

# genHOME Project Summary Report

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The purpose of this summary report is to outline the work of the genHOME project, which has been supported by the membership of the Royal College of Occupational Therapy Specialist Section for Housing (RCOTSS-Housing). The summary provides a commentary on the background to the project, key outcomes the project has achieved over the past 7 years, where the project is now, and the future going forward.

## Background

The catalyst for the genHOME project began with an article written by Darren Awang and Frances Heywood and published, in 2011, in the British Journal of Occupational Therapy. The article describes the three challenges impacting on the development of an effective evidence base to inform practice in housing adaptations and inclusive design. Firstly, the existing research is fragmented and, consequently, frustrates efforts to build a robust body of evidence. Secondly, there are large gaps in the knowledge base about housing adaptations. Thirdly there is a lack of a consistent and coherent approach to measuring outcomes.

The article concluded by recommending the formation of a project founded on the principles and spirit of the original genome DNA mapping project, and which would begin the process of addressing the challenges identified by Awang and Heywood. Thus, with the generous financial support from the members of the RCOTSS-Housing, Pressalit, and UKTROF, and with the formation of the genHOME steering group, formal work on the project began.

## 7 Years of the genHOME project

Since 2011, the genHOME project has achieved a number of milestones towards overcoming the challenges of developing an effective evidence base for housing adaptations practice. Throughout this period, the members of the RCOTSS-Housing have been a constant source of support and encouragement. The key achievements are listed below:

**2013:** A scoping review of the evidence base was completed, which identified key gaps in the literature. The findings of the scoping review were presented to the RCOTSS-Housing Conference in 2013.

**2014 – 2017:** Development and maintenance of a repository of evidence related to housing adaptations and inclusive design. Articles added to the repository were published monthly on the genHOME news section on the Royal College of Occupational Therapists website and in the RCOTSS-Housing e-newsletter. The repository now contains over 450 articles.

**2015 – 2017:** With the support of the RCOT website development team, a genHOME area was created and maintained on the RCOT website.

**2016:** The first international symposium on housing adaptations, bringing together 33 national and international academics and individuals from organisations involved or interested in housing

adaptations and housing design research, the symposium had the simple aim of planning a way forward to promote and raise the quality and impact of international research in housing adaptations and housing design.

**2017:** Report written for the RCOTSS-Housing National Executive Committee on outcome measurement tools used in housing adaptations research

**2017:** Under the umbrella of the genHOME project, 6 international researchers came together at the International Association Geriatrics and Gerontology Conference. The researchers gave a presentation on the cross-cultural comparison of housing adaptations research and the need for a genHOME project.

During this 7-year period, the genHOME Lead has also responded to individual requests from members of the RCOTSS-Housing who have requested specific information and evidence to support them in their practice. The genHOME lead also presented at the 2015 and 2016 RCOTSS-Housing conferences, giving members an update of genHOME activities and achievements.

## **Where we are now and the future going forward**

With changes in policy, the mounting development costs of creating a searchable database of evidence, and the aspirations of the genHOME steering group for creating an online virtual community of international researchers and multidisciplinary practitioners, the RCOTSS-Housing National Executive Committee reflected on the direction of travel for the genHOME project. And in October 2017 it was agreed that the project would be gifted to the steering group, allowing them to take forward their aspirations for the project. Work is now underway to find a new host for the genHOME project and a downloadable document based on the repository will be made available for members of the RCOTSS-Housing to download.

As the steering group looks to the future and for a new host for project, this summary report provides an opportunity to give thanks and recognition to the members of RCOTSS-Housing who have supported the project over the last 7 years, and without whose help and encouragement the many achievements of the genHOME project would not have been possible.

Report written on behalf of the genHOME Steering Group – January 2018

**Note by the Chair RCOTSS-Housing 2018-It is with grateful thanks to the steering group that we have such a rich repository and we hope this legacy will be fruitful in developing the evidence base going forward.**