

Funding home adaptations: The changing needs in later life planning

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The UK's ageing population poses a potential shift in the way later life care needs are going to be met.

Based on projections from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), there were 1.7 million people aged 85 years and over in 2022, making up 2.5% of the total UK population. By 2047, however, this figure is forecast to almost double and grow to 3.3 million, or 4.3% of the UK.

As general life expectancies creep upwards, there will be more UK families coming to terms with the later life care responsibilities for their loved ones. Home adaptations could be set to play an increasingly essential part of later life planning, as more people look to stay in their homes.

From installing stairlifts and walk-in showers, to making doorways more accessible for wheelchair use, home adaptations help to tackle the mobility and accessibility challenges that could affect many people as they get older. One other challenge, however, is how to fund such improvements.

Unlocking wealth

Property wealth has the potential to be a useful tool for those looking to fund later life care. A lifetime mortgage can allow borrowers to access the wealth tied up in the value of their home, providing them with the freedom to use the money however they would like.

Figures from L&G have shown that equity release is being increasingly used to support quality of life spending and family priorities, with half (50%) of



all new L&G customers now using equity release to fund home adaptations.

One of the benefits of using a lifetime mortgage is that borrowers can choose whether they want to repay all, some, or none of the money each month. Adapting a home to meet care needs could be costly for a UK family, but the flexibility of a lifetime mortgage could provide a way to fit those costs into budgeting plans.

Considering all the options

While lifetime mortgages can be an important consideration as part of a holistic approach to financial planning, seeking professional advice is always recommended because there may be alternative, more efficient ways to source money for home adaptations.

State support could be available to those looking to fund later life care, and the Government offers grants that could help older homeowners. The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is one example, with up to £36,000 available to people who may have age-related needs.

While this grant might not cover

the entire costs of adapting the home for everyone, support such as this can play a complementary role alongside a lifetime mortgage, ultimately to fund the necessary care that a loved one might require.

Where to start

Amid the variety of options, it can be difficult for some families to know where to go for advice.

L&G offers a free Care Concierge service, providing guidance and information over the phone to help clients understand, find and fund later life care. Their team can also talk clients and their families through the care system, including any state funding they might be eligible for.

A lifetime mortgage might not be appropriate for everyone, but L&G's service offers calm, clear, and trusted advice to ensure families can find the right solution in their care responsibilities.

With the ONS forecasting such a rapid rise in the UK's over-85 population in the years ahead, the number of families looking to adapt homes is likely to grow - and providing them with trusted advice will be paramount.

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