

Mrs Gita Lawrence comments

Page: [Policy H1 Increasing housing supply](#)

Section: [H1](#)

There is a significant number of elderly people in London and the surrounding areas who continue to live on their own in their 2 or 3 Bedroom home after their children have grown up and left the family home. Most elderly people use 1 or 2 rooms in their home and the rest of the house is left unused. With some joint-up thinking, this resource could be put to good use, not only helping with the housing issue but also with the social care issue.

If Councils thought 'out of the box' and allowed the elderly to split their family home into two flats, the benefits would be as follows:

- in terms of social care, it would create a 'buddy' system between the two families. The elderly would become the landlord/landlady and would have to interact with the new family which would address several issues affecting the elderly like isolation, managing high heating costs etc. It might also help with simple medical assistance with falls and getting the elderly to the hospital etc.
- in financial terms, it will be additional income for the elderly and might mean that some elderly who depend on the welfare state to meet their living costs might not have to do so.
- the Council will benefit with additional income by receiving two Council tax payments from the property instead of one.
- It is not unheard of that a family home split into two flats cannot be turned back into a family home.
- The reason for refusal to split family homes into two flats on grounds that the Council is required to have a certain quota of family homes in the borough does not make sense because this quota is only on paper. The reality is that many of these 'family homes' are not being used as family homes and may only have 1 elderly person living in the house so how does this quota help when there is a 'housing crisis' and rising homelessness in London and the surrounding areas?

Page: [Policy H1 Increasing housing supply](#)

Section: [4.1.2](#)

There is far too much rigidity and inconsistencies between Councils across London. The Planning Departments in Councils need to think creatively and use their limited resources sensibly. There is little point saying 'there is a housing crisis' when Councils take decisions that don't help the situation.