

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Undecided | genuinely not able to decide whether to move or not, needing either to talk it through or to obtain more information that might help the decision process. |
| 2. Unhappy but.. | genuinely unhappy in current home but unable to move for any of the following reasons: |
| 2a. non-supply | non-existence or insufficient supply of what was wanted in right place at price that could be afforded |
| 2b. no information | non existence or hardness of obtaining of information |
| 2c. access problems | person unable physically to go and see alternative properties |
| 2d. not free | too much in someone else's power or otherwise not free to be able to achieve a move |
| 2e. complex | complex situation and not knowing where to start |
| 2f. can't afford | can't afford to move |
| 2g. needs support | prospect very daunting: would need a lot of support and help. |

- 3. Happy but..** Happy in current home but feel obliged to consider moving now or in future because of:
- 3.1 frail increasing frailty, not wanting to be a burden to family or friends
 - 3.2 cost can no longer afford.
 - 3.3 too big house too big generally
 - 3.4 garden can't cope with garden
 - 3.5 unsafe don't feel safe
 - 3.6 pressure pressure from family or others
 - 3.7 insecure insecure tenancy
 - 3.8 need support need to be where there will be more support from family or others
- 4. No move but need** Not intending to move from current home but needing...
- 4.1 repair repairs
 - 4.2 adapt adaptations
 - 4.3 home help home help (house or garden)
 - 4.4 company way of dealing with loneliness

C) Just gathering information at present

- 1. Looking ahead** wanting to be prepared for future

D) Issue not primarily about housing

- 1. Relationship issue** issue very much about relationships rather than or as well as physical housing issues.
- 2. Need to talk** principally wanting someone to talk to

Appendix C

What are the most serious housing issues?

Percentage of respondents giving 'c' scores

All categories

Topic	%
familiar neighbourhood	0
answering door or phone	04
gas/wiring/water supply	04
security of tenure	04
generally hazard-free	06
size of rooms	06
arranged to suit	06
freedom to please self	06
content with responsibility for home	06
good base for activities	06
able to manage clothes wash	07
able to manage cooking	07
fire precautions	07
condition of roof	08
having visitors	09
liking look and feel of home	10
light and sun	10
convenient neighbourhood	10
like neighbourhood	10
energy costs	10
independent of family & friends	10
cost of transport	12
heating system	13
absence of damp	13
feel safe from burglary	13
able to manage shopping	14
feel safe in street	14
peaceful neighbourhood	14
distance from family/friends	14
help available when needed	14
cost of rent or mortgage	14
house secure when away from home	14
condition of structure & plaster	15
decoration & furnishing	15
condition of garden walls/fences	16
condition of windows/doors	17
keeping warm	17
parking	19
design/layout	19
cost of council tax, phone, water	19
pleasant/healthy neighbourhood	20
size of garden	21
accessible bath or shower	22
cost of help in house or garden	22
cost of TV licence	22
managing minor maintenance	24
managing stairs	24
storage space	24
enough company	24
able to keep house clean	25
able to manage bathing	25
confident of support in future	25
number of rooms	25
cost of repairs/insurance	29
able to manage gardening	30
confident can stay	34
help would come if accident	38
able to manage decorating	40

Appendix D

Percentage of Respondents Giving 'c' or 'b' scores

Percentage of respondents giving either 'c' or 'b' to sub questions

Category	%		
security of tenure	7	decoration & furnishing	44
familiar location	10	structure & plaster	45
generally hazard-free	13	rent or mortgage	45
freedom to please self	15	liking look and feel of home	46
independent of family & friends	22	clothes wash	46
like neighbourhood	24	garden walls/fences	47
managing cooking	24	size of rooms	48
answering door or phone	24	pleasant/healthy location	50
good base for activities	27	managing maintenance	50
light and sun	29	parking	51
peaceful location	30	number of rooms	52
gas/wiring/water supply	31	confident can stay	52
having visitors	32	managing bathing	53
fire precautions	32	cost of help in house or garden	55
managing shopping	34	help would come if accident	55
condition of roof	35	storage space	56
convenient location	35	size of garden	58
responsibility	37	design/layout	58
arranged to suit	39	managing to keep house clean	59
help available when needed	39	enough company	59
house secure when away from home	39	condition of windows/doors	60
feel safe in street	40	managing decorating	60
distance from family/friends	40	confident of support	60
keeping warm	41	managing gardening	64
feel safe from burglary	41	managing stairs	65
accessible bath or shower	42	cost of TV licence	65
heating system	43	cost of energy	67
transport	43	cost of repairs/insurance	74
absence of damp	44	cost of council tax, phone, water	80

Appendix E

Detailed comments and information from the interviews

The material in this appendix is included to give interested readers more of an idea of some of the detailed or individual points contained in the interviews.

General comments

- Don't fancy sheltered housing "all those old people" (1)
- "might be depressing" (1)
- would like more space (1)
- generalised fear of not being able to manage in future (2)
- would need physical help to pack (2)
- when I moved in was desperate for a place so I accepted it (1)
- just had to accept the flat: nowhere else to go (1)
- too peaceful (1)
- feel sad and lonely (1)
- q.5.12 "Do you feel confident that more support will be available if and when you need it? "Yes, now I know Stayput" (1)
- At moment don't feel independent: don't like it at all (1)
- "Won't call my own home" (1)
- Would be hard to go but if it makes every body happy... would hate to give home up and go and live with anybody" (1)
- home help hours reduced and erratic and not all tasks done (1)
- as one ages one needs different type of furniture (1)
- great difficulty shopping (1) (in this interview, managing a massive problem yet no information on help was required)
- hard to get people to help in home or garden (1)
- the steepness of the path affects the quality of your life (1)
- Giving a score for anything is a lot of rubbish (1)
- estate in middle of motorway traffic 24 hrs a day non stop (1)
- so many locks on doors and windows could be fire hazard (1)

Information wanted

- need information on properties for sale locally (2)
- need information on properties for sale in area away from current home (3) (plus 1 bungalow)
- sheltered housing for sale (1) pref 2bed (4)
- rented sheltered housing (11, including 1 bungalow)
- rented sheltered housing, different area (2)
- rented housing, not nesc sheltered (3 plus 1 bungalow and 1-2 bed bungalow)
- need financial information (6)
- need advice on how to increase income (3)
- need financial information on part buy schemes (3)
- need estimate of value of house (1)
- mutual exchange (1)
- right to buy (1)
- information about retiring to another country (1)

Appendix F

Housing needs revealed in the development project questionnaires

Number of times issues were raised

No	Issues
9	access to bath or shower (including can't get enough water to have bath) and (having to wait for nurse: once a fortnight)
9	domestic or garden help
8	help with repairs/adaptations
7	more rooms or bigger rooms
7	smaller property
4	2 bedrooms
3	room for family to stay
3	company
3	TV licence free to pensioners
3	less responsibility
2	bigger or better kitchen
2	bigger or better bathroom
2	less outlay, for fear of rising costs
2	help to move
2	warden (see also 'reassurance' below)
2	social activities
2	to be able to keep furniture
2	higher switches
2	peace of mind
2	to be nearer family
2	insurance a problem
2	reassurance of having support
2	ways of increasing income
2	ways of reducing housing costs
1	smaller garden
1	information on support services
1	just want to get out of here
1	new furniture
1	council to decorate every 5 yrs
1	biggest problems damp and loneliness

1	none as has local contacts
1	a room with a view
1	more interesting environment
1	my own front door, privacy
1	family to have homes adapted so could live with them
1	to go back to Jamaica
1	If had to move would need help tackling decorating etc
1	moving would be heart rending: would need moral support
1	social and support groups
1	cheap plumber (have wash machine but can't afford plumbing)
1	cheap gas fitter
1	cheaper insurance
1	cheaper security gadgets
1	transport/taxi scheme

Appendix G

Signposting information sources for HOOP users

It is proposed that the general distribution versions of HOOP, both printed and on disk, will include a signposting matrix to explain in detail what information and assistance users can call on from supporting agencies and individuals.

Participation in such a 'HOOP users support network' is a key issue which remains to be fully addressed. However it is envisaged that an initial matrix will be one of the outcomes of the launch workshop for HOOP on 15th June 1999, and that this will gradually be expanded and refined in meetings between users – both agencies and individual older users.

The matrix will need to address several aspects, and could look something like the following:

	General area of competence	Specific information offered	Home interview service	Office interview service	Ongoing support
AGENCIES					
Care & Repair England, Castle House, Kirtley Drive, Nottingham, NG7 1LD. Tel. 0115 979 9091. Contact Ian Bradford					
	Repairs and adaptations to the home	Full professional service through local agencies, including survey, design, supervision and assistance with funding	No	Yes	Yes
EAC, 46a Chiswick High Road, London W4 1SZ. Tel. 0181 742 1182. Contact David Wagstaffe					
	Moving into specialist housing or care homes	Telephone counselling service covering all available options, plus identification of suitable housing or homes	No	No	Yes
INDIVIDUALS					
Mrs Mary Smith, Tel. 01565 444 444					
	Local knowledge of voluntary and statutory support agencies in South Lancashire	Telephone counselling, plus lists of agencies	No	Yes (at local Age Concern)	Yes
Mr John Brown, Tel. 01644 777 777					
	Experienced in adaptations and aids to support independent living by blind and partially sighted people	Telephone counselling, plus access to local and national agencies for the blind	Yes (for repayment of travelling expenses)	No	Yes

Appendix H

The 'scratch card' version of HOOP

Please see separate download entitled 'Mini-HOOP tool'.

