

NDTi Insights give you the most important bits of learning from a piece of work by the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi). We aim to make them quick to read; they point to more detailed materials for those who want more information.

Supported Living: Making the Move

Who should read this?

This paper has been written mainly for people who work directly or indirectly to plan, develop and provide housing and support for people with learning disabilities. It may also be useful to people with a wider interest in housing and support for people with learning disabilities and those involved in housing for people from other 'client groups'.

Background

The first discussion paper from a three year project on Housing and Social Inclusion led by the NDTi - working with eight partners in different regions of England. The project is focusing on how to place the need for community inclusion at the heart of planning and design of housing for people with learning disabilities.

Purpose of Report

Written by NDTi as part of this project to help promote discussion, debate and understanding about obstacles that currently prevent adults with learning disabilities from living in their own home in the ways that they want.

Plain English summary

'Making the Move' has been written to help people planning and managing housing and support services for people with learning disabilities.

It explains the difference between supported living and residential care.

It describes different types of housing and support that should be available for people, and how to go about putting them in place.

Main findings

- Despite evidence that people want more 'non-traditional' housing options, the number of residential care places for people with learning disabilities is continuing to grow, with shared supported housing and residential care continuing to be by far the most common options available.
- The choice of different forms of housing and support for people is still too narrow. Barriers to getting the right type of housing are not just about supply, but also about how we often all think and work in traditional ways.
- The main principles of supported living are that people with learning disabilities own or rent their own home, with clear housing rights, have choice and control over the support they get, who they live with and how they live their lives. Supported living is not one fixed design model and can look very different for different people.
- Some people in supported living arrangements are often still not making fundamental decisions and choices – such as where they live, with whom, who supports them and how this happens. Control over people's lives still, too often, remains with commissioners and providers.
- Ordinary housing options such as shared ownership, renting in the public, not for profit and private sector can work well for most people with learning disabilities but various factors combine to make accessing them complicated.
- Councils are now allocating public sector housing through choice based letting where people can find housing through a range of ways (e.g. internet). This works for a lot of people, but many schemes are not



Main findings – continued

Further NDTi Insights:

Also available in our Insights series is:

[2 The Real Tenancy Test: tenancy rights in supported living](#)

[4 Commissioning services for people with LD who challenge services](#)

The transition of young disabled people into adulthood

www.ndti.org.uk/publications/ndti-insights

This report

A copy of the full report is available at:

<http://www.ndti.org.uk/major-projects/past/housing-and-social-inclusion-project/>

For more information on the Housing and Social Inclusion Project, please visit the NDTi website www.ndti.org.uk or please contact Bill Love on 01225 789135 or bill.love@ndti.org.uk

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accessible to people with learning disabilities who therefore lose out to other groups of people.

- There is no single route that people with learning disabilities (often supported by families and friends) take when looking for housing. Most go to their local authority (Social Services, Housing or Supporting People teams) and some to specialist providers. Often the process is confusing and fragmented and people have little knowledge of their housing rights, and the options that are open to them. Good advice, support and expertise are not always offered, especially where anything 'out of the ordinary' is being sought or when people are going through transitions in their lives.
- For most people with learning disabilities, the ability to live successfully in their own homes will be strongly dependent on the ongoing support they receive. People too often receive support that is provided at a fixed level and tied into where they live – not using staff resources effectively and leaving people with a fundamental lack of choice and control.
- The group model of living as a means of combating loneliness for people doesn't work for everyone. Some people are 'stuck' with people they would not choose to live with, which can exacerbate isolation. Paid workers often spend time 'replacing' friendship in these situations.

Conclusions and key messages

- Residential care may be right for some people, but it should not be the only or the predominant choice of housing for adults with learning disabilities. It may not be a sustainable model of service as personalisation takes hold.
- Our main focus should be on maximising housing rights, choice, control and independence. This needs equality of access to mainstream housing to enable people to live more equal, ordinary and socially inclusive lives.
- Access to a much wider range of models and funding sources is needed, including: home ownership (including shared ownership schemes), family funded models, private and public sector rented housing, Extra Care, Community Living Networks and Shared Lives (formerly Adult Placement).
- As new models emerge and more people move to live in different housing options, we need a wider, more flexible mix of support including: assistive technology, Extra Care, Homeshare, Good Neighbour schemes, Community Living Networks, Timebanks and live-in carers. These can help people get the right amount and type of support and promote their dignity whilst still ensuring that they have their own space and live the way they choose.
- There is a need for a greater focus on helping people to make friends of choice and connect with communities more naturally and less emphasis on arrangements where people have to live in groups they would not choose.
- When developing shared housing, it is critical that the property design achieves the right balance between individual private space and communal space.
- Overall there needs to be a wider range of housing and support options that ensures people with Learning Disabilities have real choice and control in where and how they live. This will require national and local effort to shift resources and change structures that have been geared to 'old' ways of doing things.