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Housing and Social Inclusion Project

# **MY OWN PLACE!**

Transition Planning for Housing

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A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page features a central yellow sphere with a gradient and a shadow. The word 'housing' is written in white, lowercase, sans-serif font across the middle of the sphere. The sphere is flanked by two semi-circular shapes: a dark blue one on the left and a light blue one on the right, both with a white inner curve.



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Written by Linda Jordan for the NDTi

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## Section 1 – Introduction

The National Development Team for Inclusion has been leading the Housing and Social Inclusion Project since April 2009. The project has been funded by the Department of Health for three years and has worked with a number of local authorities to:

- Design and implement a move from residential care to separate housing and support arrangements aimed at community inclusion
- Develop and implement effective tenancy agreements and staff training on housing rights
- Train support providers to deliver support that promotes community inclusion
- Use an evaluation tool, 'The Inclusion Web', that enables providers and commissioners to quantify the impact of new practices around community inclusion
- Understand the economic implications of the move from residential care to supported living models

During the project, it became clear that there are specific issues around housing for young people moving into adulthood. An event was arranged to offer the sites involved with this project a chance to share ideas and experience and to develop some guidelines for good practice.

At this event, Ingrid Clark, a parent, talked about her own experience as the mum of an 18 year old disabled son, and about how the current system does not follow a clear pathway. She went on to talk about her dreams and aspirations for her son Wilf, and about how person-centred planning, support planning and personalisation are helping her to work out how the things she dreams of can be achieved.

## WILF

Wilf is 18 and was diagnosed as autistic when he was two years old. As a family, we have always wanted Wilf to have an ordinary life. We expected him to be part of his community and to be included. Fortunately, he was able to go to mainstream schools, as at that time our local authority had started to develop inclusive schools for children with autism and other disabilities.



The best thing was that Wilf's younger brother, Charlie, went to the same schools and so they have grown up together with a big network of young people in the community.

Despite Wilf's positive experiences at school, we were not given an opportunity to talk or plan about what would happen to him as an adult, what support and funding is available or what might be possible except for a couple of short sessions with Connexions which were only concerned with finding a Sixth Form placement. Children's services did not do transition planning and adult services wanted to start from the beginning. I was astonished when I was told that Wilf had to have an IQ test to see if he was "eligible" for adult services. This seemed bizarre and outdated. I thought that if he isn't eligible, who is?

Through the Getting a Life programme I found out about person-centred planning, individual budgets and support planning and started by doing a PATH<sup>1</sup> with friends, family and some professionals. Wilf loved the meeting and we set lots of actions to start the ball rolling on thinking about employment, housing, health and social life.

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<sup>1</sup> *Pathways to Getting a Life*, DH, 2011 [www.gettingalife.org.uk](http://www.gettingalife.org.uk)

Now that we know what is possible we are thinking about all of the housing options that we didn't even think applied to somebody with Wilf's disabilities.

I used the PATH to begin doing a support plan that I sent to adult services and my lovely social worker has used that to agree Wilf's individual budget alongside their standard forms. My local authority will be using Wilf's experience to pilot personalised transition planning.

Although there is a lot of work ahead, we all feel that Wilf has the potential and support to move into adulthood with things that are important to him in place and to continue to have a great life.

Ingrid Clark

The event for sites highlighted a number of important issues and challenges. These are set out in further detail in Appendix 2.



## Section 2 – Background

Where we live, how we live and who we live with are among the most important decisions in our lives. Most young people live in families until some time in their late teens or early twenties, when they begin the journey to independent living. They often begin in shared flats or student accommodation before moving on to living alone, with friends or partners.

However, for some young people with disabilities and other support needs, this does not happen. Official statistics show that the majority of adults with learning disabilities live with their families or in residential care. Since the changes brought about by Valuing People, thousands of people have moved from long stay hospitals, campuses and residential care to supported living. But there are still far too many young people moving into adulthood without the knowledge of what their future possible housing options are and how to achieve them. Families too feel that they do not have the information about how their son or daughter can have their own home with the support they need.

The major barriers are:

- Lack of planning with individuals
- Lack of strategic planning leading to holistic multi-agency working
- Many people working in systems not knowing what is possible
- Lack of expectations and aspirations

*Getting a Life* was a three year cross-Government programme that worked with 400 hundred young people and their families to explore how the system could change so that they could move into adulthood with jobs, friends, independent living and good health. One of its outputs was a Housing Pathway that is based on what was learned from these young people, their families and their local education, social care and health systems. Beginning with the barriers, the Pathway built on good practice and on what is known about good transition planning (which includes planning for housing).



## Section 3 - Implementing a Housing Pathway: Principles and Strategy

The Housing Pathway is one of four Pathways into Adulthood developed as part of the Getting a Life programme (see Pathways to Getting a Life, Department of Health 2011). This programme worked with twelve local authorities to identify the changes that needed to take place during transition in order to support young people into adulthood with jobs, independent living, good health and social inclusion.

Although many young people even without disabilities now continue to live in the family home for much longer than previously, it is nevertheless really important that young people with disabilities and their families have good information and are supported to plan so that they have equal access to housing opportunities and can make the right decisions.

The Housing Pathway sets out the most important issues that need to be tackled strategically in a local area, so that commissioning can ensure high quality information and support. Young people and their families will then know about the right housing options and be able to plan for them as they move into adulthood. These options might include home ownership, private or public sector renting.

The key strategic questions for local transition strategy groups are:

- Is there a shared vision across health, social care and education?
- Is person-centred transition planning, including a focus on housing, happening from Year 9?
- Do people have circles of support to help with planning and with accessing natural community activities?
- Is accessible information available about housing options?
- Is accessible information available about the benefits system?
- Do young people and their families meet adults who are already living in their own places?

- Do staff in front line services have a good understanding of housing options for young disabled people?
- Does the local housing strategy fully take on board the housing needs of disabled people, and is it informed by the aspirations of young people and their families?
- Are individual budgets being used to promote independent living?

The Housing Pathway graphic below sets out these issues. It follows the transition planning process.

# HOUSING PATHWAY

JULY 2010  
© Pen mendonca

YEAR 9	YEAR 10	YEAR 11	POST 16
PERSON-CENTRED TRANSITION PLAN & SUPPORT PLAN €	REVIEW PERSON-CENTRED TRANSITION PLAN	REVIEW PERSON-CENTRED TRANSITION PLAN & SUPPORT PLAN €	REVIEW PERSON-CENTRED TRANSITION PLAN & SUPPORT PLAN €
<p>Begin planning for housing and support</p> <p>Curriculum to foster ideas about where young people may live when they get older and that this will change over time</p>	<p>Curriculum options to include opportunities to raise young people's aspirations eg. older young people with learning disabilities talking about living in their own places</p> <p>Families getting more detailed information about housing options</p>	<p>Link housing plan and big career plan so that people think about where they might live when thinking about what jobs they might do</p> <p>Plan for short, medium and longer term, taking into account that things change</p>	<p>Put name on housing register</p> <p>Understand choice-based lettings</p> <p>Know about benefits including housing benefits and tax credits</p>

## THINGS THAT NEED TO BE IN PLACE & QUESTIONS TO ANSWER (Strategy)

**ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: & THEIR FAMILIES ABOUT:**

- Housing options including family investment, shared ownership, mortgages, social housing & private renting
- The local housing strategy
- The places that people with learning disabilities live
- "What's possible" Support for living
- Using Personal Budgets & Direct Payments
- Benefits & housing allowance

**HOW DOES THE LOCAL SYSTEM:**

- Support young people with learning disabilities to spend time away from home? eg. inclusive school trips, club trips, staying with friends, holidays with friends
- Enable young people to use their personal budgets and direct payments for time away from home
- Support families to know about choice-based lettings, family investment, buy-to-let, private sector renting (at parent evenings, and at transition review meetings).

Is the local housing department advising families?  
Is the local housing strategy informed by the aspirations of young people & families? Use assistive technology effectively to support people to live in their own places.



Share with friends  
Support tenant

## Making it Happen

In order to implement the Housing Pathway, some key activities need to take place as young people begin their transition planning.

### School year 9

In school year 9, when young people become 14 and start their transition planning, they and their families need information about housing options. They need to know that as you get older, it is possible for young people to live with friends, on their own or with partners. They can hear from adults with learning disabilities who are living independently and who can talk about how they achieved their homes. They also need to know about the support that is available to help with housing, including benefits and personal budgets. At this stage the information can be fairly general and designed to ensure that young people and their families are aware of the possibilities.

#### Recommendations

- Begin planning for housing in school year 9, at the first transition review meeting
- Make sure that the school curriculum supports young people to think about where they may live when they are older, and about how this can change over time
- Develop accessible information about housing options and make it available for young people and their families at the year 9 review

### School year 10

As young people develop their transition plans, they need the opportunity to help them think about becoming independent adults, and about how eventually they might want to move out of the family home. If they are already in receipt of a direct payment or a personal budget, it is important to make sure that this is used to maximise opportunities to prepare for adult life.

## Recommendations

The local system needs to consider the following:

- How are young people supported to spend time away from the family home doing things they have chosen?
- Are they included in school trips and club trips?
- Are they supported to stay with friends on sleepovers?
- Is support planning being used to enable young people to have time away from home?
- Is the local housing department fully aware of the numbers and location of young people with disabilities at school, so that it can give them good advice and make sure they are included in their housing plans?
- Are young people and their families aware of the local system and how to apply to be on the housing list?
- Are young people and their families aware of family investment, buy-to-let, private sector renting, home ownership and other housing options?

## School year 11

During the final year of compulsory schooling, it is important that young people and their families have the information they need to move on to the next stage. It is recommended that young people and their families receive the following information:

- To know how to apply to be on the local housing register, as this is usually possible from age 16 and it can take many years to be offered a home
- To have all the information they need about welfare benefits, housing benefits and funding streams that are available to support people to live independently.

Even if the young person is staying on at school, it is important that this information is available. If planning does not take place and information is not given at this stage, it could lead to the young person missing out on important opportunities. As well as information about housing options, it is also important that the young person and their family know about assistive technology and community support. A good person-centred transition plan and support plan developed with a circle of support/friends will help to make sure that there is creative thinking around how to provide good support.

As the young person moves into adulthood, their transition plan/support plan can develop with the help of new people in their life. The planning that has gone on at school needs to be built on at college and beyond. It is therefore important that adult social care, health and education services work closely with the young people during the transition years, to avoid unnecessary and repetitive assessments.

Strategic planning and commissioning is much better focused on value for money and outcomes if it is based on the information from young people's person-centred transition plans. Getting a Life sites have used 'Working Together for Change' approach (see Appendix 1 for further information) to achieve more effective commissioning and planning.

## Post -16

As young people move into adulthood, it is critical that their learning programmes have been directly influenced by a person-centred transition plan. Matthew's story highlights the importance of early, person-centred planning for transition.

### **MATTHEW**

Matthew and his family completed a person-centred plan before he went away to residential college and he decided that when he returned, he wanted to live with friends in the local area where his family lived.

During the autumn break in Matthew's final year at college, Matthew and his mum visited some local estate agents and started to find three-bedroomed properties where Matthew could live with a friend and a carer. Matthew chose some streets that he liked, and which were close to transport links, shops and other important places. As they found possible homes, Matthew's mum Kathleen kept his social worker informed but found it hard to get a clear answer about what was happening and what they needed to do next.

In December, the family found out from the social worker that Matthew's care budget had been agreed, but that they would need to find a place for three people to live in, rather than two as they had previously understood. The family started again, looking for four-bedroomed houses that could accommodate Matthew and his friend, another young man, and a carer.

As they got closer to Matthew's return in July, the family got more worried about securing a house. Matthew's friend pulled out of the house share, and so they went back to looking for a three-bedroomed house, knowing that he would have little time to get to know his new housemate after returning from college, as the young

man was still living in the local area.

Matthew's mum had to negotiate with the housing association (which the social workers had selected) as they did not usually buy older properties in the area where Matthew wanted to live. The family found a house that they thought would be suitable, but after the survey, the housing association pulled out of the purchase without informing the family, and they had to start searching again.

Finally, in late May, Matthew's family found another house that needed very little work, and the housing association went ahead with buying and decorating it. Matthew and his new housemate picked the bedrooms they wanted.

On 20th September 2010, Matthew and his friend moved into their new home, in the community where they both grew up. The house is on a quiet pedestrian street with a garden at the front, and a yard at the back. There are many shops nearby and the area has good transport links.

Kathleen, Matthew's mum says, "The house felt like home from the start. Things could have been far better planned, but the outcomes have been much better than we could have hoped. Even though we got there in the end, the journey was not straightforward, and certain things need to change, most importantly making things person-centred, to set a higher standard for the future."





## **Section 4 - Implementing a Housing Pathway: Practicalities for Commissioners and Practitioners. Who Does What?**

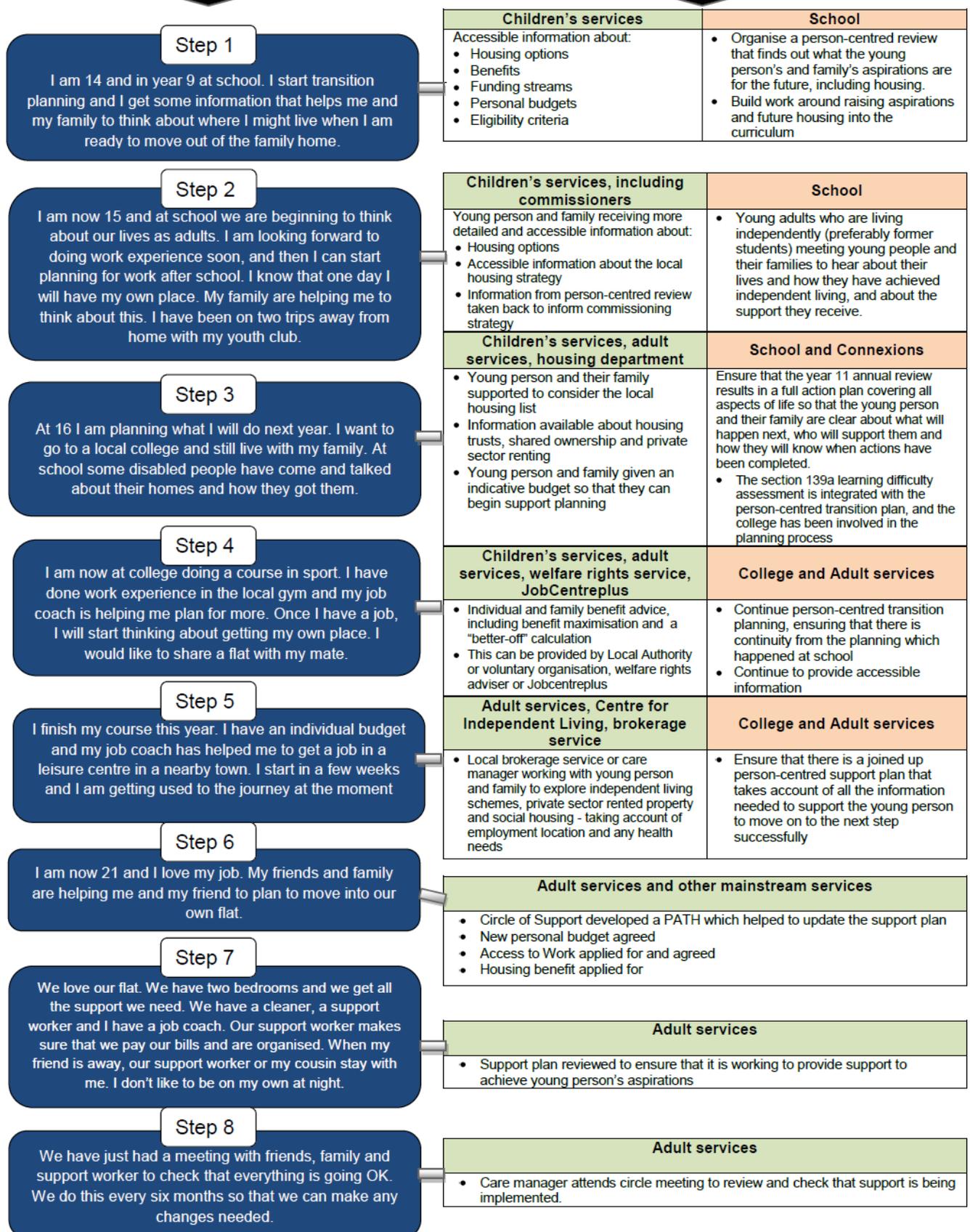
The housing pathway sets out some of the key activities during transition that significantly increase a young person's opportunities to move into adulthood, with high quality information and a plan that will support them to live independently at the time that is right for them. The issue of who should carry out some of these tasks or actions is not easy to prescribe, as each area differs in its structures and practices. Ideally, a local strategic planning group might work out how the principles and strategic pointers can be put into practice in their area.

The table below sets out a brief "ideal model" with some suggestions about how different services and professionals can contribute to a person-centred planning process that ensures a young person's aspirations are known about and supported.

Another example of a way of working that complements this housing pathway was devised by Helen Sanderson Associates and was used effectively by 'Getting a Life' project sites. To read more about 'Working Together for Change' approach see Appendix 1.

## The individual step-by-step pathway

## Activity required from others at each step





## Appendix 1 – Using Person-Centred Information to Commission Good Support

The 'Working Together for Change' approach has been devised by Helen Sanderson Associates. Young people and their families came together with commissioners and service leads to share what had come out of their person-centred reviews. This gave some clear messages to the system about what needed to be in place so that young people could achieve their aspirations.

'Working Together for Change'<sup>2</sup> is a simple, six-stage process that uses person-centred information taken directly from individual reviews, support plans or person-centred plans to influence strategic planning and commissioning. It provides:

- A proven, effective way of working with disabled people and their families to transform local systems and services
- A model for ensuring effective community engagement in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- A way of understanding and measuring the impact of personalisation, especially when taken in conjunction with outcomes-focused reviews
- A way of ensuring effective community engagement in strategic planning for transition



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<sup>2</sup> *Working Together for Change*, HSA, <http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk/training-and-consultancy/our-courses-/working-together-for-change.aspx>

Several of the Getting a Life sites used 'Working Together for Change' and found it provided a very different approach to commissioning, making it clear how important it is to find out what is working and not working for people, and how they would like their lives to be in the future, before committing resources to services.



## Appendix 2 – Housing and Social Inclusion project meeting, June 2011

At the event held in June 2011 for the sites involved in the Housing and Social Inclusion project. The initial focus of this meeting was The Housing Pathway (developed by the *Getting a Life* programme – part of Valuing People Now) which sets out the key things that need to happen during transition in order to maximise young people's opportunities for independent living, choosing who they live with and where they live.

Those involved were keen to explore how planning for housing could be built into transition planning so that young people move into adulthood on a clear pathway, rather than they and their families having to face the barriers that occur if housing is not right from the beginning.

### Working Together

#### Issues and challenges:

- Engagement with families needs to improve
- A need to work with providers to make sure they are offering what people want
- Housing officers and housing experts need to meet directly with families
- Housing officers and providers need to be involved in transition strategy groups
- Education (nurseries, schools, colleges, youth services) need to take more part in raising aspirations
- Professionals supporting young people should get to know them before year 9

### **Possible solutions:**

- Include housing more explicitly in transition planning
- Make sure that housing is included in support planning and resource allocation systems
- Get a much clearer picture of the role of schools
- Work with a specific group of young people in transition to test out or walk through policies and procedures, to check how they work

### **Information**

#### **Issues and challenges:**

- A need to get better at gathering information about young people's aspirations
- Essex have produced a fact sheet on housing for families which will be given out before year 9 as part of a pack
- Families and young people need information before the year 9 meeting
- There needs to be a thorough understanding of benefits in the system, particularly housing benefit

#### **Possible solutions:**

- Make sure not to use jargon
- Develop a housing strategy for people with learning disabilities that includes young people
- Collect better information about young people's housing aspirations through person-centred planning

### **Family Involvement**

#### **Issues and challenges:**

- Families need much more information, need to be more empowered and to be more demanding

- Commissioners need to hear directly from families about future housing aspirations

**Possible solutions:**

- Think differently about working with families – start small and get some good stories/outcomes



## Appendix 3 - Useful resources

- *Feeling Settled*, NDTi, 2011 [www.ndti.org.uk](http://www.ndti.org.uk)
- *Pathways to Getting a Life*, DH, 2011 [www.gettingalife.org.uk](http://www.gettingalife.org.uk)
- Helen Sanderson Associates [www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk](http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk)
- *Working Together for Change*, HSA  
<http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk/training-and-consultancy/our-courses-/working-together-for-change.aspx>
- Housing Options [www.housingoptions.org.uk](http://www.housingoptions.org.uk)
- Golden Lane Housing [www.glh.org.uk](http://www.glh.org.uk)
- People and Places [www.cdsm.co.uk](http://www.cdsm.co.uk)

For further information about the ideas contact the NDTi and ask for:

- Steve Strong about housing and social inclusion issues and
- Linda Jordan for specific issues around the transition to adulthood.