

Housing Learning & Improvement Network

Care Services Improvement Partnership 

Health and Social Care
Change Agent Team

Enhancing Housing Choices for People with a Learning Disability

This paper explains the range of accommodation options for people with a learning disability. It is aimed at workers who advise and support people with a learning disability to identify and extend their housing choices. It can also be used by commissioners and providers to check the range of housing choices and support available locally.

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1. Introduction

This paper explains the range of accommodation options for people with a learning disability. It is aimed at workers who advise and support people with a learning disability to identify and extend their housing choices. It can also be used by commissioners and providers to check the range of housing choices and support available locally.

Good quality housing, with the right care and support, can enable almost anybody to live independently. It makes it possible to choose where and with whom to live. It should enable people with a learning disability to link in with their local community; to access services and opportunities such as leisure, employment, transport and education. This enables building wider networks of support both formal and informal.

As well as choosing where to live, people with a learning disability should be able to choose who supports them. This should be part of person centred planning. The options outlined in this paper should be available to all; including those with the most complex housing and related care and support needs.

An accessible version for people with a learning disability and one for family carers will be produced. Check our website for details – www.cat.csip.org.uk/housing.

2. Background

A person-centred approach

Evaluating housing and related care and support needs of people with a learning disability requires assessment of individual needs but also awareness of wider complexities. The property needs to help overcome any physical or sensory disability; one in three people with a learning disability have a sensory impairment. Up to 40% of people with a learning disability are likely to experience mental health problems. There is a higher incidence of early onset dementia. Some people can make heavy demands on buildings, which need to be suitable for the use they will get; some are inclined to dismantle plumbing or electrical fittings, which consequently need careful design and specification.

Dealing with these added dimensions calls for partnership across services. For example, working with mental health services. It involves linking in with other policy agendas locally, such as Supporting People, employment, individualised budgets and direct payments. Housing is central to building an independent life and being part of the community.

Housing and related support needs to embrace local cultural requirements. The numbers of people from BME communities with learning disabilities are predicted to rise by 70% between 1991-2021, reflecting changing demographic patterns. Currently there is little targeted provision or information for people with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities. (The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities, part of the Mental Health Foundation, published a report, in 2001, Learning Disabilities - the Fundamental Facts. www.learningdisabilities.org.uk)

A strategic approach

Many local Learning Disability Partnership Boards have written housing strategies and are now overseeing their implementation. Any which have not should complete this task as a matter of urgency. Earlier plans may now need updating. Assistance may be available regionally via Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP). There should be partnerships strategically between social care, health, housing and providers. This should involve, at all levels, people with a learning disability and their families.

At the individual level, networks and partnerships should be being built in order to enable the person to live independently, to access local resources and services, and to determine how their support needs are best met.

The policy context

In planning both strategically and on an individual level there a number of key government policy documents and strategies to take into account. These include:

- Valuing People White Paper (DH 2004)
- Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services (DH 2006)
- Improving the life chances of disabled people (Prime Minister's Strategy Unit 2005)
- Vulnerable People Strategy (Housing Corporation 2006)
- Supporting People (Department of Communities and Local Government 2003)

Full details of these and the implications for housing for people with a learning disability are contained in the accompanying Housing Learning & Improvement Network policy briefing 'Learning Disability and Housing' under "Briefings" at www.cat.csip.org.uk/housing.

3. Accommodation with care and support options

The majority of people with a learning disability are still supported by relatives in their own homes. Many carers are themselves now well over retirement age as a result of people with learning disabilities on average living much longer. There is a need to plan for both the future, and where wanted, the present in terms of housing options.

In younger families there are often higher expectations than in the past. Where disabled people have been looked after outside the family home in the vast majority of cases this has been in a narrow range of relatively institutional settings predominately in the sharing of both housing and care:

- NHS hospital/campus
- Registered care home
- Group home

We need to dramatically increase the range and allow for independence. This section introduces some possibilities. The box below provides a checklist of some of the more common options. This is not an exhaustive list.

Exploring Options - which options are a possibility?

<p>TENURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Full Ownership/Inheritance<input type="checkbox"/> Shared Ownership<input type="checkbox"/> Homebuy<input type="checkbox"/> Trust Ownership<input type="checkbox"/> Joint Ownership<input type="checkbox"/> Renting from a council or housing association<input type="checkbox"/> Renting from a charity or voluntary organisation<input type="checkbox"/> Renting privately<input type="checkbox"/> Renting from parents or relatives<input type="checkbox"/> Lodger	<p>SOME TYPES OF HOUSING AND SUPPORT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Registered Care Home<input type="checkbox"/> Group Home<input type="checkbox"/> Intentional Community<input type="checkbox"/> Supported housing<input type="checkbox"/> Locality Networks<input type="checkbox"/> Extra Care<input type="checkbox"/> Sheltered Housing<input type="checkbox"/> Cluster flat<input type="checkbox"/> Adult Family Placement
<p>SOME SUPPORT OPTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Personal assistant<input type="checkbox"/> Support tenant<input type="checkbox"/> Community Support Volunteer<input type="checkbox"/> Live in carer<input type="checkbox"/> Outreach or Floating support<input type="checkbox"/> Learning independent living skills<input type="checkbox"/> Culturally appropriate support<input type="checkbox"/> Support for health needs<input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy<input type="checkbox"/> Circle of Support<input type="checkbox"/> Informal support from family, friends and neighbours<input type="checkbox"/> Assistive Technology<input type="checkbox"/> Domiciliary support<input type="checkbox"/> Social Support scheme<input type="checkbox"/> Good Neighbour<input type="checkbox"/> Cleaner<input type="checkbox"/> Cook<input type="checkbox"/> Meals delivered<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Warden	

Group homes, shared housing, registered care homes

Sharing a property with a number of other people, often in a registered care home, has traditionally been the most common option.

If accommodation, personal care (not just support) and board are all provided together, the home will be an establishment registered by the Commission for Social Care Inspection. www.csci.org.uk. Group homes may be registered care homes or not depending on whether they fit the criteria of the Care Standards Act 2000, and typically are based on three or four people sharing a property. What triggers registration is a complex matter on which expert advice is advisable. If personal care is provided in someone's own house then the care provider will have to be registered with the CSCI but as a **domiciliary care provider**. (Adult Placement is a bit different)

Support staff either visit regularly, or are there during the day and sometimes overnight as well. Residents may do their own shopping, cooking and housework, with help from staff. Small group homes may not be registered establishments because for example:

- No intimate, personal care is provided only support
- People have their own tenancy
- Care is separate from housing with different providers.

It is important with this form of shared housing to look at ways that people can choose who they live with. Traditionally the 'matching' has been done by the professionals. Some people choose to live with others but it should be their choice. Another option would be smaller scale sharing where two people who are friends share a rented property or buying a house somewhere.

Case Study – Dudley MBC

This scheme involves two men in their 50s, who had lived with family and then in a residential setting, choosing to live more independently and share together. Dudley MBC identified two council bungalows. These were knocked into one and adapted. The two men have been involved in the decoration, furnishing etc of their new home. It has raised issues of tenancies where two people share and Dudley have worked on this issue.

Dudley plan to identify more council stock to allow further developments.

Contact: john.povey@dudley.gov.uk

Cluster flats

Cluster flats, bedsits or bungalows are self-contained properties, either on one site (like sheltered housing for older people) or occasionally spread across a small geographical area. Support staff are usually on hand and there may be shared facilities such as a laundry and communal lounge. This type of housing is often suitable for people who want to live more independently than in a home but have other people around to socialise with. A Housing Association could set aside a number of properties in a development of ordinary housing, or across its stock within a local area that are for people with a learning disability and work with a support provider to assist them. Some schemes have been based on re-letting part (or all) of a sheltered housing scheme for which there is no longer demand.

Case study – Wakefield

Wakefield MDC, in partnership with Yorkshire Housing, received extra care funding from the DH to build apartments, for people with learning disabilities who live with older carers, in the Wakefield District. The scheme seeks to promote inclusion, independence and innovation through combining accommodation for people with learning disabilities with general needs housing.

Contact: Jayne Gilmour, jjgilmour@wakefield.gov.uk

Adult placement and supported lodgings

Schemes where people live as part of someone else's family have had a resurgence of interest over the last few years. Supported Lodging is used to describe schemes where the person requires much lower levels of support than individuals using Adult Family Placement schemes do. People using both type of scheme have to be over 18 years of age.

Adult Family Placement

The main characteristics of Adult Family Placements are that the individual is living as a member of an ordinary household. The family provide a permanent home to the person who needs accommodation and support. The individual usually shares the whole house and mealtimes whilst having the privacy of their own bedroom. The family normally belong to a Adult Family Placement Scheme run by a local authority and has to be registered with CSCI although a family could set up without the need to register.

In Adult Family Placements, the host family undergoes a thorough preparation process including meetings and training to learn about aspects of learning disabilities and ensure they are adequately prepared to be a host family. They also receive on going support from a Family Placement Worker after a placement has been made. They receive a weekly fee.

Supported Lodgings

In Supported Lodgings, individuals receive much less support and placements are not registered with the local Registration and Inspection Unit. Supported Lodgings differ particularly in the level of involvement and support from the family / landlord / landlady and the level of the support arranged as part of the placement. Usually this only involves help with finding lodgings and minimal support to placement hosts. In Supported Lodgings, the tenant does not necessarily share to the same degree in family life as with Adult Family Placements.

Family Placement have proved successful for some very severely disabled people although, as with any family, the presence of additional supports are an essential part of a comprehensive care package, including use of respite and short breaks services.

It should be noted that Adult Family Placement does not offer permanent secure accommodation. Some schemes do require that guests are provided with a licence

agreement but this does not offer the same security as an assured tenancy. They can be asked to leave at a few weeks notice and has no legal means of challenging such action.

In a lodging arrangement, with a weekly rent, the security of tenure is still not high. The level of security will depend upon the agreement reached with the landlady/landlord. It is usual for the lodger to have some form of licence agreement.

Accommodation with care and support: Things to think about:

- Not really independent or real choice if still limited leisure / work / education opportunities and inaccessible transport.
- High support needs- often less choice and range of options.
- People from black and minority ethnic communities poorly served.
- Need to plan not just for older carers.
- Risk averse/paternalistic attitude still in parts of the services,
- Participation of people with learning disabilities and their families.

4. Rented accommodation for people with a learning disability

More people with learning disabilities are now renting properties from local authorities, housing associations, or private landlords. Alternatively, if the family home is rented, depending on succession rights, the son or daughter may eventually be able to take over the tenancy.

Private rented accommodation

Renting from a private landlord

The main advantage of the private rented sector is that it may provide greater choice of area and property type, depending on the local rental market. As a “market” properties are often more quickly and readily available than joining a queue in the public sector. It is also in the spirit of giving people with a learning disability access to ‘ordinary housing’ like their non-disabled peers.

The biggest disadvantage is lack of security of tenure, because most private landlords let on assured shorthold tenancies, usually for an initial six month period. After that, the tenancy can be terminated by the landlord for no reason with only in effect two months notice. For someone with a learning disability this is a major disadvantage and can lead to a “revolving door” of private rented accommodation. Work is being undertaken in some areas to look at arrangements with the private rented sector to increase security and open up the market.

Case Study – Norfolk – Private sector leasing scheme

This DH extra care funded scheme is a 'private sector leasing scheme' across Norfolk for people with learning difficulties who are currently living with older carers. It provides 15 units of suitably adapted and equipped privately rented accommodation. It offers a 'lease premium' to a number of private sector landlords to enable them to adapt and make improvements to properties to bring them up to a good standard of accommodation. The project also provides for the purchase of units of portable 'assistive technology' to enable people to feel secure and to live as independently as possible.

Contact: Wendy Hicks, wah@great-yarmouth.gov.uk.

Another problem is that many landlords refuse to let to people on benefits and in any event housing benefit limits often mean that people with learning disabilities will have to pay out of their other income to meet the part of the rent not covered by HB. However, local authorities may be willing to use discretion to pay higher levels of HB to a learning disabled tenant if there is no other solution.

Private Sector Leasing

Local authorities also use private landlords to help with housing, especially for homeless families. Private leasing schemes, often in partnership with a housing association, can provide short to medium-term housing because the lease is for a number of years. The usual arrangement is for the association to lease properties for private landlords for 3 – 5 years and then sub-let to the disabled individual

Renting from family members or a trust

Parents (or other relatives) can purchase self-contained property to provide rented housing for their child(ren). As long as it is clearly a normal commercial arrangement, just like any other private landlord, the tenant(s) should be entitled to HB. However, parents would be advised to discuss this in advance rather than assume that it will be acceptable. Renting part of the parental home (e.g. a bedsit) is not eligible for housing benefit. An important Social Security Commissioners decision in 2005 has clarified the rules in relation to renting to relatives.

www.housingoptions.org.uk/gi_factsheets/gi_fs_17.html

Note that as a private letting, rents are referred to the rent officer by Housing Benefit and may be insufficient to re-pay the full cost of a mortgage along with maintenance cost and other landlord obligations.

Social rented housing

This refers to subsidised council or housing association housing so that rents are more affordable.

Local Authorities

There are two main ways to access Local Authority Housing, as a homeless applicant or via the housing waiting list.

Homeless Applicants

Homeless applicants take priority over those on the waiting list as they are considered to be in more immediate housing need. Being 'homeless' does not have to mean that an applicant is sleeping on the streets. For example, an individual might be living in unsuitable accommodation, living in accommodation which is in poor condition, or have no security of tenure.

To be housed through the homelessness route applicants must meet a number of other criteria as follows:

- Priority Need - there are clear definitions of the groups of people whose needs take priority. This includes individuals who are vulnerable because of physical or mental illness or disability.
- Local Connection - this means that you are living or working in an area or have family in an area. There may also be other special reasons that give a 'local connection'.
- Eligibility for Assistance - theoretically, anyone who does not have the resources to get their own housing is eligible. In practice the degree of need takes priority.
- Not intentionally homeless - the local authority does not have a duty towards an individual who has done or failed to do something to remain in an existing tenancy. Guidance says that, in most cases a person with learning difficulties or who is mentally ill should not be found intentionally homeless.

The Housing Waiting List

The waiting list application is separate to the Homeless Application. Many Local Authorities operate a points system to decide who will be housed and when. Points are awarded for overcrowding, lack of amenities, medical reasons and time on the spent on the list for example. In effect, the greater and more urgent your housing need the more points you will get. Not all Local Authorities operate a points system.

Choice Based Lettings (CBL)

CBL is an approach to allocations that offers more choice and transparency to the home seeker. A pilot of 27 housing providers was set up to offer Choice Based Lettings running from April 01 to March 03. Evaluation of the pilot schemes can be found at www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1153340#P63_4344. All authorities will have CBL by 2010.

Applicants are invited to 'bid' for vacant properties advertised on a regularly updated list for example a magazine, local authority housing department entrance or a website. In order to be eligible to bid for a property the applicant must be on the Housing Register or registered as Homeless with the local authority. Allocations are made to the bidder nearest to the top of the list.

Local Authorities have a duty to provide housing advice including a 24 hour emergency service. Advice may be contracted out to other agencies such as housing advice centres.

As CBL requires the applicant to positively bid someone with a learning disability may lose out unless supported to monitor vacancies and bid. Some local authorities have set up arrangements whereby a member of staff bids on behalf of vulnerable people as vacancies occur.

Some areas are making agreements to take over some stock for people with a learning disability. For example Dudley Social Services have refurbished two semi-detached council bungalows into one two bedroom property that two friends will share. They are working with the Housing Department to acquire further properties. Work is being undertaken to ensure joint tenancies and choice over whom someone lives with.

Other authorities agree to make available a set number of lettings for disabled people each year.

The National Social Inclusion programme

(<http://www.socialinclusion.org.uk/home/index.php>)

Although primarily focused on mental health this site has some useful documents on choice based lettings and housing issues.

Housing Associations

Alongside CBL many areas have Common Housing Registers whereby social landlords and the local authority combine all their waiting lists together with the same application process. Where this is not the case it may be necessary to apply to both the local authority and the local housing associations for social housing to rent.

Local authorities will have the right to nominate (i.e. put forward for housing) people for vacancies in housing associations as they occur – typically 50% but can be more. The actual letting decision remains with the association.

Nearly all new rented social housing is built by Registered Social Landlords (RSL) with Housing Corporation funding. New developments depend on allocation from the Housing Corporation to the association. Getting an allocation in turn depends on the local authority letting the Housing Corporation know that this is a priority.

Groups of self-contained units with support - KeyRing

An option for the use of any rented housing is the type of service (such as Keyring) run as Community Support Networks. These are a very suitable option for people with low support needs, living in ordinary housing in a neighbourhood. KeyRing provides an established model of low support using social rented housing and has 60 networks that support over 500 tenants nationally.

The model provides ten ordinary properties scattered around a small neighbourhood where you can easily walk from one to another. People with learning disabilities live in nine flats or houses with assured tenancies from the housing association or secure tenancies from the council. The tenth property is occupied by the KeyRing community living worker who works part-time on a flexible basis. KeyRing aims to provide emotional and practical support, drawing on the skills of all the network members in a mutual support network.

Individuals can have their own care package in addition to basic support provided by KeyRing.

KeyRing's website can be found at www.keyring.org

Rented accommodation for people with a learning disability: Things to think about:

- What are people with a learning disability being offered? Where is it? Is it in an unsafe area putting vulnerable people at risk?
- Is there adequate training for housing staff to understand the needs of people with a learning disability, particularly in light of choice based lettings?
- Do support staff and families understand all the housing options?
- Have Social Services staff/care managers been trained in the full range of housing options.
- The Valuing People objective of a choice of where and how you live requires local authorities to give information on services offered, priorities for providing help and procedures for applications. Housing allocations schemes need to be given to the service user and their families in a form which can be understood

5. Home ownership

There are a number of ways that enable someone with a learning disability to own their own home. The various options for home ownership include:

- Inheriting a property: either directly or through a discretionary trust.
- Ownership outright or with a mortgage
- Using benefits for repayments; Note that critically important to people with a learning disability is the Income Support Mortgage Interest system (ISMI). See the fact sheet at http://www.housingoptions.org.uk/gi_factsheets/gi_fs_18.html
- Joint ownership: a group of parents or relatives combine resources to purchase a property for their sons and daughters.
- Shared ownership: using part-buy, part-rent arrangements from a housing association
- Homebuy – a new Housing Corporation programme

Shared Ownership and Homebuy are both low cost home ownership schemes, which help people who cannot afford to buy outright. You get the benefits and security of ownership but at less cost than owning a property outright. Both schemes are run by Registered Housing Associations. There are some possibilities to do shared ownership privately without grant. See www.glh.org.uk/

Homebuy

This is a new programme of low cost home ownership. HomeBuy is available through a small number of housing associations called "HomeBuy Agents". Details of the nearest agent can be obtained from the Housing Corporation.

There are various types of HomeBuy including:

- New Build HomeBuy – where you share ownership of your home with a housing association – if you only buy 50% the association owns the other 50% which is rented to you.
- Open Market HomeBuy – where you part buy a property and get a loan from a housing association for the rest. Normally you must buy 75% and you can get an interest free loan for the remaining 25%.

For disabled people the rules allow additional flexibility:

- You can buy a property on the open market on a shared ownership basis – as at present
- The lease on which New Build HomeBuy is based allows the maintenance obligation to fall on the landlord. This means if the shared owner qualifies for Housing Benefit this may include an amount to meet these costs.
- A bigger property than would normally possible may be bought.

Further information available from www.homebuy.co.uk or the Housing Corporation www.housingcorp.gov.uk.

Shared Ownership

The property is normally funded from a combination of:

- Grant from the Housing Corporation, or 'loan' from family (or trust), which is repaid if the person no longer needs the property
- The housing provider's loan (re-paid by part of the rent)
- The shared owner's mortgage

The person claims Housing Benefit for the rent they pay. Provided that they are entitled to Income Support and satisfy the criteria, if they have a mortgage they can claim the mortgage interest (limited to a mortgage of up to £100,000).

The property can be part of a housing associations development of properties for shared ownership but it is also possible to use shared ownership to buy properties for sale on the open market, providing a high degree of choice.

Shared ownership/Homebuy using Housing Corporation funding

Housing associations make bids to the Housing Corporation for funding to provide an element of subsidy called Social Housing Grant (SHG) shared ownership housing, either new-build or purchased on the open market. The subsidy is necessary to make schemes financially viable within Housing Benefit limits on the rents they will agree.

Privately funded Shared Ownership.

Relatives (or a trust) can replace the capital grant element with their own resources, creating a purely privately finance shared ownership model. This possibility is only available through a limited number of housing association and charitable organisations – most notable Golden Lane Housing – part of Mencap.

Ownership by a trust

If parents (or other relatives) set up a discretionary trust, then the trust can own the property and the person with the disability can live there rent-free. The situation on paying rent is complex but it may also be possible for the Trust as the landlord to charge a rent which can be reimbursed by Housing Benefit (see also section on renting from family members). The person with the disability does not enjoy the choice and control that they would have if they were the owner or shared-owner. Trustees will need to make arrangements for repairs and maintenance.

Shared ownership using family money: sole occupancy, where the person is the shared owner

One scenario is where parents are trading down to a smaller property or moving away from the area (perhaps on retirement) but their offspring wishes to remain in the area. Parents may wish to use some of the capital released to fund another property for their adult son or daughter with learning disabilities. Another scenario has used the person with disabilities share of inherited money from the sale of the parental home to buy a suitable property on a shared ownership lease.

Outright ownership

Properties can be inherited directly so that the individual owns outright or occasionally parents have purchased and effectively gifted the property to a son or daughter.

All these are possible. Legal capacity is not required as there is no contract. The downside when compared with shared ownership is that as there is no Housing Benefit claimable and other arrangements need to be made for repairs and maintenance.

For more detailed information on the options see www.housingoptions.org.uk or for a fact sheet on shared ownership go to www.housingoptions.org.uk/gi_factsheets/gi_fs_7.html

Case study

A young woman, Claire (not her real name) was referred to Advance Housing as she was about to be given notice to quit her registered home as she was 'too difficult to support in the home'. She had become distressed due to her communication difficulties and the number of other people in the home.

Advance were able to help and assessed Shared Ownership as being a good option for her to pursue. A support provider in the area she knew was contacted and they agreed to put together an appropriate support package for the young woman. A property was identified with the woman and her family's support. This property was in an area well known to the woman and gave enough space for her to be able to enjoy her space when she wanted.

The funding was agreed for the support and this was through Direct Payments. The property was purchased and the young woman moved in. She has since had a House warming for all those in her circle of support and has settled into her new home quickly. She is in control of her home and the support she receives and seems to enjoy her life. She is now able to live in her home until she decides it is time to move.

6. Extra care

Extra care housing has traditionally been seen as an option for older people. As it has developed the needs of other groups and older people with other needs has started to be addressed.

Extra care schemes for older people have started to develop to take account the needs of older people where they may have dementia, a functional mental health problem or a learning disability.

This will mean that schemes will need to look at how they adapt their service to support older people with a learning disability. There will need to be good working partnerships with older people and learning disability services. Staff will need to have training and experience in the area of learning disabilities. It is important to ensure older people with a learning disability are part of the general community of the scheme.

Case Study :Salford -‘Moving on – Making Space’ at Pennine Court

This scheme involves remodelling an ‘ordinary’ sheltered scheme, which has been hard to let due to its bed-sit design, to provide 4 flats for older people with a learning disability. They are being built to the highest design, accessibility and technological standards to act as a pilot for extension to other areas. Assistive technology will be utilised alongside a design that takes into account the needs of people with dementia. This will be complemented by remodelling of the remainder of the scheme, which will move the whole scheme along the continuum towards Extra Care provision.

The partners include Salford City Council, Salford Primary Care Trust, ‘New Directions’ Learning Difficulty Services and English Churches Housing Group.

Contact : Shena Latto, shena.latto.t21@btopenworld.com

The Department of Health has funded a number of extra care schemes for younger people with a learning disability. This has included developing partnerships with RSLs, the private rented sector and shared ownership.

These schemes have utilised assistive technology to ensure people have access to 24 hour support and can live independently.

More information about these schemes can be found on the Housing LIN website under ‘Learning Disability’.

Things to think about:

- Important to have accessible information and advice on the housing options for people with learning disabilities and their families.
- In older people’s services, there is a need for training for staff.
- Good arrangements and partnerships are needed between the older people’s service and the learning disability service.

7. Accommodation for people with physical and sensory disabilities

Many people with learning disabilities may need specially designed or adapted accommodation. Physical disability, cerebral palsy or other impairments of movement occur in 20 - 30% of people with severe learning disability. Sensory impairment is even more common. Some key points:

1. If a building is designed to be useable by someone in a wheel chair it will probably be appropriate for all disabilities
2. People with learning disabilities can now expect a life span which compares with the general population - it makes sense to construct buildings that can be adapted easily and economically. An influential example of long term thinking about flexible use is *Life-time Homes*¹.

¹ Brewerton J & Darton D (1996) *Designing Lifetime Homes* York Publishing

3. Lifetime Homes are "ordinary housing" not "special needs" accommodation. They are designed so that people with moderate mobility needs can be accommodated in general needs housing.
4. Quality of life can often be improved by careful consideration of the individuals (and carers) specific needs and wishes

The standards for care homes recommend adaptations and equipment to maximize independence in homes offering a service to people with physical disabilities and recommends specialist equipment should be provided as needed for the individual including:

- Moving equipment/overhead tracking for hoists
- Stair rails, lifts
- Environmental control system
- Appropriate bathroom fittings/equipment
- Call alarm systems
- Lowered light switches, work surfaces, window openings
- Storage/recharging facilities for wheelchairs/mobility equipment

Further information is available in *Designing for Special Needs*²

8. Living with the Family

Those living with older carers

The important role played by family carers is recognised in the Valuing People White Paper. Valuing People identifies the problem of those living with older carers whose needs may not be known by commissioners and service providers. It highlights the need for planning ahead, involving the person and their family in order to avoid an individual being taken suddenly into care because of a crisis, without good preparation.

Planning for moving out from home is not just an issue for carers over 70. There is a risk that if someone is with a carer the time is not taken around person-centred planning for them to look at what they want in terms of housing. Both parties need support and accessible information on the housing and support options available locally. It may be that someone would like to move quite soon or perhaps in a few years time. That needs identifying so that the help they want can be given. Often this group is overlooked until there is a crisis. Furthermore, family carers may not be aware of what the options are in their area.

Consider running workshops/conferences to explain the kind of housing opportunities outlined here. This may best be done in conjunction with an agency like Mencap or the National Autistic Society and provided by them or a suitable expert. Housing Options have also run workshops for carers all over the country for local authorities and family carer groups.

² Harker M & King N (2002) *Designing for Special Needs*, RIBA Enterprises

Working with family carers needs to be handled sensitively and in a way that recognises their role. They may have seen many changes of policy and may be concerned as to whether their son or daughter will receive adequate support to allow them to live independently.

Case study – South Tyneside Council and Places for People

This scheme, which has received DH extra care funding, is building properties to rent for people who have been living with older family carers. Much of the work has been around engaging and reassuring family carers and involving them in the project board. Assistive technology is being used to facilitate communication by the use of web cams and computers so that people can talk and see each other.

Contact : Alan.Cormack@stpct.nhs.uk

Transition planning: from childhood to adulthood

There is also a need to plan for transition planning for children. The transition from school or college to adult life is complex for any young person, and can be particularly difficult for those with a learning disability. This time of life involves a move from Children's Services to Adult Services, and good planning is critical for a successful transition out of the educational system.

A 'Transition Plan' needs to take into account such things as:

- Daytime activities after leaving school (college, day services, employment etc.)
- Living arrangements and living independently (a place to live)
- Medical, physical, and mental health care needs
- Finances, benefits, direct payments
- Leisure opportunities

For young people with a learning disability, transition can carry on until they are 25 years old, depending on when it is appropriate for responsibility for co-ordinating the individual's services to be passed on to the relevant adult agency..

Young people with a learning disability will need to be supported to plan where they would like to live and this may well be part of the transition process.

9. Funding for care and support services

When someone is placed by the local authority in a registered care home the inclusive service cost is almost entirely met social services. In supported housing, housing costs, rent and housing related support are met by housing income or housing benefits, household and everyday living costs met from the person's income and benefits. Care and support costs are met by social services, health and the Independent Living Fund (ILF) and Disability Living Allowances for care and travel.

Summary of revenue funding

Source	Funds
Housing Benefit	Rent Eligible service charges e.g. communal heating
Council Tax Benefit	Council Tax
Income Support and Premiums	Daily living expenses – meals, household bills, clothes, travel
Incapacity Benefit	Part of Income Support for people unable to work because of illness or disability
Disability Living Allowance	Care component (3 levels) Mobility component (2 levels)
Independent Living Fund	Care / support up to a £ 420 limit subject to L.A contributing £295 per week. Must be on high rate DLA
Supported People Grant	General counselling and support- can cover wide range of assistance such as help with budgets, shopping
Social Services	Balance of costs of meeting assessed needs. Comes as either care contract and / or direct payments

Housing Options

The NHS and Community Care Act 1990 provides the structure for assessment and the provision of services needed. Local authorities are required to assess all those who even *may* be in need of community care services, and having regard to the results, decide whether the needs call for provision. There is a duty for social services authorities to invite a housing authority to assist in an assessment if it appears that the person has housing needs. (S47 of the Community Care Act 1990) However this places no additional responsibilities under housing law so social services have the responsibility to provide for that person and depend on good working relationships with housing.

Since a House of Lords judgement a few years ago it was decided that the local authority could take into account resources available in deciding what needs would be eligible for a service. The *Fair Access to Care Services Guidance* is based on the principle that councils should operate just one eligibility decision for all adults seeking social care support – namely, should people be helped or not? In carrying out their duties under section 47 of the NHS and Community Care Act 1990, there is a duty to carry out assessments of need but the guidance says this should be *in proportion to individuals' needs*.

To help them determine eligibility, the guidance provides a national framework for councils to use when setting their eligibility criteria. The framework is based on risks that arise from needs associated with various forms of disability, impairment and difficulty, and will help councils to promote the independence of those seeking their help. The guidance prioritises the risks faced by individuals into four bands - critical, substantial, moderate and low - and requires councils to adopt these bands in determining their criteria.

In setting their eligibility criteria councils should take account of the resources locally allocated and available to adult social care. Eligible needs are those needs that are

assessed as falling within a council's eligibility criteria, and which should be met. These can be found on local government websites.

Direct Payments

When a local authority has assessed someone's community care needs, the usual approach has been for the authority to provide or purchase the services needed. Recent legislation has made it possible for people aged 16+ to be given the cash value of the service, so that they can pay for their own arrangements. This power to make Direct Payments is discretionary and so individuals cannot insist on getting them.

The Housing LIN has produced a briefing on housing and direct payments available at www.cat.csip.org.uk/housing.

Individualised Budgets

An Individual Budget is designed to provide individuals who currently receive services greater choice and control over their support arrangements. The government is committed to piloting individual budgets with a view to rolling them out nationally should they prove successful

http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/SocialCare/SocialCareArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4125774&chk=/Ubh1q

The idea behind individual budgets is to enable people needing social care and associated services to design that support and to give them the power to decide the nature of the services they need. Key features are:

- A transparent allocation of resources, giving individuals a clear cash or notional sum for them to use on their care or support package
- A streamlined assessment process across agencies, meaning less time spent giving information
- Bringing together a variety of streams of support and/or funding, from more than one agency.
- Giving individuals the ability to use the budget in a way that best suits their own particular requirements
- Support from a broker or advocate, family or friends, as the individual desires.

DH, DCLG (formerly ODPM) and DWP have worked together to develop a starting model for individual budgets, which will include some of the following income streams:

- Council-provided social care services
- Independent Living Fund
- Supporting People
- Disabled Facilities Grant
- Integrated Community Equipment Services
- Access To Work

13 local authorities are piloting Individual Budgets in order to develop an evidence base for potential national roll out.

There is also a great deal of information about self-directed support available on the In Control website:

<http://www.in-control.org.uk/home.php>

Supporting People Grant

Learning disability is often seen as a high cost service. It is important to ensure there is the revenue funding agreed with projects. Good strategic links need to be made with local Supporting People Teams to look at the needs of an area and to plan and look at best use of resources. This may include making some difficult decisions about decommissioning of services, remodelling or re-providing existing residential care, supported housing or other care and support services. It might involve looking at how best to support someone and to look at new ways, such as the use of Assistive Technology to allow someone to remain at home and free up time for day time support.

Aids and adaptations

Disabled people may be entitled to several sorts of help either to adapt their home to make it more suited to their needs or for special aids and equipment.

Aids and equipment are provided by Integrated Community Equipment services which deliver the items that are recommended by either health or social care professionals. People with a learning disability may qualify because of physical or sensory handicap and/or health needs.

Disabled Facilities grant (DFG's) meet the costs of adapting a property to meet a disabled persons needs. DFG's are administered by the local housing authority which decides whether an adaptation is 'reasonable and practicable', although the Social Services occupational therapist will usually be the first point of contact as they have to decide which adaptations are 'necessary and appropriate'. DFG's are a mandatory, means tested grant that a disabled person who is over 18 years old can apply for whether they own or rent their property. Parents of disabled children can apply for a DFG and there is no means test in the case of children.

The current limit on DFG's is £25,000 (£30,000 in Wales) but Social Services do have the power to pay for works in addition to the DFG under the *Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970*.

The grant can cover things like:

- Making it easier to get in and out
- Providing a more suitable bathroom or kitchen you can use independently
- Making the home safe

Most local Home Improvement Agencies (HIA's) can provide advice and help with obtaining adaptations. The best way to find your nearest HIA is to contact 'Foundations' see link below.

Further information on aids and adaptations, where to go for advice and assistance and funding arrangements can be found at:

- DCLG - www.communities.gov.uk
- Care & Repair England - www.careandrepair-england.org.uk
- Foundations, the link for HIAs - www-foundations.uk.com
- ICES website - www.icesdoh.org

Case study – Coventry Care & Repair, Orbit Housing Association

Coventry Care & Repair is piloting a new service to support older adults with moderate learning disabilities who wish to remain living independently in their own homes, particularly in the owner occupied sector. They offer practical help with finances, home repairs and adaptations both to resolve a crisis and also offering ongoing support to maintain independence.

Contact : Sue Adams, sueadams@freenetname.co.uk

Kathie Martin: kathie.martin@orbit.org

Things to think about:

- Important to plan ahead rather than wait for a crisis.
- Good information, advice and advocacy need to be in place.
- Support for families at all stages, from transition to adulthood to those who are older family carers.
- Person-centred planning to be at the heart of developing individual housing and support options.
- Direct payments and individualised budgets have a role in enabling choice and independence.
- Workshops or other events to inform families and individuals
- Independent living fund can play a role if someone moves into their own place
- Housing benefit may pay rent if have an home
- Income Support can fund day to day living expenses check right level
- Check Disability Living Allowance at right level
- Take up campaign

Other Housing LIN materials

This paper is one of series of learning materials on housing for people with a learning disability produced by the Housing Learning & Improvement Network in the Care Services Improvement Partnership at www.cat.csip.org.uk/housing. They include:

- A factsheet on 'New Provisions for Older People by Nigel King' www.cat.csip.org.uk/library/docs/Housing/factsheet03.PDF
- A report on 'New initiatives for people with learning disabilities' by Jenny Panell www.changeagentteam.org.uk/library/docs/Housing/LearningDisabilities/LD_ECH_report.pdf
- **Embracing Diversity - DVD: A look at housing with care (March 2006) (25 minutes)**
The DVD offers an insight into a selection of current housing with care options that have been developed in England to meet the hidden needs of diverse older populations. Ask for a free copy at housinglin@cat.csip.org.uk

10. Useful Contacts

Information sources

Benefits and legal advice

Citizens Advice Bureaux –

www.nacab.org.uk 020 7833 2181

The Citizens Advice Bureau Service offers free, confidential, impartial and independent advice on debt and consumer issues, benefits, housing, legal matters, employment, and immigration. Advisers can help fill out forms, write letters, negotiate with creditors and represent clients at court or tribunal. The national website provides a directory of local CAB offices.

Department of Work and Pensions

www.dwp.gov.uk 020 7712 2171

www.disability.gov.uk

Benefit enquiry line 0800 882200

The directorate is responsible for providing an efficient, reliable and considerate system of Disability Benefits, and for all disability issues: unemployment and sickness benefits, income support, disability, children with special needs, residential care etc. The Disability website provides information on disability rights and policy. The Benefit Enquiry Line for people with disabilities is a confidential telephone advice and information service, for disabled people and their carers.

Disability Law Service

020 7791 9800

The Disability Law Service provides free advice and representation to disabled people and their families on housing, care, education, wills and trusts.

Disability Alliance

www.disabilityalliance.org

020 7247 8776

Website of Disability Alliance (DA), who are also publishers of the Disability Rights Handbook. Disability Alliance was set up in 1974 providing various services to disabled people, their families, carers and professional advisers about social security benefit entitlement and other entitlements. These services include the provision of [advice, information, campaign work, research and training](#).

Independent Living Fund

www.ilf.org.uk

0115 9428191.

The Independent Living Fund (ILF) is set up and financed by UK central government and may be available to support disabled people who want to live in their own homes. To qualify applicants have to be receiving the highest rate of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) care component and receiving services from their local authority of at least £200 per week.

Housing and Care

Housing Learning & Improvement Network

www.cat.csip.org.uk/housing

020 7820 1682

The Housing LIN is part of the Department of Health's Care Services Improvement Partnership (see below). It supports the extension of housing with care and support choices of older people and vulnerable adults in England. It works closely with local authorities and housing providers on the implementation of the DH's Extra Care Housing programme.

Housing Corporation

www.housingcorp.gov.uk

020 7393 2000

The Housing Corporation is a Non Departmental Public Body whose job is to fund and regulate housing associations in England through its regional offices. A website includes information on the Housing Corporation's role and responsibilities, access to publications and guidance on housing, housing investment, low cost home ownership and information about housing associations.

Housing Options

www.housingoptions.org.uk

0845 4561497

Housing Options is an independent advice and information service to assist people with learning disabilities with housing and support choices – more options for individuals, parents, social services and providers. It does this by providing practical help, advice and information. The website provides Factsheets and Briefings and there is a telephone advice line.

Commission for Social Care Inspection

www.csci.org.uk

The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) registers, inspects and reports on social care services in England.

National Housing Federation

www.housing.org.uk

020 7067 1010

The National Housing Federation is the body that represents the independent social housing sector with 1400 non-profit housing members managing around 1.8 million homes. They produce useful guides and factsheets on social housing.

Department for Communities and Local Government

www.communities.gov.uk/

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) was created on 5 May 2006 with a powerful remit to promote community cohesion and equality, as well as responsibility for housing, urban regeneration, planning and local government. The aim for housing is to give everyone the opportunity of a decent home, promote social cohesion and independence, increasing the provision of affordable housing, and area regeneration. (previously held by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)

Shelter

www.shelter.org.uk

0808 800 4444

Shelter is a national organisation working to improve the lives of homeless and badly housed people. We provide free, professional and independent advice on homelessness, legal rights and benefits. The aims are to prevent and alleviate homelessness by providing information, advice and advocacy for people with housing problems and campaign for changes to housing policy practice.

Supporting People Team

www.spkweb.org.uk

The Supporting People programme offers vulnerable people the opportunity to improve their quality of life by providing a stable environment which enables greater independence. It aims to deliver high quality and strategically planned housing-related services which are cost effective and reliable, and complement existing care services. Supporting People is a working partnership of local government, service users and support agencies. The Programme provides £ 1.7bn revenue grants to services but since its introduction in 2003 has been working with a reducing budget.

Other National Organisations

Department of Health

www.dh.gov.uk/

www.valuingpeople.gov.uk/

www.csci.org.uk/

www.csip.org.uk/

Department of Health

DH Valuing People Support Team (VPST)

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Care Services Improvement Partnership

Information about government policy and guidance on learning disability services and the special support team for Valuing People on services, employment, health, housing education and social care. The VPST have their own newsletter and other publications.

Disability Rights Commission (DRC)

www.drc.org.uk

08457 622 633

The DRC Helpline provides information and advice about all aspects of the Disability Discrimination Act. Signposting towards specialist organisations. Offers good practice advice on the employment of disabled people.

National Adults Placement Service

<http://www.naaps.co.uk/>

0151 227 3499

NAAPS is a UK charity which was established in 1992 to represent the interests of all those involved in Adult Placement and to promote high standards of practice

Foundation for People with Learning Disabilitieswww.fpld.org.uk

020 7802 0300

Research foundation that also publishes factsheets and booklets on learning disabilities and autism. Their website gives [news](#) and [events](#) on learning disability issues, as well as information on topics such as [advocacy](#), [accommodation](#) and [employment](#).

Mencapwww.mencap.gov.uk

020 76964545

Mencap campaigns and provides advice and support directly through the national charity and its local network of more than 1,000 affiliated groups. The [support provided includes housing, education, employment and leisure activities](#). [Support service for people with a learning disability](#) are provided in either a Mencap home or a person's own home. Golden Lane Housing provides ordinary housing that enabling people with a learning disability to live within the community.

National Mencap - national helpline 0808 808 1111 Solicitors freephone for wills and trusts 0500 243444, Golden Lane Housing 020 7696 5521

National Autistic Societywww.nas.org.uk

0870 600 8585

Services, information and advice for children and adults with autistic disorders throughout the UK including post-school education and training, residential provision, and supported employment. The NAS have good directories of information on local societies, service providers and factsheets and publication on a range of topics.

Other Housing LIN publications available in this format:

Housing LIN Reports available at www.cat.csip.org.uk/housing :

- **Extra Care Housing Training & Workforce Competencies (Report and Executive Summary)**
- **Yorkshire & the Humber Region - Extra Care Housing Regional Assessment Study (Report and Executive Summary)**
- **Preventative Care: the Role of Sheltered/Retirement Housing**
- **Developing Extra Care Housing for BME Elders**
- **New Initiatives for People with Learning Disabilities: extra care housing models and similar provision**
- **Dignity in housing**

Factsheet no.1:	Extra Care Housing - What is it?
Factsheet no.2:	Commissioning and Funding Extra Care Housing
Factsheet no.3:	New Provisions for Older People with Learning Disabilities
Factsheet no.4:	Models of Extra Care Housing and Retirement Communities
Factsheet no.5:	Assistive Technology in Extra Care Housing
Factsheet no.6:	Design Principles for Extra Care
Factsheet no.7:	Private Sector Provision of Extra Care Housing
Factsheet no.8:	User Involvement in Extra Care Housing
Factsheet no.9:	Workforce Issues in Extra Care Housing
Factsheet no.10:	Refurbishing or remodelling sheltered housing: a checklist for developing Extra Care
Factsheet no.11:	An Introduction to Extra Care Housing and Intermediate Care
Factsheet no.12:	An Introduction to Extra Care Housing in Rural Areas
Factsheet no.13:	Eco Housing: Taking Extra Care with environmentally friendly design
Factsheet no.14:	Supporting People with Dementia in Extra Care Housing: an introduction to the the issues
Factsheet no.15:	Extra Care Housing Options for Older People with Functional Mental Health Problems
Factsheet no.16:	Extra Care Housing Models and Older Homeless people
Factsheet no.17:	The Potential for Independent Care Home Providers to develop Extra Care Housing
Factsheet no.18:	Delivering End of Life Care in Housing with Care Setting
Case Study Report:	Achieving Success in the Development of Extra Care Schemes for Older People
Technical Brief no.1	Care in Extra Care Housing
Technical Brief no.2	Funding Extra Care Housing
Technical Brief no.3	Mixed Tenure in Extra Care Housing

Published by:
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