

What is Cohousing?

Cohousing is a way of living which brings individuals and families together in groups to share common aims and activities while also enjoying their own self-contained accommodation and personal space.

Cohousing communities are a means of compensating for the alienating effects of modern life where neighbours don't recognise each other and where day-to-day collaboration is minimal. They offer particular benefits for children in terms of secure play-space and shared activities. Older people can also find companionship and mutual support.

Features of cohousing communities

- They are set up and run by their members for mutual benefit
- Members are consciously committed to living as a community
- Developments are designed to encourage social contact and a sense of neighbourhood among members
- There is self governance by consensus
- Members are involved in design process from the outset
- Common space facilitates shared activities like community meals and other amenities like laundries, heating systems, guest rooms and transport may be shared



Work day at the Community Project, Sussex

Cohousing in the UK

Six fully-established cohousing communities exist in the UK, all currently based on owner-occupation. There is a rapidly-growing UK interest in cohousing. Increasing numbers of groups are looking for sites and many individuals are seeking a group to join. There are an estimated 20 groups currently functioning, with another tier of up to 20 loose coalitions interested in cohousing.

A key aim of the UK Cohousing Network is to seek ways of making cohousing as financially accessible as possible. Most forming groups aspire to build mixed-tenure communities but the funding structures are currently unclear. The Network is lobbying government and housing bodies to help develop ways of enabling affordable housing to be included within cohousing schemes in the future.

“Life here is characterised by caring support, friendliness, too many meetings, challenging disagreements, exciting ideas and opportunities. It's exhausting and demanding but really enjoyable too”



Common house at the Community Project, Sussex



Springhill Cohousing, Stroud

The UK Cohousing Network is made up of people from established and forming cohousing groups in England & Wales. It was set up as a network of volunteers following the National Cohousing Conference in Lancaster in 2005. It became a Company Limited by Guarantee in 2007 and then employed a part-time project manager. To date the UK Cohousing Network has organised the Lancaster Cohousing Conference; lobbied government; met ministers; supported forming groups, run training workshops and developed the national website.

The Network aims to:

- Develop as a resource point for new and forming cohousing groups
- Develop and maintain the cohousing website
- Provide an advice point for planners, registered social landlords and other professionals
- Seek ways of making cohousing as financially accessible as possible
- Promote and signpost workshops for individuals and forming cohousing groups
- Promote cohousing via the media
- Raise awareness of cohousing
- Undertake lobbying and policy development



Working on the land at the Community Project, Sussex

Workshops Members of the Network run a range of residential workshops and talks. These can be for people just starting their exploration of cohousing or for groups at a more advanced stage of development. Workshops are held at a number of cohousing schemes in the UK and enable participants to get a taste of life in a cohousing community at the same time as learning how to create a cohousing project.

Telephone information and advice The project manager can be contacted by telephone or email. Please leave a message if necessary.

Resource Materials A small number of cohousing books are available for sale. A collection of sample legal and financial protocols is being acquired for reference or sale.

Media Media enquiries are welcome and where appropriate are passed on to Network members for interview or comment.

Website The website contains a comprehensive range of material about cohousing, including information on established and forming groups, details of other people near you that might be interested in cohousing and advice about the first steps towards cohousing. Registration to become a member of the Network is free and enables individuals to view the profiles of other members of the site and contact them, in addition to other benefits.

www.cohousing.org.uk

the UK COHOUSING NETWORK

The UK Cohousing Network exists to promote the awareness and development of cohousing and to provide support to forming and established cohousing communities



Workday at the Threshold Centre, Dorset

Can you support us?

We are very grateful to the Cooperative Fund for supporting the Network. Our funds are, however, very limited and we are dependent on donations from individuals, cohousing groups, professionals and other parties. To support us, please send a cheque payable to 'UK Cohousing Network' to:

The Project Manager, UK Cohousing Network, The Community Project, 15 Laughton Lodge, Lewes, East Sussex; BN8 6BY. Tel 01323 815727.

Email: info@cohousing.org.uk

Supported by

The **co-operative** fund

the UK COHOUSING NETWORK



Springhill Cohousing, Stroud

Imagine a neighbourhood where you can ...

- Get to know neighbours and share resources
- Walk to see friends.....leave your car at home
- Let your children run free and know they never lack playmates
- Spend less time in the kitchen and have optional shared meals
- Reduce your carbon footprint and live more sustainably
- Have access to workshop / office space
- Spend less time alone and live life more fully

Find out more about cohousing
Support the cohousing movement
www.cohousing.org.uk