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Housing Crisis is Driving the Generations Apart, Literally

Profound changes in where older and younger generations live over the last 25 years, due in large part to the housing crisis, is literally driving the generations apart, according to a new report from the Intergenerational Foundation (www.if.org.uk),

Across England and Wales, the number of neighbourhoods in which half the population is aged over 50 has risen sevenfold since 1991. In 1991 there were just 65 such neighbourhoods. This rose to 485 in 2014, 60% of which are rural.

The research reveals that since 1991 rural areas have aged almost twice as fast as urban areas, as young people have moved away to towns and cities. But, even within urban areas, older people, children and young adults are all living increasingly apart from each other.

The report, [*"Generations Apart? The Growth of Age Segregation in England and Wales"*](#) developed in partnership with Legal & General, warns that such trends impose a range of costs on society. These include: social costs, due to the undermining of trust and the opportunity to share experiences between young and old; care costs, as living further apart makes it harder for young and old to look after each other; economic costs, such as higher unemployment, as age segregation reduces people's opportunities to find work; and political costs, as it makes it harder for younger and older generations to see each other's points of view.

Angus Hanton, IF Co-Founder says, "Just 5% of the people living in the same neighbourhood as someone under 18 are over 65, compared to 15% in 1991. This is hugely damaging to intergenerational relations. It weakens the bonds between the generations, and leads to a lack of understanding of, and empathy for, other generations."

Nigel Wilson, Chief Executive Officer of Legal & General, which supported the research, adds, "We have created an intergenerationally unfair society. We need to take bold steps to reverse the negative trends of the last thirty years. This will involve not only an increase in housing supply of 100,000 a year of all tenures, but also a step up in investment in modern infrastructure and modern industries to create the jobs of the future. Legal and General will continue to step up and we are encouraged by the positive signals of intent from the new Government."

IF's analysis shows that the degree of separation between retirees and young adults has doubled during the same period. Every neighbourhood in England and Wales where half the population is under 30 is now urban. In Cardiff, identified in the report as the most age-segregated city in England and Wales, more than 30% of young adults, a quarter of retirees, and 15% of children would need to move in order to eliminate age segregation in the city, as the centre of the city has become more youthful while outer-lying neighbourhoods have aged.

Hanton continues, "We believe that the housing crisis is driving this trend, with older **generations enjoying either rural or leafier suburban living, while young people are** concentrated in rental properties in the centre of towns and cities."

Brighton, Leeds, Nottingham, Sheffield and Southampton are also identified as age segregation hotspots where over 30% of young adults, and 25% of retirees, would have to move in order to balance the ages more evenly across neighbourhoods.

Meanwhile, in areas of Newham, London, half the population is under 25 years of age, and is barely 12 miles away from neighbourhoods in Havering, where the median age is over 45.

IF and L&G have produced the following 10 Point Plan:

1. **Build more homes to buy:** more homes for all types of people, especially affordable homes for the young.
2. **Build more homes for downsizers:** the right homes in the right location at the right price.
3. **Build more homes to rent:** encourage the entry of large-scale institutional landlords.
4. **Deliver modern building concepts:** build quickly at low cost.
5. **Encourage downsizing-in-situ:** encourage older generations to subdivide their homes and share neighbourhoods.
6. **Combat nimbyism:** build close to where we live.
7. **Give up some greenbelt:** give up environmentally poor parts for building new homes
8. **Live together:** encourage greater intergenerational living
9. **Build to share:** create new mixed housing developments that different generations can share
10. **Increase density:** build up with more shared outside spaces.

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Notes to Editors:

- For the research report follow [this link](#)
- For the brochure follow [this link](#)
- Infographic maps of Cardiff, Brighton and London, as well as a table of the top 25 cities for age segregation are also available

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Angus Hanton, IF Co-Founder is available for comment

The Intergenerational Foundation is a non-party-political charitable think tank that researches fairness between generations. IF believes policy should be fair to all: the old, the young and those to come.

Legal & General, established in 1836, is one of the UK's leading financial services groups and has a commitment to invest around £15 billion in UK infrastructure, including new homes for both young and older people.

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