



Creating a housing plan for people with learning disabilities in Northamptonshire

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AN INVITATION TO HOST THE COMMUNITY HOUSING AND SUPPORT NETWORK

Date:- 31ST January 2011

The Community Housing and Support Network

Over the past year members of the Learning Disability Partnership Board's 'Finding a Place to Live' Group have produced a Learning Disability Housing Plan for Northamptonshire. This has been produced in partnership with the 7 Local Housing Authorities, Northamptonshire Social Services, Local Providers and Voluntary Bodies.

A number of key actions have been agreed. The main one is to create [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 in their new homes and community.

Hosting the Community Housing and Support Network

It is our intention to set-up the Network in 2011- 2012 and to 'pilot' some of the activities and projects it will undertake. To enable us to do this we are seeking an organisation or organisations to host and mentor the Network and its members, through out this year.

The hosting arrangement will allow time for the Network's business model and method of operation to be established, for the network to be formed and for people to learn some of the skills required to run this new enterprise going forward. It will also offer space to test out some of the methods we plan to use to operate the network and to begin supporting people to meet their housing needs.

About the Community Housing and Support Network

The Network will be sustained via a combination of fees, contributed time

and private investment, and run on a membership basis.

Co-production

It will be run using co-production principles, stressing the benefits of people and professionals working together equally to achieve their aims. Members will collectively share their skills and help to meet some of each other's needs using approaches such as Timebanking. As well as helping each other, the network also offers a means by which members can support other people in the broader community

Timebanking

This is where people share time and skills to help each other. For every hour of help given a person receives 1 time credit. They can then use this time credit to 'pay for' any help they need from others.

In the Housing and Support Network we aim to enable members to receive both money and or time credits for the skills they share. Thus offering a kind of 'employment' for people and an opportunity to learn new skills as well as enhance existing ones. This will help many people, previously reliant on benefits, begin to sustain themselves in new ways.

Network membership will be open to anyone in the local community
Including:-

- ❖ People with a Learning Disability or Difficulty
- ❖ Family members, supporters and other vulnerable people
- ❖ Interested community members,
- ❖ Local businesses or voluntary organisations
- ❖ Local advocates
- ❖ Housing and support providers

The Network will be closely linked to local housing authorities, housing providers and Social Care teams, as well as with local voluntary bodies.

Network Actions

The Housing and Support Network will help people to:-

- ❖ Broaden their awareness of ways of living and try out some of these
- ❖ Explore their housing desires and understand their housing needs

- ❖ Think about where and how they wish to live
- ❖ Work out the costs and help people find money to pay for them
- ❖ Work together with others to create their housing solutions
- ❖ Explore support / care options to sustain themselves
- ❖ Help people to move, settle in, make friends with neighbours and connect into their new community,
- ❖ Provide a route for people offer support to each other, and other community members
- ❖ Act as a link between people and organisations that help them

Creating Housing Solutions Together

As group members understand their housing desires they will approach housing providers directly to 'commission' individual or collective housing solutions. The Network would become a base of knowledge and information about housing and a source of tools to help people communicate their needs and access services.

This approach would help:-

- People feel able to contribute and being valued in their community
- People do new activities and perhaps gaining employment
- Significant savings to public purse being achieved, especially funds spent on (a) day services (b) Housing support, and care provision

The Main Housing Plan Objectives for 2011-2012

The main objectives for colleagues implementing the Plan from April 2011, will be to :-

- (a) begin setting up the Community Housing and Support Network
- (b) work with an agreed number of people and families to explore their housing options, needs and help them move if they wish
- (c) Produce many of the guides and tools which will help people expand their options – including creating a Housing teaching module for young people

- (d) Establish a 'try out' scheme where people can have a go at living in a variety of ways,
- (e) Start working with Local Housing Authorities to improve their methods of providing housing advice and helping people with Learning Disabilities to apply for Social Housing,
- (f) Make contact with local housing providers to begin the planning and creation of required housing solutions
- (g) Work with People with learning disability, families, local housing authorities and Social Care colleagues to begin recording people's housing desires and collating this data

The Duties of the Hosting Body

The main duties of the host body would be to:-

1. Begin carrying out some of the actions identified for the Network in the Learning Disability Housing Plan
2. Hold any funds, resources or 'staff' the Network begins to attract
3. Support colleagues and friends to begin setting up the Network, establishing appropriate business and operational systems
4. Provide mentoring and capacity building skills to members so they will be ready to take its reins and launch the Network as an independent enterprise by April 2012

Details of the Hosting Arrangement

This invitation is not being offered on a contractual basis. Indeed, the hosting agency or agencies would need to make this exercise self sustaining. There is no guarantee that any funds to establish the Network will be forthcoming from either the Learning Disability Partnership Board or any of the Northamptonshire local authorities.

However, colleagues and friends are working hard to secure front funding for this work from Social Services, as well as identifying sources of private grant and establishing 'Timesharing' opportunities.

The planned model of operation does offer the opportunity for an organisation to set-up ways of charging people for help or charging fees

for facilitating groups through which people begin to help each other. The latter would require minimal staff time 'input' and is one of the preferred options for Housing Steering Group members, who envisage that a mixture of charging approaches could be developed.

The Length of the Host Period

Once the network is established as a stand alone body the host will let it 'float off'. There are no requirements, at this stage, for the host to have long term responsibility for this enterprise.

Requirements of the Hosting Agency

A body may be:-

- providing help to access housing or support already
- experienced in working with people with Learning Disabilities
- a provider of housing or support services
- an advice or advocacy organisation

The organisation would need to:-

- be based in Northamptonshire and have local premises from which the network could operate
- be willing to support the use of co-production and timebanking techniques
- Have the skills and experience to support the delivery of the key duties outlined
- positively promote personal choice, control and responsibility for people with a learning disability
- be able to support Network members to explore a wide range of approaches to business sustainment and
- help members set-up their desired business model

We would also expect an organisation(s) to be signed up to the aspirations and aims of Valuing People Now, and be fully supportive of the personalisation approach.

Physical Requirements of the Host body(s)

The sort of assistance we seek from the host or hosts will be to:-

- provide office space or access to meeting rooms
- provide access to admin facilities
- promote the network's service along side their own
- help members to attract people to the pilot projects
- provide supervision and mentoring for network members
- provide budgeting, payroll and payment facilities
- provide support to select an appropriate business model

All of these elements do not have to be provided by one organisation, they could be provided in partnership, by a few contributing agencies.

Hosting Selection and Timescale

Once we hear from interested parties, members of the Housing Steering Group will 'select' the appropriate candidate(s). It is not our intention to exclude interested bodies from this opportunity. So where more than one suitable host is identified we will contact colleagues to see if they would like to work together. If you would prefer to be a sole host please indicate this on the attached form. We hope to have agreed an arrangement before end of March 2011, ready for the host(s) to begin work with Network members in April 2011.

How to Express Your Interest

To express your interest in hosting the Community Housing and Support Network please complete the attached 'Expression of Interest' form and return by Wednesday 16th February 2011.

If you would like to discuss this further contact Marion Turner, The Learning Disability Housing Plan Co-ordinator, on 01933 381467 or email on marioturner@hotmail.co.uk

or Contact Andy Horwood, Support People Commissioner for Learning Disability and Mental Health Services on 01604 237757 or at ahorwood@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Marion Turner
Learning Disability Housing Plan Coordinator

HOSTING THE COMMUNITY HOUSING AND SUPPORT NETWORK

Expression of Interest Form

(1) Organisation Name _____

(2) Address _____

(3) Tel No. _____ Email _____

(4) Please describe the nature of your organisation and detail its main business activities

(5) Please outline why you are interested in hosting the Community Housing Support Network and what your organisation could add to help establish the Network as a self sustaining enterprise

(6) Would you wish to be the sole host of the Network Y/N

(7) What facilities or skills would your organisation offer to support the Network

- | | |
|---|-----|
| (a) office space | Y/N |
| (b) access to meeting rooms | Y/N |
| (c) access to admin facilities | Y/N |
| (d) promotion of the network's services | Y/N |
| (e) help members to attract people | Y/N |
| (f) supervision and mentoring services | Y/N |
| (g) budgeting, payroll and payment facilities | Y/N |
| (h) support to choose an appropriate business model | Y/N |
| (i) fundraising & marketing skills | Y/N |

(8) Do you have any additional resources you could access to support the Network's set up Y/N

If Yes, please detail

(9) Is there any thing else you wish to add? Please do so here

Please return this form by Wednesday 16th Feb to:-
**Marion Turner, C/o Northamptonshire Supporting People Team,
John Dryden House, P.O. Box 225, Northampton, NN4 7DF**