

# Reform housing with care to reduce pressure on NHS, says expert

March 24 2015, by George Wigmore

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New figures have shown that more than one million hospital beds were lost last year due to delayed discharges, resulting in a chronic lack of beds and huge strain on the NHS.

This 'bed-blocking' is now costing the NHS £287 million, with the practice rising over 20 per cent in the last year and now at record levels with health managers forced to keep patients in hospital for much longer than needed as they cannot be transferred into the community.

Commenting on the issue, Julianne Meyer CBE, Professor of Nursing: Care for Older People at City University London and Executive Director of My Home Life Programme, said:

"Bed-blocking is a horrible term, which focuses on beds, not people, and inappropriately blames [older people](#) for failures in the system. We

should be more concerned about older people being stuck in hospital beyond their need, which places them at higher levels of risk. The focus on beds, not older people, is truly shocking.

"We need to recognise that [care homes](#) are potentially part of the solution for the NHS and, if we worked in better partnership with them, could help alleviate some of the pressures that are crippling the NHS, and also ensure that older people receive the care they need to live a good life, before having a peaceful death in a place of their choice. Care homes need to be seen as a positive option, rather than the end of the line.

"To better understand the context of care homes, all NHS staff should read the recent Commission on Residential Care report, which was chaired by the Rt Hon Paul Burstow and sets out 38 recommendations to reform the sector. NHS staff would do well to acknowledge the strain the care home sector is also currently working under. Instead of passing on blame, let's value and respect each other more and work together to find solutions."

Provided by City University London

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