insights
from the
National Development Team for Inclusion

Housing Choices
for People with
Support Needs

Plain English Summary

The National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) believe that people should have choice and control over where they live and the support that they receive. Although there are a lot of different housing options for older people, people with learning disabilities and people with mental health problems, we know that a lot of people are living in traditional forms of housing and support such as residential or nursing care. Part of the reason for this is a belief that they are cheaper than other options. To get people talking and thinking about all of the different alternatives, NDTi have looked at the costs and characteristics of different housing and support options. This Insight summarises this work.

Main Findings

Cost and cost-effectiveness of housing and support options:

We reviewed the evidence available on the cost and cost-effectiveness of residential care compared to other housing and support options. This evidence is very limited in both quantity and quality. However, there is no robust evidence to demonstrate that any one housing and support model is more cost effective than any others.

Our conclusion from this is that commissioners (and indeed providers) cannot justify taking decisions between different models on cost alone – other than going for the cheapest option without considering outcomes for people.Given this, commissioners should explicitly base decisions on the extent to which different approaches promote rights, inclusion, choice and control - the non-price factors expected by current health and social care policy.

A significant reason identified for commissioners not considering all housing and support options (beyond residential care) is a lack

Who should read this?

Commissioners and providers of housing and support (in all its forms), people who use services and their families (and representative organisations), academics and policy makers.

Background

Although current health and social care policy and legislation emphasises person-centred approaches and use of community based options and discourages residential settings which are segregated from family and communities, this does not appear to be having a significant impact on current patterns. It appears that we are currently seeing a shift away from options that offer choice and control, towards more traditional residential care – with these developments being implemented on the rationale that residential care is lower cost.

Purpose of Work

To stimulate debate about the continued over reliance and possible increase in use of residential care, and to encourage more serious exploration and consideration of alternative housing and support options.

of common understanding about terms and definitions. From our evidence search, we therefore proposed a typology of different housing and support options in 8 main categories and 21 sub categories. The typology can be found here - https://www.ndti.org.uk/uploads/files/Housing_Choices_Discussion_Paper_2.pdf.

These different options vary in terms of the choice, control, rights and inclusion they offer. We mapped these characteristics against those desired outcomes in a number of diagrams and tables that illustrate these characteristics. Clear differences emerged between different options, as can be seen here - https://www.ndti.org.uk/uploads/files/Housing_Support_Paper_3.pdf.

Conclusions and key messages:

From these findings and from discussion and debate generated from sharing the reports, we have identified a number of policy and practice recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1.** Government, research bodies and local authorities should invest in a research programme to address the lack of evidence to inform effective commissioning.
- **Recommendation 2.** Given residential care offers demonstrably less rights and control than most other options, there should be a fundamental review of registered care regulations to consider how to increase people's rights and control.
- **Recommendation 3.** People for whom it is proposed they move into residential care or similar provision (and thus lose certain key rights), should have a statutory right to independent advocacy and authoritative information to assist around that decision.
- **Recommendation 4.** A national programme is required to provide training and information on housing options and their characteristics so that commissioners can take more informed decisions about housing and support.
- **Recommendation 5.** A similar programme of support should be developed for providers along with best practice advice and materials on maximising people's rights, choice, control and community inclusion within the current legal frameworks (pending action on recommendation 2).
- **Recommendation 6.** Government should amend, clarify and strengthen regulatory responsibilities so that rights, choice and inclusion receive greater attention and, in particular, models that accord housing rights deliver on that promise.

Related Reports

Housing Choices Discussion Series:

https://www.ndti.org.uk/resources/publications/housing-choices-integrated-discussion-paper

including:

Paper 1 - What is the evidence for the cost or cost-effectiveness of housing and support options for people with care or support needs?

Paper 2 - A proposed typology of housing and support options.

Paper 3 - Characteristics of housing and support options: Inclusion, rights, choice and control

Paper 4 - Policy and Practice Recommendations

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