



Recruitment Information Pack May 2021

An opportunity to help shape and deliver a new service to older people and their families



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Closing date for applications: Wednesday 9th June 2021



A new 'housing options' advice service for older people

1. Context

It is now broadly accepted that older people need access to good, independent and impartial information and advice (I&A) to help them ensure that their home will suit them as they age, and that they will be able to access any support or care they may need to continue living independently, safely and well at home.

Arguably older people have a broader range of housing options open to them than in the past, but with this comes more complex decision making – often involving family members. For many an emotional attachment to 'home' still makes addressing the basic question of '*should I stay or should I move*' difficult, whilst declining physical ability can make both 'age proofing' an existing home or moving somewhere more suitable equally daunting. Costs involved may be difficult to understand, predict or afford.

2. About EAC

EAC (Elderly Accommodation Counsel) is a registered charity formed in 1985 whose mission is to provide information, advice and guidance to help older people reach informed decisions about meeting their housing, care and support needs and aspirations.

Over the decades we did this via a highly regarded telephone Advice Line, through our main website <https://housingcare.org/> and HOOP (Housing Options for Older People) tool <https://hoop.eac.org.uk/>, and by building close relationships with older people's agencies and services that complement what we do. Between 2008 and 2016 we took the lead with Care & Repair England in building the FirstStop Advice network, bringing willing partners into close working collaboration and managing a grant programme to seed fund new local housing options services. From early 2017 we were forced by lack of funding to gradually wind down, and ultimately close, our telephone advice service.

However we have continued to invest in our online information resources, and during 2020 launched fully rebuilt versions of both the HousingCare website and HOOP tool. We also host the legacy FirstStop site (<http://www.firststopadvice.org.uk/>) and have another site dedicated to our National Housing for Older People Awards (<https://eacawards.org.uk/>). For more information about the EAC the charity see our recent Annual Reports & Financial Statements at <http://www.eac.org.uk/about.aspx>

3. About a new service we aim to create

Happily we are now in a position to pilot a new modest scale advice service, thanks to a 12 month grant from the OneFamily Foundation (<https://www.onefamily.com/your-foundation/>) and increased earnings from our website and data. We want to use the opportunity to create an authoritative 'housing options' service spanning the 'staying put' to moving home continuum, including meeting care/support needs where applicable and crucially, addressing the complexity of funding later life living solutions.

The service will:

- be national, but promoted mainly in England.& Wales;
- integrate with EAC's online resources, and be advertised mainly through our HousingCare website and HOOP tool;
- operate via telephone and email, via 'live chat' when capacity allows, and on an exploratory basis via video-conferencing;
- employ home based Advisors, with EAC providing the computer and telephony kit required;
- be offered to older people directly, and also to family members and carers.

We envisage triaging service delivery to enable us to respond promptly to most initial enquiries and to offer booked appointments for lengthier / more in depth conversations to a proportion of clients.

Initial contact (Level 1-2)

- Generally by telephone and email, plus 'live chat' when capacity allows
- Understand customer requirements
- Help to access EAC and other online resources (where relevant)
- Bespoke information, guidance and guidance (within target time limit)
- Explanation of Level 3 service offer (if relevant)
- Arrange Level 3 callback

In depth / ongoing information, advice & support (Level 3)

Covering two broad options:

- 'Staying put' solutions: home repairs and adaptations, sourcing home help and low level support services, home technology, and funding for each;
- Moving home options: focusing on retirement housing and helping clients understand and choose between the many models of built form, location, tenure, service provision, capital costs / rents, service and other charges - as well as between different landlords / managers.

Level 3 contact will generally be by telephone and email, but we aim to pilot video conferencing with clients who prefer this, including where conversations also include family members.

Quality assurance

Service delivery standards, including data security and confidentiality protocols, will be guided by EAC's Quality Standards

(<http://www.firststopadvice.org.uk/resources/quality-assurance/qa-standards/>).

Maintaining the service longer term

During the first year of the new service we aim to explore and test a range of ways of ensuring its longer term financial viability. Examples may include:

- charging some clients for in-depth or extended advice;
- a bespoke service for involved family members (eg. a comprehensive exploration of housing options with reporting and recommendations);
- commission on introductions to certain products or services (eg. independent advice on financial options);
- an 'added value' free service to OneFamily mutual members
- subscriptions services to specialist housing providers (eg. independent advice to prospective residents on extra care housing or shared ownership tenure);
- a housing or service 'finder' service;
- research grant funding (eg. for analyses & reporting on client attitudes to certain housing options);
- additional targeted advertising on HousingCare website.

4. Staffing the service

With the team of 3 fte staff the first year budget permits we aim to deliver both levels of service described above. Depending on recruitment this may be achieved by all Advisors dividing their time between Level 1-2 and Level 3 work, or some other arrangement. The current recruitment aims to appoint two fte Advisors, who will be offered fixed term 12 month employment contracts with EAC.

The service will be led and managed initially by EAC's CEO John Galvin, who will organise induction, training in specific subject areas if required, team meetings and one-to-one sessions with Advisors. During the pilot we will review options for the longer term management of the service.

Advisors will be expected to work from home. Supervision, training and team meetings will initially be held via Teams, Zoom or similar, with face-to-face meetings introduced as soon as the Covid situation allows.

We are very much open to working with another older people's advice agency to help staff our housing options advice service.



Job description Housing Options Advisor

1. Key facts

- **Accountable to:** EAC Chief Executive
- **Responsible for:** No staff management responsibility
- **Based:** Home-based
- **Salary:** Up to £27k pa for 35 hour week (or pro-rata)
- **Hours:** The service's core operating hours will be 9am – 5pm on weekdays and working hours within this will be agreed with you.
- **Duration:** 12 months
- **Leave entitlement:** 25 days (pro rata) plus statutory bank holidays
- **Pension contributions:** Nest minimum contribution by EAC
- **Probationary period:** 6 weeks, with reviews at 3 and 6 weeks
- **Closing date for applications:** Friday 4th June 2021

2. Job purpose

- To deliver an independent, impartial, authoritative and confidential housing options advice service to older people, their families and advocates – by telephone, letter, email, 'live chat' service and (experimentally) video conferencing;
- to work with EAC colleagues to explore ways of sustaining the service beyond the 12 month funded period.

3. Main Tasks

To provide older people, their families, carers and advocates ('clients') with informed, professional and authoritative information and advice to enable them to make informed decisions about:

- meeting their current or future housing needs and aspirations;
- accessing related support and care services;
- financing the above.

To:

- refer clients as appropriate to the Advice Service's Level 3 service;
- record outline information on all enquiries using EAC's CRM system;
- identify and write up case examples for practice-sharing and PR use;

- work as part of a team to ensure that EAC service standards are maintained.

The above list is not exhaustive and other duties may be expected of you in consultation with the Chief Executive.

4. Person specification

Unfortunately EAC can offer only limited induction and on-the-job training at present, and the person specification below is therefore very demanding. If you feel you can meet all or most of these essential requirements, we very much want to hear from you.

Skills

- ability and interest in engaging with clients via websites, apps and social media, as well as traditional means (E);
- good customer service skills with the ability to communicate by telephone and in writing (E);
- adequate literacy skills (E);
- ability to deliver information and advice in ways appropriate to each client and that empower them to reach their own decisions (E);
- self-motivated with good time management skills (E).

Experience

- experience of providing information and advice by telephone (E);
- experience of working/engaging with older people (E).

Knowledge requirements

- a broad awareness of ways in which older people can adapt or 'kit out' their homes in anticipation of or response to ageing generally, or to specific conditions they may have or anticipate (E);
- a broad awareness of ways in which older people's support or care needs may be met through a combination of formal and informal sources, both free and paid for (E);
- some understanding of the impact of dementia on older people's lives and ways in which 'housing options' have evolved to address this (E);
- a broad awareness of the models of retirement housing – their availability, built forms, integral services and facilities, tenures and costs (E);
- an interest in innovatory thinking and practice about enabling older people to 'live safely and well at home' (E).

5. Further information

- EAC Reports & Financial Statements (see www.eac.org.uk/about.aspx)
- 'Live safely and well at home' historic client brochure (see <https://housingcare.org/downloads/kbase/3143.pdf>)
- EAC FirstStop national advice service standards (see <http://www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk/resources/quality-assurance/qa-standards/>)
- EAC websites www.housingcare.org, <https://hoop.eac.org.uk/>, www.firststopadvice.org.uk

6. How to apply

Please provide your CV along with one to two A4 pages (max) explaining why you would like to work for EAC in this role, and how your skills, experience and knowledge make you suitable for the job.

Send your application to john.galvin@eac.org.uk

Please also email me if you have any questions about this post.

The closing date for applications is Wednesday 9th June 2021.

7. And then?

We will invite shortlisted applicants for interview during the week starting 14th June.

We will write to all other applicants to tell them of our decision, however we simply cannot promise to explain our reasons given how few pairs of hands we have at the moment.

John Galvin, CEO

EAC

24th May 2021