



Creating a housing plan for people with learning disabilities in Northamptonshire

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A Housing Plan For People with a Learning Disability in Northamptonshire

Executive Summary



**By The Finding a Place to live Steering Group
of the Northamptonshire's
Learning Disability Partnership Board**

The Housing Plan has been co-produced with people with a learning disability, their supporters and other members of our community

Date:- 17th January 2011

Message from the 'Finding A Place to Live Group'

Historically people with a Learning Disability have had little control over many areas of their lives. We intend that by sharing our experiences in jointly creating this plan both people and professionals will begin to see that, in these challenging times, our greatest chance of success is where we work and plan together, as equals, to create the kind of life experiences we all wish to enjoy.

The 'Finding a Place to live Group' January 2011

Why We Need a Housing Plan

Many people with a Learning Disability in Northamptonshire do not have the same choices and options about where and how they live as others do. Whilst every person may not wish to live independently we need to ask the question 'are people with a Learning Disability getting a fair and informed chance to consider their housing desires, regularly?' From our work it is clear that for many people this is not the case. It is also clear that much work is required by key partners, such as the Local Housing Authorities and Social Services, to improve their ways of supporting people along their housing journey

Producing the Housing Plan

This Plan has been funded by the Northamptonshire Learning Disability Partnership Board and co-produced by the 'Finding a Place to Live Group'.

About Co-production

Co-production is where people work along side professionals as equal partners sharing the control and responsibility to run services or create plans. It encourages us to value all community members and seeks to engage all in the design, creation and running of services focused on meeting our needs.

The People Producing this Plan

The 'Finding a Place to Live Group' is made up of people with a learning disability, their supporters, community volunteers, and professionals from a range of local organisations which have included;

- people from the 7 Local Housing Authorities (LHA's),
- Social Care Commissioners, Care Managers, Mencap, and DELOS,
- Children's and Young People Services,
- the Transitions Co-ordinator,
- the LDPB's Black and Ethnic Minority Officer, and Supporting People colleagues.

Creating Sustainable Solutions in the Present Climate

As well as facing long standing challenges relating to housing choice and access, the resources previously available to people with a Learning Disability to expand their

options have significantly reduced following the Governments comprehensive spending review. Less public funds will be available to people, these include:-

- capital available to build homes
- funds for care and support packages and
- personal funds as people on benefits see cuts in their awards

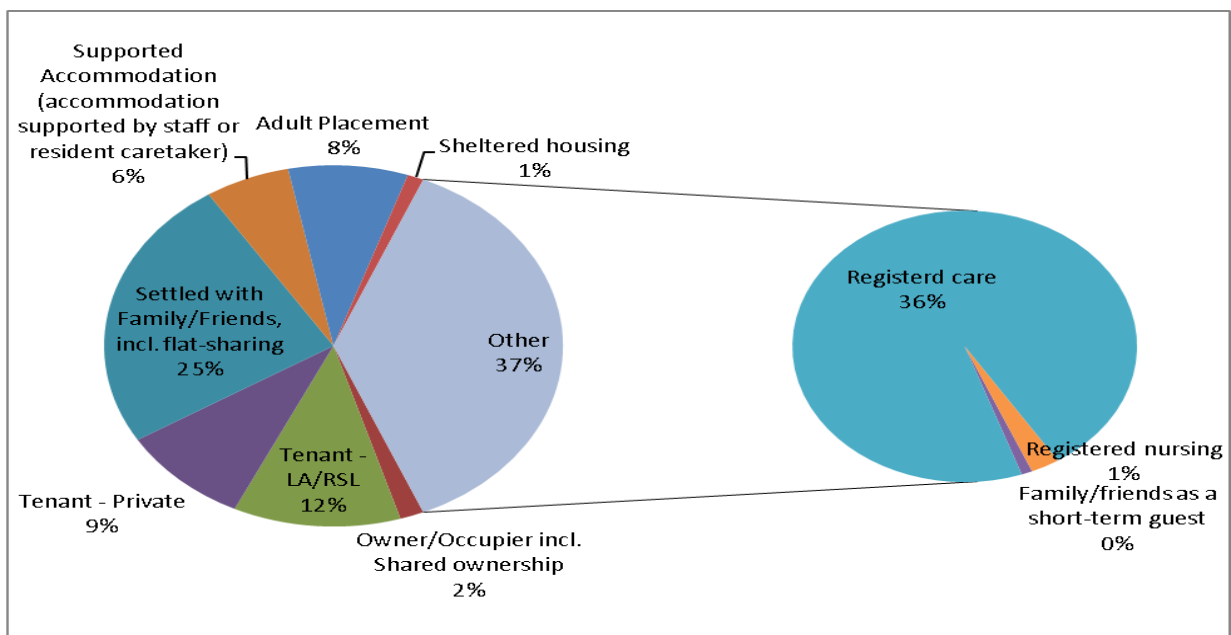
The Plan highlights a new approach to these considerable challenges

Where People Presently Live

From 2009/10 figures (Valuing People Self Assessment return), we found that of the 1293 people that Social Care colleagues had information for, about,

- 36% were living in residential care,
- 25% were living with families and
- 21% were renting.

We also found that in Aug 2010, 8% lived out of County (CareFirst System)



Housing Plan Main Findings

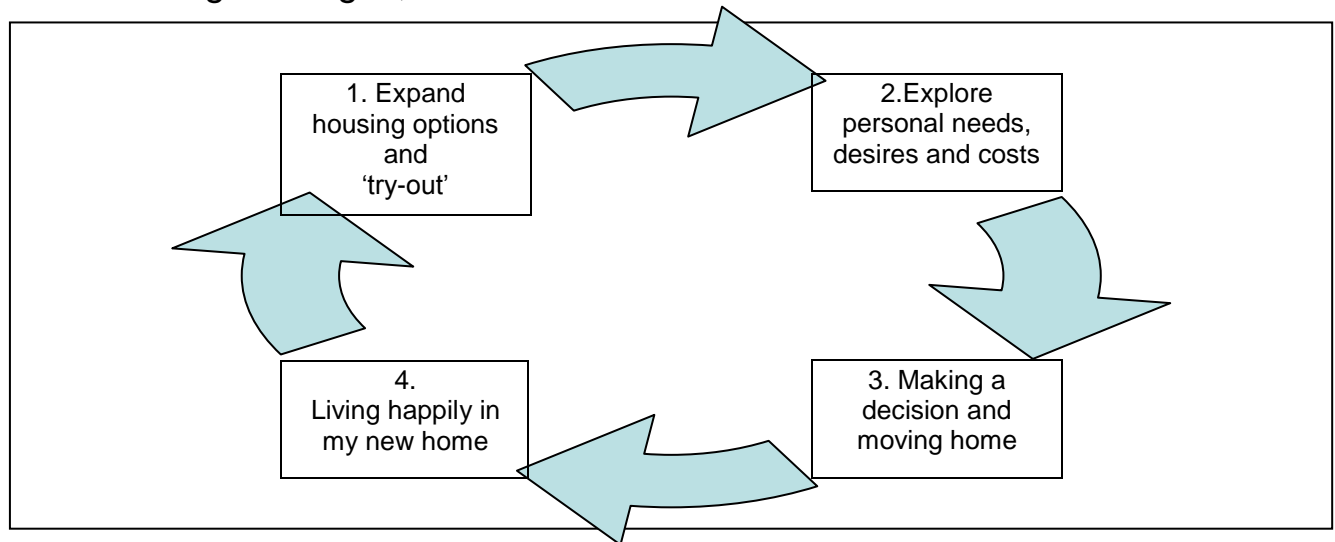
The plan highlights the following key findings. We found that people, their families or supporters:-

- often feel their choice is limited and are confused about who can help
- People rarely approach Local Housing Offices for help with housing
- Where they do some people have experienced limited understanding of their needs, issues of being housed inappropriately and problems with understanding housing systems

- They often receive limited help from Social Services except in an emergency
- People can have very limited experience of what living options may be possible and minimal opportunity to ‘try out’ other ways of living
- Where people want to plan ahead, they often don’t know where to turn for help to support them through what can be a very complex process
- There are significant challenges around finding appropriate housing for people, capital for new build or adaptations
- The 7 Local Housing Authorities are supportive of the Housing Plan and have agreed a way of collective representation using the two sub-regional housing groups of North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire

The Stages of People’s Housing Journey

In finding and creating their desired housing solution we found that people tend to travel through 4 stages, these are :-



Through our discussions with people we found that the help people received at each of these stages was minimal and for stages 2 and 3 help was often non-existent.

Our Vision:-

We want to:-

- * have real choice and access to the same housing as other people
- * find information we understand
- * get support to meet our needs, and
- * lead in a planned way
- * understand how partners can help, And, do all of this at our own pace



Our Desired Outcomes

We aim to achieve the following key outcomes, such as more:-

- (1) Adults and young people living independently in the community
- (2) Older people living in housing such as sheltered and extra care
- (3) Black and ethnic minority people accessing a greater range of housing
- (4) People feeling safe at home and in the community
- (5) People living in the county where they wish to

We also wish to see that more people are:-

- (6) Able to explore and create their housing desires themselves, with support
- (7) Have a broader range of available housing choices
- (8) Playing a leading role in achieving their desires
- (9) Regularly able to review their housing desires and needs
- (10) Find accessible information on housing options and responsibilities, and
- (11) More young people move into adulthood with a greater sense of choice

Making This All Happen – Our Action Plan

To achieve the above outcomes the following actions are recommended

General Actions

1. Local Housing Authorities to be people's main source of advice about housing, with the support of Social Services
2. Create a Community Housing and Support Network (countywide) where people can work together to explore and create their housing desires
3. Offer regular housing reviews for people with a Learning Disability and support people to make a change where desired
4. Collate review information to build a picture of housing needs
5. Produce a guide about housing options, responsibilities and rules
6. Use the www.myhomemysay.co.uk website to support this work
7. Create a housing awareness programme to help people learn more about ways of living
8. Help people 'try out' various ways of living and create a training programme to help all colleagues provide sensitive support
9. Produce a list of housing solutions to 'commission' with housing providers
10. Seek new resources to implement these actions, including using a timesharing approach and seeking investment from local private organisations

Young People

- (1) produce a teaching module about housing to be used in schools
- (2) help young people 'try out' different ways of living and plan how they wish to live before they are 18 or leave school or college

Older People

- (1) Carry out housing reviews with people from 50 onwards for their future
- (2) Work to adjust Sheltered housing rules to help people with a learning disability under 55 yrs to access this
- (3) Work to ensure dementia services are also available for people under 60yrs

People from a Black and Ethnic Minority

- (1) Ensure all information materials and training sessions address cultural, language or religious needs of people from minority groups
- (2) Enhance Training for staff to effectively support people from minority groups

The Community Housing and Support Network

- This will be a countywide self sustaining body whose aim will be to help people with a learning disability help themselves to explore and create their desired housing solutions and support each other to settle in to their communities.
- It will be sustained via a combination of earned income, contributed time and private investment
- It will be a membership organisation where people, their families, other community members and interested parties work together to help people help each other achieve their housing ambitions
- The Support Network will offer members a means by which they can share skills and meet needs
- All members will be both providers and customers and could receive both money or time credits for the skills they share
- The Network will offer a kind of 'employment' for people and an opportunity to learn new skills as well as enhance existing ones, helping people, previously reliant on benefits, begin to sustain themselves in new ways
- Membership will be open to all community members although it will concentrate initially on helping people with a learning disability
- Two of the main roles in the Network will be Housing & Community Connectors. Housing Connectors will support people through their 4 stage housing journey and Community Connectors will help people settle in to their new community
- The Network will be closely linked to local housing authorities, housing providers and Social Care teams as well as with local voluntary bodies

People We Have Already Helped in Making The Housing Plan

As part of creating the Housing Plan members of the Group have supported a number of people with a Learning Disability to explore their housing options or helped them to find ways to keep their home. Here are some of their stories.



Ashley lives in her own home and has a job in a local shop which she enjoys very much. When her boyfriend moved out she found it difficult to pay all her bills and needed help. The Group put Ashley in touch with an organisation that could help. They helped her to sort out her money and get more money to pay her bills so that she could carry on living by herself in the home she loves



Chris was living in a house he shared with other people and he wanted to move into a place of his own. He came to a meeting of the Group with a supporter. They were finding it difficult to find the right place for him to rent. The group was able to advise on where to go for help and Chris now has his own flat.



Michelle had moved from her parent's house to live in a flat by herself. At first she was happy there until someone else moved in next door who was not very nice to her. Eventually she moved back home. She came to a meeting of the Group with her Dad and we provided some advice and guidance. Hopefully she will soon have a new home.

Implementing The Housing Plan

The Community Housing and Support Network will undertake many of the actions identified in the Plan in partnership with others. The whole process will be overseen by the Housing Steering Group.

Developing People's Capacity and Mentoring the Network

The Housing and Support Network could be mentored by provider organisations who will initially take responsibility to perform the main tasks of the Network and support local people to 'grow' their skills and abilities to ultimately take on this role.

The Cost of Implementing the Plan

The main cost will be to set up the Community Housing and Support Network and to fund the creation of a range of tools and resources to help people and professionals. It is estimated that it will cost about of £150,000 over 2 years to set-up the Network and about £10-12,000 to produce the required tools. Initially, colleagues are seeking funds to implement key actions in year one. These actions will concentrate on :-

- (a) Exploring the challenges people with a Learning Disability face as they travel on the 4 stage journey and resolving issues partners face in supporting them
- (b) Setting up the Community Housing and Support Network to establish a means by which people will be able to help themselves together in future
- (c) Creating the materials and tools to help people meet their housing needs

Actions will include creating a:-

- ❖ Housing awareness and try out programme
- ❖ Housing Options, Rules and Responsibilities Guide
- ❖ Housing teaching module for young people at schools and college
- ❖ Working with a small group of adults and young people to help them review their housing needs and find a new home if they wish
- ❖ Working with housing providers to identify appropriate housing
- ❖ Working to create more community support options, i.e. via the Timebank

Funding for Year 1

It is estimated a minimum of £70,000 would be required to undertake the first year pilot actions. Colleagues are seeking financial support from Social Services of 50% (£35,000) of this amount, with a view to generate the remainder from the private sector, in kind contributions and time sharing.

The Housing Plan will be implemented from April 2011 to 2015.

The Housing Plan Documents

The full document and easy read summary are also available from the project website www.myhomemysay.co.uk

JOINING IN and HELPING US

If you have been inspired by what you've read and you would like to join us in implementing this Housing Plan please make contact. You might be excited about the Community Housing and Support Network, or want to help in another way. If so please contact Marion Turner, on 01604 237180

Produced 17th January 2011. Marion Turner, 01604 237180,
marioturner@hotmail.co.uk or mturner@northamptonshire.gov.uk