

A Housing Plan For People with a Learning Disability in Northamptonshire

(Final Version)



by Marion Turner

**Together with members of The Finding a Place to live Group
Northamptonshire Learning Disability Partnership Board**

This plan has been co-produced with people with a learning disability,
and members of the community

Date:- 11th January 2011

CONTENTS PAGE

	Page No.
Why we need a Housing Plan	3
Our Housing Vision	3
The Desired Outcomes	4
Our Key Findings	4
Section A: Background and Context	4
Section B: Housing Context in Northamptonshire	8
Care and Housing Pressures	12
Section C: Issues and Observations	13
Section D The Help People Need to Address These Issues	16
Section E: The Big Ideas	18
Section F: The Housing Action Plan 2011 – 2015	21
Section G: Implementing and Monitoring the Plan	23
Bibliography and Useful Information	27
Glossary	29
Appendices	35

Message from the ‘Finding A Place to Live Group’

Historically people with a Learning Disability have had little control over so many areas of their lives. We intend that by sharing our experiences in jointly creating this plan 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. Indeed, many are not even aware that they have a right to choose. From the project work undertaken to create this Plan it is apparent that people and their supporters often don’t know about the many ways of living open to them and the support available to help them live safe, happy and independently in our communities.

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 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

Our Vision:-



We want to have real choice, have access to the same housing as other people, find information we understand and get support to help us create our dreams. We want to jointly lead on this in a planned way



We also wish to:-

- understand how partner organisations can help, and
- jointly produce the tools needed to make and communicate these choices

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 with a learning disability living in housing such as sheltered and extra care housing
- (3) black and ethnic minority people accessing a greater range of housing
- (4) people feeling safe at home and in the community
- (5) less people living out of the county

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

Our Key Findings

From our work we are aware that people:-

- often feel their choice is limited and are confused about who can help
- can have low expectations about what is available and possible
- have limited opportunities to 'try out' other ways of living
- rarely approach Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) for help and if they do they can find it hard to communicate their needs or understand housing systems
- often receive limited help with housing matters from Social Services
- Where parents want to plan ahead with their loved ones, they frequently don't know where to turn for support to do this
- There are significant challenges in finding appropriate housing for people as well as capital for new build & funding for adaptations

Through this plan we aim to help people begin to address many of these issues and collectively create some practical solutions to meet their living aspirations.

SECTION A - BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Housing Plan has been commissioned by the Learning Disability partnership Board (LDPB) and has been produced by the 'Finding a Place to Live' Group. This is a sub-group of the partnership board. The plan has been created using a technique called Co-production.

About Co-production

Co-production is about people working along side professionals as equal partners sharing the control and responsibility to make things happen, in this case the Housing plan. It encourages us to value all community members and seeks to engage us all in the design, creation and running of services (Boyle, Slay and Stephens, p9, April 2010.) The approach guides us to create supportive local networks and to learn how to value the many gifts and skills we can each offer.

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),
- Care Management staff & Social Care Commissioners,
- Colleagues from Mencap & DELOS,
- Children's and Young People Officers & the Transitions Co-ordinator,
- the LDPB's Black and Ethnic Minority Officer, and
- Supporting People colleagues.

Other attendees have included:-

- A colleague from Northamptonshire Police victim support team, and
- people and family members wishing to find out more about housing

Over 75 people and organisations have contributed to the making of this plan. The group is jointly chaired by a community member and a person with a Learning Disability and has been meeting since May 2010. It intends to begin implementing this plan following its adoption by the Partnership Board in November 2010.



Valuing People Now Objectives

Valuing People' Now is the Governments policy on learning disabilities published in 2009. One of it's aims is to ensure that:

“All people with learning disabilities have the opportunity to make an informed choice about where and with whom they live” (from Valuing People website, section on Housing)

In it the Government have said that they expect to see:-

- (1) local authorities significantly reducing their use of residential and nursing care services
- (2) a reduction in the use of out of county(or area) placements
- (3) an increase in the number of people living in a broader range of housing options in the community, and
- (4) Young people supported to have greater choice about where and how they live

Creating Sustainable Solutions in The Present Climate

The present climate offers many challenges to creating sustainable ways of expanding housing choice. Considerable savings to the public purse are required and many public bodies are bracing themselves for massive cuts in funding and significant job loses over the next few years. In Northamptonshire this will mean reductions in;-

- (i) funding for Social care and health
- (ii) funding for the Learning Disability Partnership Board
- (iii) Supporting People funding and services
- (iv) the help available from Local Housing Authorities
- (v) income for disabled people due to pressures on all benefits, and
- (vi) the availability of paid work

Other Challenges to Extending Housing Choice

Many capital and revenue grants previously available to fund housing build or purchase costs will be reduced from public sources, i.e.

- (i) Capital for new housing developments is already considerably reduced to local housing providers (Housing Associations)
- (ii) The Independent Living Fund (ILF) is presently frozen
- (iii) Grants from Government via Housing Associations to help people with Disabilities become homeowners will be reduced
- (iv) Forthcoming changes to housing benefits will as increase pressure

The New Role of Public Bodies and People

The role of public bodies is significantly changing. We are witnessing considerable contractions of public services and spending. With these changes there will be a greater emphasis on communities and individuals helping ourselves and each other.

The 'Big Society' vision, outlined by the new coalition government, embodies the expectation that each of us will become more involved in our communities and that we 'step up' to take the lead in meeting our own needs, together, in the areas where we live and work.

In this new environment public bodies need to be asking how can we enable and support communities to take the lead in meeting these challenges themselves, whilst stepping back and playing a guiding and facilitative role.

How Co-production Can Help

The same approach used to create this plan can also be used to help communities in Northamptonshire participate in creating the services we see as essential. As well as sharing the responsibility to run, fund and steer them. The New Economics Foundation (NEF) have published a document to start 'main streaming' this method to provide public services. Called 'Right Here, Right Now'.

Building a Picture of The Issues and Needs

In creating this plan we have drawn from a variety of sources, including the 2004-5 Housing Needs study to build a picture of the issues, needs and challenges facing people with a learning disability wanting to explore their housing options. The findings and observations made in the plan are drawn from many customers, family carers and professionals. Although many of these observations are anecdotal in nature they do provide a comprehensive picture of the types of challenges both people and professionals are facing in exploring housing options and making changes happen.

Learning Disability Demographic information in Northamptonshire

In 2008 there were 679,000 people living in Northamptonshire. Using national percentages the likely number of people in the County with a learning disability could be just under 20,000. That is about:-

650 people with severe disabilities, 2600 with moderate disabilities and 16,280 with mild disabilities (Developing Community Lives Strategy 2009, p 9 - 11)

Future Need

We know there are likely to be more people with a learning disability living in Northants in the future. The expected growth across the county of people aged between 18 – 64 years with moderate or severe learning disabilities is 7%.

In 2008 the number of older people with a Learning Disability was estimated to be just under 2,100. This population is forecast to increase by 28% to 2,600 by 2015. (JSNA, 2009, chpt 4, Health and Social Care need, Older people with Learning Disabilities). With this increase the instances of people developing dementia conditions is also increasing. ('Developing Community Lives Strategy 2009', p 9/11).

We also know there will be more people with Autistic spectrum disorders or Aspergers syndrome. Presently, there are in the region 4300 people in Northants with these conditions. By 2015 this is expected to increase to 4600. ('Developing Community Lives Strategy 2009', pg's 9 and 11).

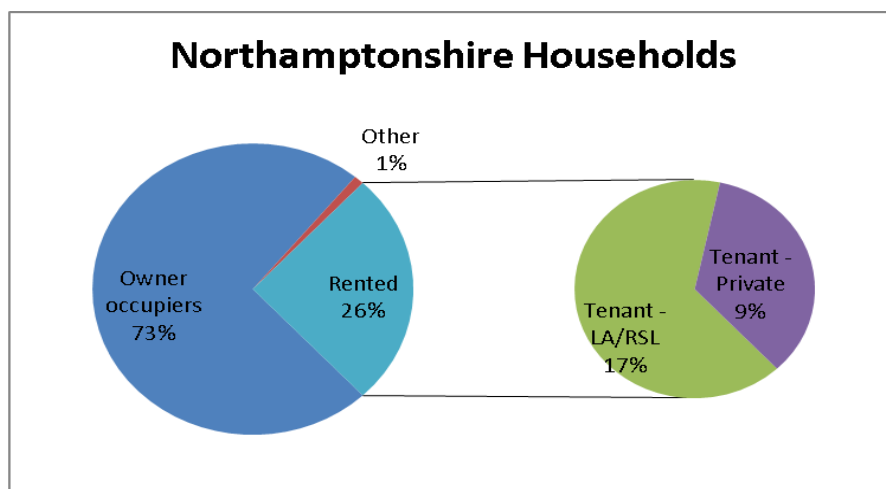
The Needs of Young People

In 2008/2009 there were 156 young people between 13 and 17 yrs with severe or profound learning disabilities and a further 2040 young people with a low level needs (Northamptonshire Valuing People self assessment 2009-10, p38)

SECTION B - THE HOUSING CONTEXT IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Demand for housing and accommodation in most parts of Britain is consistently high. The Country is experiencing a housing crisis, with too few available homes. Also not enough homes of the right size and cost, particularly affordable homes, are available in the areas of highest demand.

Most people in Britain own their home (78%), with below a quarter renting, some privately and some from 'social housing landlords'. In Northamptonshire 73% of households own their home and about 26% are renting (2001 census figures).



Social Housing

Historically, some vulnerable people have been able to rent a home from either the local council or from a Housing Association, these are Social Housing Landlords.

People are able to access social housing by applying through their local District or Borough council (these are the Local Housing Authority (LHA's)). Typically, social housing is often hard for people to access as there is a limited number of homes available.

In Northamptonshire there are 46,000 people renting social housing homes, this is about 17% of all households in the County (figs from each DC/BC as at August 2010). However demand for this housing is high and there are very long waiting lists for people wanting to rent. Across the County just over 20,000 people are waiting to access a home in the social housing sector (Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix, as at 1st April 2010, from each LHA's return to Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)).

People are keen to rent from social housing landlords as they often provide better quality housing, have more housing rights and rents are much lower than in the private sector. Up to 50% less from one local study (see Wellingborough Borough Council Housing Strategy 2009-2012, p26). Even though the Government plans to increase social housing rents they will remain lower than renting privately.

Private Renting

Renting privately can offer more choice to people but often the rents are higher and typically people will need to pay quite a large deposit to landlords to guarantee against damage to the property. Also their rights are not as good as those renting in social housing. In Northamptonshire 9.3% of households are renting privately (23,684).

The Housing 'History' for People with a Learning Disability

The advice and advocacy agency 'Housing Options' points out that historically the range of housing opportunities available to people with a Learning Disability have been very limited. People generally either live with their families or in residential care.

Home Ownership

Home ownership is much less commonly accessed by people with a learning disability. House prices across the county do vary substantially but with average mortgage payments in North Northants being in the region of £170 – 180 per week and with prospective householders presently needing a deposit of up to 25% of the property cost, the prospects of people becoming home owners when they are on very low incomes does not look good.

Shared Ownership

The most likely route for many people with a learning disability to acquire their own home has been through shared ownership. Nationally, this model has helped many

people on low incomes become homeowners. 'MySafeHome', an organisation set-up specifically to help disabled people become home owners, reports that they have been able to help over 1000 people with a Learning Disability nationally. In Northamptonshire there have only been a handful of people choosing this option (6), but the results have been promising.

Recent changes to the funding on mortgages for shared ownership may make this option more challenging in future, but if people or families are able to 'top-up' mortgage payments, or find capital funds from elsewhere, this is likely to continue as a viable housing option for some.

Possible Forms and Sources of Private Investment

Given the present financial picture for public sector funding, creating private investment partnerships to back any kind of housing solution for people with Learning Disabilities will be an appropriate strategy for the future.

Breakthroughs have been possible where families are able to release some equity from their homes or innovative schemes could be developed with Local Housing Authorities, housing providers, and ethical investment bodies. For more detail on private finance and other housing solutions see appendix 4.

Local Housing Authority Commitments

Each District and Borough Council in Northamptonshire is committed to supporting people with a Learning Disability, to explore their housing needs and the support provided by Local Housing Authority partners to create the plan reflects this.

Considering a Range of Housing Options

A broad range of housing options could be open to people with a Learning Disability. The list below shows there are many alternatives to explore.

Housing Options can include:-

- Living independently with support in a flat or house
- Sharing a house / flat with others
- Living in supported accommodation such as:-
 - living with care or support on site
 - Living with carers or a family in their home as with Shared Lives Services (former Adult Placement)
- Living in a community style setting with others with your own home or space, such as:-
 - Sheltered or Extra care housing
 - Living in a co- housing project or an intentional community like Camphill Communities
- Shared ownership – helping you to part buy / part rent your home

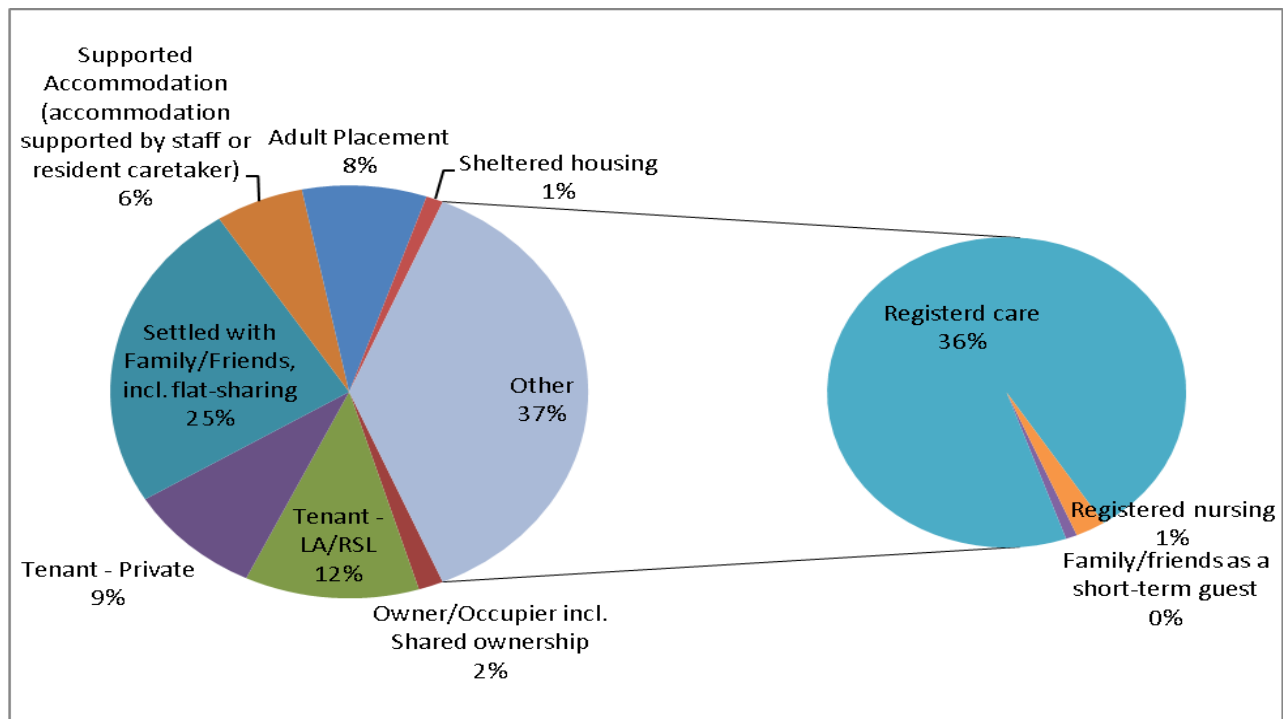
- Full home ownership
- Rent to Buy schemes
- Living in an alternative dwelling such as a boat or a caravan
- Living in residential care
- Living with your family

There are many options for people, finding the resources and the support to create people’s particular solutions is the challenge. See the ‘Useful Stuff’ area on www.myhomemysay.co.uk website for more information or the detailed information on the ‘Housing Options’ website www.housingoptions.org.uk

How People Presently Live

In 2009 -10, 1571 people with a learning disability were known to Social Services and of these we knew how 1293 people lived. Of the 1293 people

- 36% were living in residential care,
 - 25% at home with their families and
 - 1% in nursing homes.
 - 21% were renting, either privately or in Social Housing
 - Only 1% were home owners,
 - 1% were living in Sheltered housing and
 - 15% were living in some form of supported accommodation
- (Figs from Northamptonshire’s Valuing People self assessment, 2009/10, p51)
- 134 (8.5%) people lived outside Northants as at 30th August 2010 (Source: HASS ‘Carefirst’ system)



Care and Housing Pressures in Northamptonshire

In Northamptonshire 37% of people with a Learning Disability, known to Social Services, live in residential or nursing care and in 2008/09 the combined health and social care funding for this formed over 52% of all total spending on services. As a consequence colleagues are under significant pressure to work in partnership to create sustainable community based solutions to both help people achieve their housing desires and achieve better value for money.

The CSED Report

To help achieve this aim Social Care colleagues commissioned the Care Services Efficiency Delivery project (CSED), in May 2010, to provide recommendations. The work found that Northamptonshire County Council:-

- has made significant strides to reduce spending on residential care - from 59% in 2004/05 to 52% in 2008/09
- are moving in the right direction re-aims to offer more choice to people, with 65% of new customers in 2009/10 being supported via direct payments (p7)
- Most of the increase in spending since 2004/5 has been on community based solutions - from £15.6m to £20.2m in 2008/09.
- has relatively low numbers of people supported in the community and the costs of these community based solutions are comparatively high (p6)
- need to reduce residential placements by a further 25% (125 people) to match the best 25% of Authorities and achieve savings of up to £1.12m

To achieve this CSED recommends:-

- Setting up a targeted project to work with people, families and professionals to support more people to live in the community
- Work strategically with Local Housing Authorities and providers to create and commission new community based housing provision
- Working to improve the cost effectiveness of community based care and support solutions(p11)

At present it is unclear if Health and Adult Social Services in Northamptonshire are planning to implement these recommendations. Colleagues have indicated, however, they are keen to see learning disability customers having more support to explore and create their housing aspirations. This plan outlines some ways in which this could be achieved.

SECTION C – ISSUES AND OBSERVATIONS

Where People Go for Help....

1. People seem confused about whom to approach for help. Some people go to the District/Borough councils for help and others approach Social Services
2. The different roles of partners play is unclear as is how much help people get from personal assistants and advocacy agencies
3. There is little evidence of people receiving help to consider their housing needs and create solutions in a planned and steady way

Approaching District or Borough Councils for help.....

4. Few people with a learning disability appear to have registered with Local Housing Authorities to access social housing and Councils' hold limited data about their housing needs
5. Where people have approached Local Housing Authorities some concerns have been raised, such as:-

- a. Some staff don't have the experience to communicate
- b. Customers find it hard to communicate their desires
- c. Limited time to advise people is available
- d. processes are often in a format which many learning disabled people can't read or understand, such Choice Based Lettings systems
- e. Where people have been housed there are concerns about housing people sensitively, as bullying or neighbour problems have been noted

What Options are Available to People.....

6. people often seem unaware of the many housing options available
7. People who have lived in a particular way for many years often have no concept of living differently and few opportunities exist to help people expand their view and 'try out' other ways of living
8. It appears partners often explore a limited range of housing options with customers and can make assumptions about what is possible for people
9. Examples of home ownership are rare with the exception of a few people choosing shared ownership in Northants which has worked well

Helping People to Explore their Housing Needs and Desires.....

10. There appears to be limited opportunities for people to regularly explore how and where they live. Also where some people have expressed a desire to move the practical help to make this happen has not been forthcoming

Support to Live Independently.....

11. Some families have reported feeling baffled about how to help their child/sibling live independently. The things which they find difficult include:-

- a. Getting help to understand the options and what can be afforded
- b. Understanding housing rules and regulations
- c. Helping register on waiting lists, finding a property and applying
- d. Understanding housing benefit and assessing rental costs before hand
- e. Identifying support/care available, from whom, how to get it and the costs
- f. Ensuring the safety of loved ones, both at home and in the community
- g. Some people shy away from living independently as they believe it means living alone without help and support

12. People rarely see positive examples of people living independently

13. Many anxieties about people's ability to live independently continue these include thoughts such as:-

- he/she won't be able to cope on their own or won't have the capacity to understand their rights and obligations
- they won't be safe, they'll be bullied or have accidents at home
- they won't understand how to pay bills, cook and clean for themselves
- their needs are just too complex to live independently and it will be too costly

Social Services helping people to access housing.....

14. Although it is not the direct role of Adult Social Services colleagues to provide housing, personalisation teams do provide some help to find a place to live. However, it is clear that:-

- a. colleagues do not have the capacity to provide the assistance needed
- b. Under 'personalisation' people are expected to meet their needs from their own resources
- c. Limited information is collected on people's housing needs
- d. Person centred planning forms do have questions on housing desires but it is unclear how this information is collected and then used
- e. A recent review of customer's day activities showed a problem of inconsistent data collection on housing matters and a lack of clarity about who should help people address this need once identified

Issues for Young People.....

15. How and when young people start to learn about ways of living is unclear. The process of exploring begins about the age of 14 via the Year 9 review. At present, it appears that:-
 - a. few comments are ever logged against the housing section
 - b. Schools do not appear to deliver any specific learning modules about the way people live and the options
 - c. Young people can leave school at 18, or college at 22, with little understanding of housing options or how to access housing
 - d. Staff supporting young people also have a limited understanding of housing options, so minimal positive information maybe provided

Issues for Older People.....

16. People need more help to explore their housing options when they are older and support to access models of housing available to other older people
17. Presently, a handful of people with Learning Disability live in sheltered or extra care housing (15)
18. For people developing conditions where they may benefit from living in Sheltered or extra care housing earlier, work is required to make this possible
19. Also where people are developing dementia conditions, existing options should be accessible to people who are under 55 or 60 yrs

Issues for people from a Black or Ethnic Minority

20. 7% of people known to Social Services with a Learning disability are from an ethnic minority (110) (Developing Community Lives Strategy, 2009)
21. Limited information exists about housing desires and language barriers cultural differences often make it difficult for people to address their needs
22. People from a BME background often need additional support to increase their awareness of the housing options and solutions

Care and Support to Live Independently.....

Two of the major ingredients which will help people to live successfully in the community are domiciliary care and housing related support services.

23. Housing related support is mainly provided via the Supporting People Team. In Northamptonshire between 270 and 300 people are helped to maintain their independence via the Supporting people programme at the cost of £1.1 million per year
24. Of these people about 128 receive accommodation based support and 146 people receive floating support services

25. Housing related support is vital in helping people live in the community successfully. Unfortunately, we discovered that many people who participated in this project have no awareness of the Supporting People Programme, of housing related support or how to access services.

Finding out about Care options, what happens now.....

26. To live independently successfully many people need to arrange Care to support them in their new home.
27. Customers are encouraged to arrange services for themselves. Presently, customers can get help to do this from Personalisation teams but if not, people can find it difficult to identify organisations to approach
28. Market place events, where care providers share their 'wares' directly, can help but there are few of these each year. A Directory of Care Services in Northamptonshire is available, but this has limited information about services for people with a Learning Disability
29. A new tool may soon be available, via Northamptonshire County Council, called 'Shop4Support'. This is a web based directory and enquiry system which will help people identify services they may wish to purchase

Other challenges for people wishing to live Independently.....

30. Other issues that some people are experiencing when living independently include:-

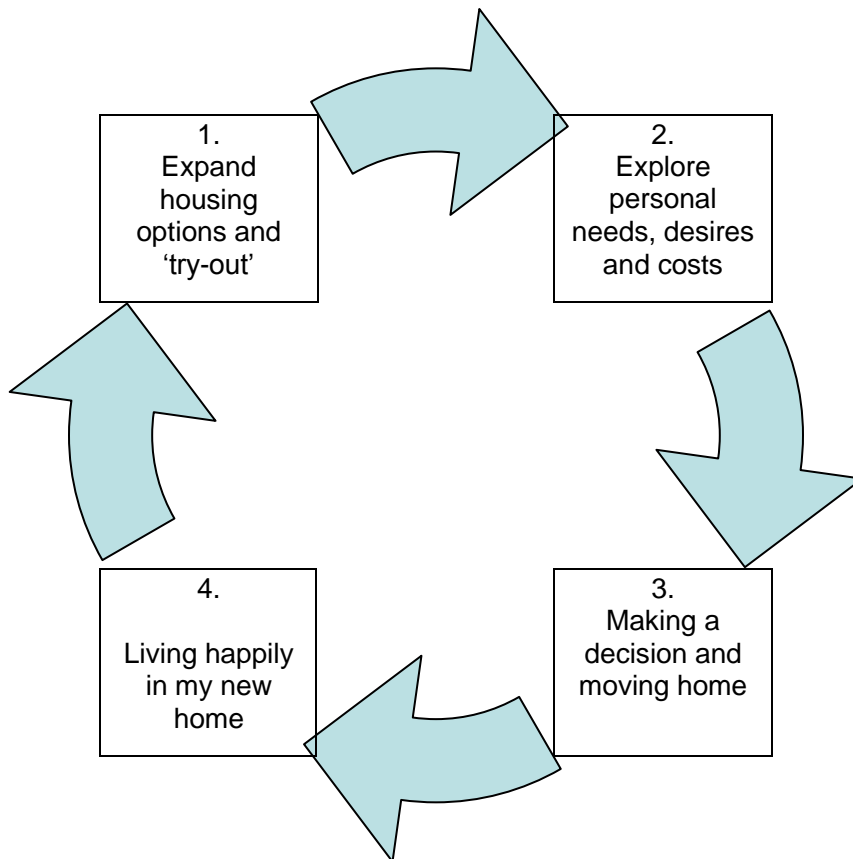
- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Feelings of isolation, loneliness and difficulty mixing in communitiesb. Difficulties keeping contact with friends in other areasc. Problems with neighbours or being bulliedd. Contacting utility companies where call systems are not sensitive to people's communications needse. Falling out with co-tenants in shared housing |
|---|

SECTION D - THE HELP PEOPLE NEED TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES

- People need clear pathways to help them consider their housing needs regularly and help through the journey of exploring options and making it happen
- People need help to expand the range of housing options open to them and expand their 'view' on the many ways they could live
- Some people will need an opportunity to 'try out' living independently
- It needs to be clear that Local Housing Authorities (LHA's) have the main responsibility to help people consider their housing needs, and that Social Services also has a duty to support this

- Information about housing options, rights and responsibilities need to be available and easily accessible in the public domain
- Regular reviews of people’s housing needs and desires should be available to people with a Learning Disability. These could be conducted by Local Housing Authorities with the support the Community Housing & Support Network
- People often benefit from being aware of others going through the same process as them. This could help people plan collective solutions
- Positive stories of people living successfully in the community should be shared and available
- Once they have moved, people also need practical support to help them ‘connect’ into their communities, make friends with neighbours
- We need to work with local housing authorities and housing providers to create more housing solutions and opportunities with people

Helping People through the Housing Transition Stages



There are 4 stages that people need help with to live happily in their chosen housing option. Presently few people are given time to explore and try out the many housing options available (stage 1) and minimal support exists to help people

through the next stages, particularly exploring and planning people's personal options and helping people decide and move in (stages 2 and 3).

Stage 4, living happily at home, is also an area where people receive minimal assistance, unless they are receiving a housing support service. Even then more work is required to help people really connect into their new community and make friends with neighbours. Other activities at this stage include:-

- Living with care, support and assistive technologies
- Learning how to look after themselves and their home
- keeping safe and secure
- Handling ongoing living challenges

SECTION E - THE BIG IDEAS

The Community Housing and Support Network

In order to help people through each of the 4 stages identified a Community Housing and Support Network (CHSN) could be created.

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 settle in to their communities.

The Network will be sustained via a combination of fees, contributed time and private investment and will be run on a membership basis. Members will collectively share their skills and help to meet some of each other's needs using approaches such as Timebanking.

Timebanking

This is where people share time & 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 & Support Network we intend to enable members to receive both money 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
- ❖ Interested community members,
- ❖ Local businesses or voluntary organisations
- ❖ Local advocates &
- ❖ Housing & support providers

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

The Network

The Housing and Support Network would 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 cost of options and help people to find money to pay for them
- ❖ Work together with others to create their housing solutions
- ❖ Explore support / care options to sustain themselves in their new home
- ❖ Help people to move, 'settle in, make friends and connect into the community,
- ❖ Provide a route by which people offer support to each other, and other community members
- ❖ Act as a link between people and organisations that wish to help

Creating Housing Solutions Together

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

This approach would help people:-

- ❖ understand they have choice and a range of options available
- ❖ get help with the complexities of finding & funding a home
- ❖ connect to each other, take responsibility & having more control
- ❖ receive broad ranging advice about housing, support & even care services
- ❖ draw on their collective experience to help each other

It could also see:-

- people feeling able to contribute & being valued in their community
- people doing new activities and perhaps gaining employment
- significant savings to public purse especially funds spent on
 - Day services
 - Housing support, care & health provision

Housing & Community Connectors

Members of the network will perform many roles to help people travel smoothly through their housing journey, as well as to maintain the organisation. Key among these roles will be the work of Housing and Community Connectors.

The Housing Connector role will support people through the 4 staged housing journey highlighted earlier. They will help people; become more aware of their options, understand their housing needs & desires, consider the cost and affordability of their preferred options, and make it happen. They will be trained contributors and offer a supporting hand as people consider where and how they wish to live.

The Community Connector role will be to help people settle in once they move. To make friends with their neighbours, connect & join in with their local community. So that people can experience much more fulfilling lives. Using things like timesharing people will be able to feel needed and valued in their community as well as hopefully supported by their new community. Connectors will also help people consider their support and care needs, and help to ensure these services are working well for them.

SECTION F - THE HOUSING ACTION PLAN – Apr 2011 – April 2015

We aim to deliver these actions to help us achieve our desired outcomes:-

No	Action	Who with	When
A	Main Steering Group Actions		
1	Create a self sustaining Community Housing and Support Network (CHSN)		By Apr 2012
2	Set up protocols agreeing the roles that all partners will play in assisting people to meet their housing needs		Apr 2011
3	Seek set up funds and an initial host for the Community Housing and Support Network		By Apr 2011
4	Identify housing provision gaps and create a broader bank of housing options and solutions	LHAs and CHSN	By Apr 2012 & ongoing
5	Collate the results of housing needs and desires work to create a Commissioning Plan		By Apr 2012
6	Adjust housing allocations processes to reflect the needs of people with a learning disability	LHA's	April 2012
7	Work to provide joined up advice on Housing Options and Housing Benefit	LHA's	Apr 2011 ongoing
8	Improve the collection of housing needs and desires data and ensure its effective strategic use		By Apr 2012
9	Gain agreement from LHA's to prioritise housing needs of people living with older carers over 65yr	LHA's	By Apr 2012
10	Work to make more housing options for Older People accessible and Identify the specific challenges ethnic minority groups face		By Apr 2013
B	Main Actions for the Community Housing and Support Network		
1	Begin reviewing the housing needs and desires of adults over 18 known to social services	LHA's	by Dec 2012
2	Support people to consider their needs in detail and move – agree targets each year		From Apr 2011

No	Action	Who with	When
3	Create housing awareness programme and 'try out' living options	LHA's	By Sept 2011
4	Provide housing options awareness sessions for families, supporters, groups and professionals	LHA's and others	From Oct 2011
5	Enhance staff training and create communication tools to ensure staff sensitively help people	LHA's and others	Apr 2012
6	Create an accessible information guide and other materials on housing options and responsibilities	LHA's and partners	By Apr 2012
7	Access private funds to help create a broad range of housing solutions	All partners.	Apr 2011 ongoing
8	Work with housing providers to create housing opportunities and ensure compliance with mental capacity requirements	LHAs and HASS	Apr 2011 ongoing
9	Explore using assistive technology to help people live independently	HASS	Oct 2011 ongoing
10	Explore modifying some residential care settings to become community or supported living options		Apr 2011 ongoing
11	Carryout 'mystery shopping' exercises to help improve people's experience of front line services	LHA's and HASS	From Feb 2011
12	Create a 'bank' of positive stories to share with people, families and professionals		Apr 2011 ongoing
13	Create tools that help people manage personal and home safety issues	keeping safe group	Oct 2011 ongoing
14	Set-up links with external agencies		Apr 2011 ongoing

Specific Actions for Older People

No	Action	Who	When
1	Ensure housing options material contains information relating to the options for older people	LHAs and providers	April 2011 ongoing
2	Plan housing reviews for people in their early 50's and begin exploring their housing future	families and HASS	Sept 2011 ongoing

No	Action	Who with	When
3	Work to adjust Sheltered housing allocation rules to enable people under 55 to access this	LHA's & Hsg provs	By Apr 2012
4	Work to ensure dementia services are also accessible for people under 60yrs	HASS and care provs	By Apr 2012

Specific Actions for Young People

1	Review the housing needs and desires of young people leaving school or college	C and YP and LHA's	By Dec 2012
2	Create a housing options teaching module and materials to use in schools and colleges	LHA's and schools	By July 2011
3	Produce housing options leaflets and information guide for young people	LHAs	By July 2011
4	Help young people visit and 'try out' various ways of living before they are 18 yrs old	Hsg Provs	From Oct 2011

Specific Actions for People from Black, Ethnic and Minority Groups

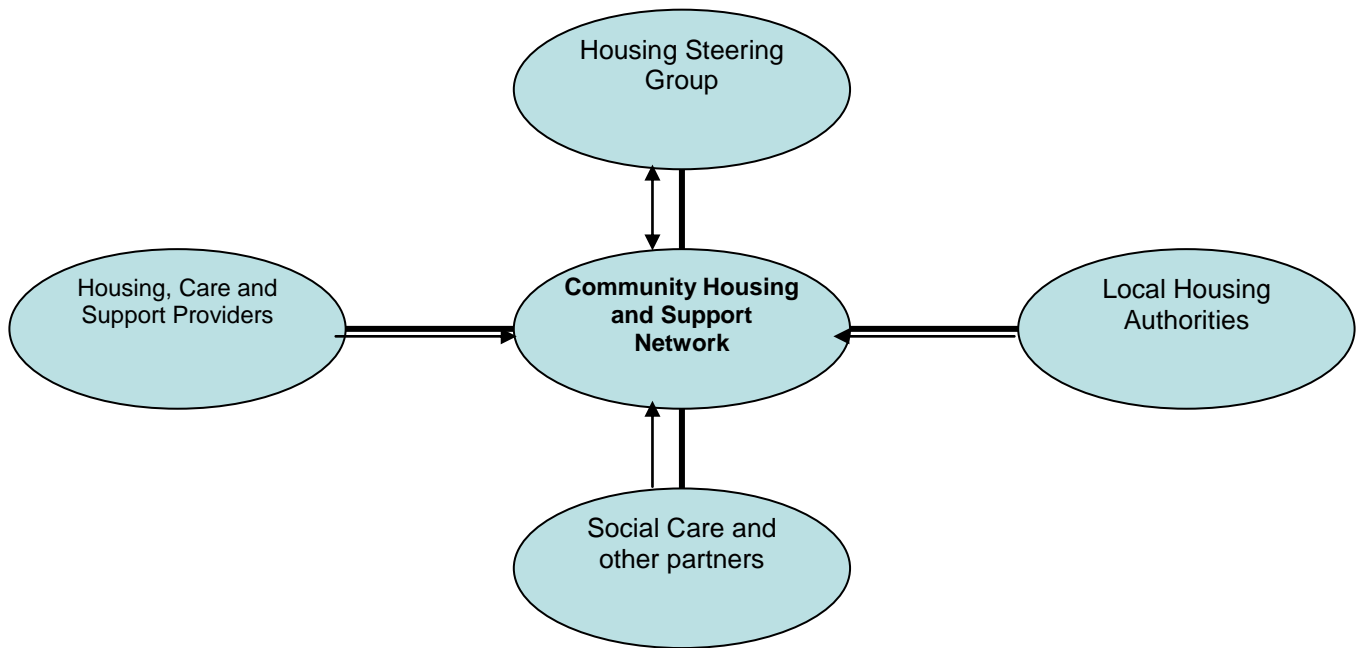
1	Ensure all information and training address additional cultural, language or religious needs of people from minority groups		By Dec 2011
2	Enhance Training for colleagues to effectively support people from minority groups		By Apr 2012

SECTION G - IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE PLAN

Much of the work outlined in the plan will be undertaken by the Community Housing and Support Network (CHSN) in partnership with others. The Housing Steering Group will over see the whole process.

Monitoring the Housing Plan

Primary responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the action plan will sit with the 'Housing Steering Group'. Once established, the Community Housing and Support Network (CHSN), the 7 Housing Authorities, Social Services and other partners will report to this body about implementation progress.



Developing People’s Capacity and Mentoring the Network

A significant amount of time and investment will be required to help establish the Community Housing and Support Network and help people acquire the skills, experience and knowledge to run it. It is envisaged that the Network will be supported and mentored by a host organisation or (s), who will initially take responsibility to perform its tasks and support local people to ‘grow’ their skills and abilities to take on the role of ultimately running it.

A Sustainable Business Model for The Network

As a self sustaining body, the Network would offer a range of service options to its members to help them meet their housing & support needs. These could follow the form highlighted below:-

Service 1

The Network could provide 100% support to people through their 4 stage housing journey. It would charge a flat rate per person to reflect the considerable support required. The charge would be dependent on the complexity of people’s needs and desires. This would be the ‘full’ service.

Service 2

Alternatively, the Network could reduce charges where people choose to do some or most of the work themselves, requiring much less support from the Network. For example, where a person chooses to perform 75% of the work themselves the rate per person would be considerably lower.

Service 3

In cases where people choose to act together on their housing journey, requiring minimal support from the Network, the charge would be further reduced. Perhaps a nominal weekly contribution for the use of facilities and for guidance would be made.

With this option it is hoped that people, once helped, would choose to help others on their housing journey. Where this happens people could even receive a payment of money or time credits which they could then use to meet other needs via the Network.

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

- ❖ £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 face as they travel on the 4 stage journey and resolving issues partners face in supporting them
- (b) Establishing route by which people will help themselves together in future, i.e. setting up the Community Housing and Support Network
- (c) Creating the resources and materials to help people meet their housing needs

It is estimated a minimum of £70,000 would be required to begin the first year work. Colleagues are seeking financial support from Social Services of 50% (£35,000) of this amount, with a view to generating the remainder from a combination of private funding, receiving in kind contributions and time sharing via the Timebank.

Timescale for The Plan's Implementation

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

Adopting The Housing Plan

The Plan was adopted by the Learning Disability Partnership Board in November 2010. Work is also well underway to seek approval from each of the 7 District and Borough Councils and from Northamptonshire County Council, which we aim to achieve by April 2011.

Feedback and Accessibility of this Plan

An easy read summary & Executive Summary of the Housing Plan are now available on the project website and an audio version of the final document will be available by mid February 2011. The website address is www.myhomemysay.co.uk

And Finally.....Thank You

We wish to thank all the people who have contributed to the making of this Housing Plan. From the people attending the Finding a Place to Live Group and doing all the investigation in the working groups, to the parents, supporters, professionals and all organisations contributing.

Thank you all very much for your support and we look forward to working with you again in the future to make this plan happen.

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 - this is just the beginning.



Marion Turner

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35	<i>Using Person Centred Reviews to Inform Change</i> by Eliane Cummins and Su Guiliano, NCC Social Care Learning Disability Commissioning, April 2010
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GLOSSARY

No	Item	Definition
1	'Housing Options' Organisation	This is a national housing advice agency, based in Oxfordshire, to help people with a learning disability. They have produced many housing advice guides and tools to help people have a broader range of options
2	'People'	In the text the word 'people' is often used as short hand to refer to 'people with a learning disability'
3	'Supporters'	This term is used to refer to those who support 'people' but who may not be a family member

No	Item	Definition
4	Accommodation based support	This is where people move in to a form of housing where support is provided as a condition of living their. It is often used to help people move out of residential care and begin living in the community
5	Aspergers Syndrome	A condition often thought to be a mild form of autism. Presenting with social aloofness, lack of interest in other people and an excessive pre-occupation with specialised interests such as timetables
6	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	Various manifestations of Autism
7	Big Society	A term used by the Conservative Party and adopted by the new coalition government to encourage people in our society to start taking more control and responsibility to meet our own needs locally. It encourages us to play a bigger role in the delivery of public services by taking on running libraries, shops and schools or volunteering to help other services in our communities.
8	C and Y	Children and Young People services
9	Camphill Communities	An organisation which runs a series of intentional communities. Here people with a learning disability live together with other members. People receive care support and also contribute to the general running of the community, performing general domestic duties as well as joining in commercial services. The nearest community is in Milton Keynes.
10	Care provs	Care providers
11	Care Services Efficiency Delivery project (CSED)	Set up following the Gershon Independent review of Public service efficiency in 2005, by the Dept of Health, CSED helps councils responsible for care services develop more efficient ways of delivering social care
12	Choice Based Lettings (CBL)	This is a system used to allocate social housing. 6 of the 7 LHAs in Northamptonshire presently use this system. It involves people having the opportunity to choose their preferred housing option. The level of priority given will depend on how the respective housing authority 'scores' their need. The remaining authority operates a traditional housing waiting list

No	Item	Definition
13	Co-housing	This is a housing model where people choose to live in the same area or as part of one housing scheme and where they have their own home but choose to share some 'common' facilities such as a kitchen or gardens. They often also choose to eat together at least once a week, and share some common activities. The model started in Denmark and, in recent year, has been more widely taken up by groups wishing to live in a more sustainable and environmentally aware way. These can be mixed tenure and mixed accommodation
14	Community based support	This is a broad term for a range of support services that help people live in the community. It includes services such as, domiciliary care, housing related support, supported housing, shared lives services and meals on wheels.
15	Extra Care Housing	This is a form of supported accommodation named after the organisation that first created this model. Here people move to specific accommodation to receive support or care services. Some schemes also offer health services. The idea is that as people's need change these can be responded to in their existing home without them needing to move for more help. So the support and care is very flexible
16	Floating support	This is a way in which housing related support is provided to people. It is provided to people who live in their own home and is available for short periods to help them settle in when they first move, or help cope with a major change in their life. The Supporting People programme has been the main funder of this since 2003.
16a	HASS	Health and Adult Social Services, commonly known as Social Services
17	Housing Associations	Housing Associations are not for profit organisations that rent social housing to vulnerable people in our communities. Also known as registered social landlord (RSLs), they have taken over from local councils as the main developer of social housing in Britain. They also provide supported housing, and work in partnership with local authorities, care and support providers to do this

No	Item	Definition
18	Housing Benefit (HB) and Local Housing Allowance	Housing benefit is payable to people who rent their home and don't have enough income to cover their rent. In 2006 the government introduced a new way of paying housing benefit called Local Housing Allowance (LHA). People apply for LHA via their local district or borough council. The new government are planning to change some of the rules related to HB by 2012 and begin scrapping the whole process in 2013 when they launch the new 'Universal Credit'. See the government website for more details
19	Housing related support	This is support provided to help people who are vulnerable keep and maintain their home. It is often provided to help people continue to live independently. It is primarily provided in Northamptonshire via the Supporting People Team at NCC
20	Housing Transition stages	This is the 4 stage housing journey referred to in this report. We all can travel many times through this process throughout our lives
21	Hsg provs	Housing Providers
21a	Individual budget	This is an amount of money awarded by Social Services to help people pay for care and support services. This amount forms part of the personal budget a vulnerable person has to help them. Other items in the personal budget can include money from work and benefit awards. This 'personalisation' model is now beginning to replace former ways of commissioning care fore groups of people. Using this method people have the freedom to buy their care /support services themselves as well as use other ways of meeting their needs.
22	Investment partnerships	These are partnerships that can be formed by a group of organisations and people to provide money to run services or funds to build homes. In the past this has involved large amounts of public funding, in future private or personal money is likely to dominate. For example from local businesses and from families

No	Item	Definition
23	JNSA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – an assessment of care and health needs of people in a particular area, undertaken jointly by Social Services and Health colleagues. The figures in this report are taken from assessment for Northamptonshire in 2009.
23a	Learning Disability Partnership Board	This is a multi-agency body made up of people from key statutory organisations, people with learning disabilities, their families, supporters and other interested people from the voluntary sector and the community. Boards were set-up across England and Wales following the first Valuing People Now report in 2001. Their main purpose is to help deliver the objectives of Valuing People Now
24	Living in ‘a’ community	This usually relates to living in an intentional community. This is a group of people who have decide they want to live together in the same area or building. They often share some common link or belief system. An example of an intentional community for people with a learning disability would be ‘Camphill Communities’
25	Living in ‘the’ community	Is often a general term used to describe where people live in general settings other than in hospital, prison, residential or nursing care. People are said to be ‘living in the community’ when they live with their families, rent or own their own home, live in supported housing or in an intentional community
26	Local Housing Authorities (LHAs)	Collective term for the 7 District and Borough councils who have the strategic housing function in Northamptonshire
27	New Economics Foundation (NEF)	This is a national ‘think tank’ which aims to encourage politicians, policy makers and organisations to put the care of people and the Earth at the heart of economics and business development in our society, along side the sustainable creation of wealth and well being
27a	NCC	Northamptonshire County Council

No	Item	Definition
28	Personalisation teams	Formerly Care Management, these are the people within Social Services (HASS) who assess people's applications for care services. They process applications and decide whether people are eligible for care support. They also tell people about their Individual Budget awards and provide advice to help people find the right care or support provider for them
29	Rent to Buy schemes	This is where a person or organisation buys a home to rent out to others. Many families have been exploring this for their loved ones. Some issues arise for families in doing this where their loved one needs to claim housing benefit to help them pay the rent. Under HB rules benefit is not payable to people who rent a property from a family member. If HB offices can see that a genuine tenancy exists they may agree to pay HB. Letting the property via a lettings agency or a trust would help HB offices feel more confident in this arrangement
30	Residential care	This is a form of care provision where people live in a home with other people and receive care support. People do not always have their own space and have to comply with the rules and timings of the care home. The home takes responsibility for their residents
31	Shared Lives Scheme	This is a form of supported housing. In this model people choose to live with as part of a family, renting a room in their home. They also receive support from the house holder and meals can be provided
32	Shared Ownership	This is where a person is helped to part own their home. Here the customer takes out a mortgage against an agreed percentage of the home's price and pays the supporting body, usually a housing association, a rent on the remainder. This is the most common form of homeownership for people with a learning disability

No	Item	Definition
33	Sheltered housing	Here people choose to live in a kind of community setting and support is available if required. Indeed this is a condition of the tenancy. There are many types or categories of sheltered housing. Low level categories tend to be clustered, they can be separate flats or bungalows, often adapted to help older people live there. Low level schemes (category 1) also have a pull cord 'life line' alarm to help residents call for help. Category 2 or 2.5 or 3 schemes move up in intensity of support. These schemes are often built in a block and a support worker or warden frequently call on residents to check they are ok. Community facilities are available for cooking and social events. These schemes primarily provide housing support. Some people may receive limited care from domiciliary care services. As people's needs increase they often have to move to receive increased support or care.
34	Social Housing	Property is rented to those living in the community who need help to access a home. Some need help because they are on a low income, have a family to support, or because they are vulnerable. Social housing is generally available from Local Housing Authorities and Housing Associations. To access it people need to apply. It can take a long time to be offered a home
35	Supporting People Programme (SP)	Also known as SP, this programme is administered by The County Council but jointly managed with the 7 LHAs, Probation, NHS Northants, and the voluntary sector. Its aim is to provide housing support to help people live independently successfully
36	Tenure	This refers to a type of legal arrangement for living in a home. There are many sorts of legal arrangement. There tends to be two main types, renting or buying.
37	Year 9 reviews	These are undertaken for young people who are vulnerable, when they are at school. Every child who has a learning disability has a review of their needs and aspirations when they are 14 years old to begin helping them, and their families, plan across a range of areas

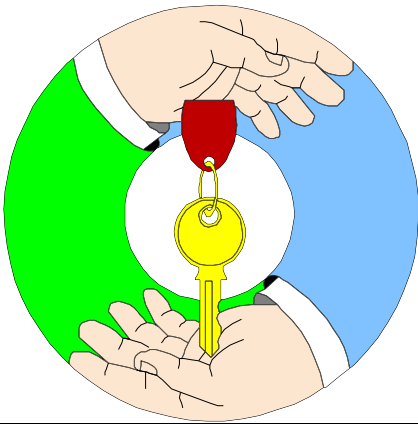
APPENDICES

(1) People We Have Already Helped in Making The Housing Plan

In the process of creating the Housing Plan members of the Finding a Place to Live Group' have supported a number of local 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 with her Dad and we provided some advice and guidance. Hopefully she will soon have a new home.

(2) A List of All Existing Supported Housing and Housing Support services presently funded by HASS and Supporting People

See www.myhomemysay.co.uk 'Useful Stuff' area on page 2, via 'News and Information' section

(3) The Joint Strategy Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2009

This a comprehensive assessment of the health, care and wellbeing needs of the people of Northants, which is undertaken by NHS Northants and NCC. There are a number of key aims within this assessment, one of which is:-

“To support people to live in their community with greater choice and control and to reduce the unnecessary use of institutional services”. (JSNA summary 2009, p2)

Another aim is:-

“To support children and young people to grow into healthy, well educated and independent adults” (JSNA summary 2009, p2)

(3) Proposed Supporting People Programme Changes

Following the release of Northamptonshire County Council's draft budget for 2011-2012, with it aim to save £68 million in the year, there will be significant changes to this programme. At present the detail of these changes are unclear but it is likely that housing support provided through this route in future will be significantly reduced.

(4) Some examples of possible private income sources or other sources of accommodation that the people can explore are:-

- **Private Sector Leasing schemes** – where authorities our people can lease properties directly from landlords. This model has mainly been used in larger cities (like London) people have often targeted landlords with large portfolio's of available housing – which was very much the case during the credit crunch when large numbers of flats were sitting empty and couldn't be sold
- **Buy to let Schemes, Discretionary Trusts and Equity Release** – Whilst these are different all can make it possible for a family, or group of families, to buy property and rent out to family members. Also, in many cases, Housing Benefit may be payable if people and families can prove that the letting arrangement is a 'commercial agreement' and not contrived for the purpose of 'defrauding' Housing Benefit systems. (see Housing Options Website for more details on this)
- **Raising Finance Using 'Bond' issues** – Many Housing Associations have used this means to raise capital for projects. Equally, the issuing of a 'Bond' may be possible within local communities to raise capital for projects that would benefit people in that community or area. There are many examples of Social Enterprise bodies using such methods to raise funds for projects. The Findhorn Community in Scotland has managed to create a number of

community assets by using such as approach after creating its own financial 'body' / arm to do so.

- **Making Better Use of Housing in the General Community** – The adult placement or shared lives model has proved very successful across the UK. In Northants about 85 people are housed and supported via this scheme. There is scope to extend this model further by recruiting more landlords/carers or finding homeowners who may wish to just take in a lodger (where care and support needs may be lower), creating a highly cost effective and community based solution for even more people in the county.
- **Seeking investment from Charitable trusts and the Government's New Social Investment Bank** – Charitable trusts may offer another route to finance for projects as may also the new Social Investment Bank. This has been set-up by the new coalition Government and offers to support projects where members of the community come together and take greater initiative to meet their own needs.

NB – for a more comprehensive list please see www.housingoptions.org.uk