

Learning Disability Housing Plan 2012 – 2015

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Contents

Page 3	Foreword
Page 4	Executive Summary
Page 6	Introduction, Definition of Learning Disability
Page 7	.....	Fair Access to Care Services, Scope, Policy Context
Page 8	.....	National Context.
Page 9	.....	Local Context
Page 10	.....	Current Accommodation Type used by People with Learning Disabilities
Page 14	.....	Current Housing Options
Page 20	.....	Support Options
Page 21	.....	Use of Assistive Technology
Page 22	.....	Personalisation
Page 27	.....	Consultation & Engagement
Page 29	.....	Implementing the Plan
Page 37	.....	Governance and Operational Structure
Page 41	.....	Consultation & Engagement, Future Actions
Page 45	.....	Appendix 1

Foreword

Many people with learning disabilities still live in institutionalised residential settings or at home with family carers where there are limited opportunities for inclusion in community and social networks.

The perception has always been that for people with learning disabilities, housing is something special, to be arranged by Adult Social Services departments. There is the occasional good news story, but there is no real choice for people with learning disabilities and their families.

In Wirral, we want to change that and have therefore created a housing plan that we believe gives people with learning disabilities the same choices as those without a disability.

We want to enable access to good, appropriate, housing in the right place with the right type of support.

This plan spans 3 years and will be a 'live' document that will change as services develop, legislation changes and the needs of people with a learning disability in Wirral change.

Residents of Wirral with learning disabilities need to know what they can expect and what they can contribute to their community. Through ensuring that as many people with learning disabilities as possible are assisted to have their own home, or a place where they choose to live, we will be helping people develop community connections, networks, and genuine friendships, which will give people with learning disabilities the opportunity to have productive work and social lives.

Everybody, whether they have a disability or not, needs to know that they have a safe and secure home and know exactly what their legal rights are. On Wirral, we will be looking closely at all existing and future arrangements to make sure this happens.

Through this plan we hope to meet the housing needs of all people with Learning Disabilities in Wirral, and would look to work effectively with partners such as Carers, Housing Associations, private landlords, the Community and Voluntary and Care and Support Providers

It is only by this approach that true inclusion can achieve fruition and we fully endorse the plan and its values, ambitions, priorities, and partnerships that will result in real action.

We give our most sincere thanks to everybody that has participated in the development of this plan, particularly the Wirral residents who have a learning disability and their family members whose contribution has been invaluable.



George Davies
Joint Deputy Leader of Wirral Council
Cabinet Member – Housing and Community Safety



Anne McArdle
Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care & Public Health
Chair of Wirral Learning Disability Partnership Board

Executive Summary

People with learning disabilities are amongst the most socially excluded and vulnerable groups in society today. Only a small number have jobs, live in their own home or have any real choice over who cares for them. Such people have the right to be full members of the society in which they live. This means that they should have the same rights as other members of society and be able to choose where they live and what they do to be as independent as they want to be.

Choice of accommodation, the “where and how”, is critical for health, well-being and quality of life for every person, regardless of whether or not they have a disability. However we do recognise the difficulties that people with learning disabilities face in the housing market. They want and expect the same opportunities as the rest of the population, including access to a range of accommodation options in order to live more independently in the community and if necessary be supported to achieve this.

This plan which has been developed by the Housing Sub-Group of the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board sets out proposals for the future provision of accommodation with care and support for people with Learning Disabilities in Wirral.

This plan has been developed in the context of key government policies. In particular, the Valuing People White Paper 2001 (and its successor Valuing People Now), that sought to enable people with learning disabilities and their families to have greater choice and control over where and how they live.

This plan also builds on the Learning Disability Commissioning Strategy for Wirral (2010) which reflects a will to facilitate people’s access to housing of their choice, including:

- More people receiving personal budgets and direct payments to increase their choice and control over where they live and with whom;
- Local Authority care managers to have an increased focus on home ownership and assured tenancies as a model for housing and support; and
- The use of person centred planning with people still living with families, to establish if that is the person’s preferred option and to instigate plans accordingly.

In order to enable people with Learning Disabilities to have the same choice and options about where and how they live as the rest of the population, we must:

- Ensure that there is a clear understanding of the current evidence base in terms of the numbers and type of accommodation and support/care services being received by people with Learning Disabilities to inform future planning of housing and support needs.
- Ensure people with Learning Disabilities have access to information and advice on the appropriate options for housing and support/care services in Wirral;
- Provide high quality accommodation and support for people who have complex and long term needs to live as independently as they can in the community.

- **Where possible, appropriate and within resources available, to meet the accommodation needs of people with learning disabilities locally near their support networks.**
- **Provide appropriate housing and support for people with learning disabilities who are older or whose carers are older.**

These objectives will be delivered through the following priorities:

- 1. The development of a robust evidence base that will inform future housing plans.**
- 2. The development of an accommodation pathway that provides a range of accommodation options that people can progress through to live as independently as possible**
- 3. To increase information and advice about the range of housing options**
- 4. To ensure that accommodation is provided which is fit-for purpose in terms of disabled access.**
- 5. To increase the range of accommodation/support options available locally.**

For this Housing Plan to accomplish the aspirations of expanding choice in accommodation and support for people with disabilities, partnership working between local housing authorities, social services, health and other local agencies is essential.

Aim of the Learning Disability Housing Plan

To achieve a coherent multi agency Housing Plan for people with Learning Disabilities that works towards the provision of accessible information and advice and housing and support services that removes the barriers to disabled people leading full lives with the maximum degree of independence and choice.

Introduction

The White Paper '*Valuing People*' gave a direction of travel in 2001 by promoting change, choice and greater inclusion for people with Learning Disabilities.

Central government's aspiration is for people with disabilities and their families to have greater choice and control over where and how they live. This means choosing the area they want to live in, the type of accommodation they want, who they want to live with and to be provided with the type of support that meets their need.

The aim of this Housing Plan is to clearly set out how Wirral Council intends to meet the changing accommodation needs of local learning disabled people. '*Valuing People Now*' (2007) states "People with learning disabilities should have more choice and control over where and how they live". This accommodation plan seeks to address this through identifying the aspirations of people with learning disabilities in Wirral, highlights the trends and likely changes that are facing us locally and provides a detailed plan of how partners will work together to meet those aspirations and changes over the coming years

Definition of Learning Disability

The definition of 'learning disabilities' (as referenced in *Valuing People: A new strategy for learning disability for the 21st Century*, Department of Health, 2001) is as follows:

"a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn new skills, with a reduced ability to cope independently, which started before adulthood with a lasting effect on development."

The presence of a low intelligence quotient, for example an IQ below 70, is not a sufficient reason for deciding whether an individual receives additional health and social care support. An assessment of social functioning and communication skills should also be taken into account when determining need. Many people with learning disabilities also have physical and/or sensory impairments.

Learning disabilities does not include all those who have a 'learning difficulty' which is more broadly defined in education legislation.

The definition covers adults with autism who also have learning disabilities, but not those with autism who may be of average or even above average intelligence, such as some people with Asperger's Syndrome. However people on the autistic spectrum may have communication difficulties and problems accessing universal health services effectively and should also be treated on the basis of their needs, with similar allowances made as for those with learning disabilities.

Fair Access to Care Services (FACS)

The Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) framework was introduced in 2003 to address inconsistencies across the country about who gets support, in order to provide a fairer and more transparent system for the allocation of social care services.

The principle behind FACS was that there should be one single process to determine eligibility for social care support, based on risks to independence over time. Its aim was to provide a framework to enable councils to stratify need for social care support in a way that is fair and proportionate to the impact it will have on individuals and the wider community, taking into account local budgetary considerations.

An individual's eligibility for statutory support is determined following assessment, which considers four key areas:

- The ability and freedom that the individual has to make choices which affect his/her life.
- Health and Safety including freedom from harm, abuse and neglect.
- The ability to manage personal and other daily routines.
- The involvement of the individuals in wider family life and community life.

Each of these four areas of everyday life is assessed according to the level of risk they present. These levels of risk are:

Critical: For people with the most severe or urgent needs e.g. where there is immediate risk of significant impairment to health or major harm/danger to the individual or others, or major risk to independence now or in the next few days.

Substantial: For people whose needs are serious, but not critical e.g. where there is risk to independence now or within three months.

Moderate: For people who have needs but can manage moderately well e.g. where there is risk of some impairment to the health and wellbeing to the individual and/or others and some risk to independence within the next 12 months.

Low: For people who have slight needs and can manage most aspects of daily living e.g. where there is little or low risk to independence.

Wirral Adult Social Services has taken the decision that, only those people with learning disabilities who have been assessed as critical and substantial are eligible for social care services.

Scope

This Housing Plan aims to prioritise the housing aspirations of People with Learning Disabilities that are known to Wirral Councils Adult Social Services and to ensure that appropriate advice, guidance and assistance is given to those individuals who are not identified as eligible for social care services.

Policy Context

The Government White Paper 'Valuing People', issued in 2001, sets out the policy framework for people with Learning Disabilities. It is underpinned by a joint Health and LA circular (HSC 2001/016; LAC (2002)23)

which provides statutory guidance to authorities regarding the implementation of the requirements of 'Valuing People'. Further guidance on the housing and support options of people with learning disabilities was issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Department of Health in 2002.

In 'Valuing People' the Governments objectives for housing are:

"To enable people with Learning Disabilities and their families to have greater choice and control over where and how they live.....by increasing the range and choice of housing open to people with learning disabilities in order to live as independently as possible.....and to ensure that people with learning disabilities and their families obtain advice and information about housing from the appropriate authorities"

'Valuing People' 2001

This has been further expanded upon in the joint circular:

"People with Learning Disabilities should be given a genuine opportunity to choose between housing, care and support options. Local councils should therefore ensure that all housing and support options are considered when they are exploring the future housing, care and support needs of people with learning disabilities and their families. These options should include small-scale ordinary housing, supported living and village and intentional communities as well as residential care. None of these should be ruled out."

HSC2001/016; LAC(2002)23 Summary Para 8

The four values that underpin the white paper have a special meaning for housing. They are:

- **Having Legal and Civil Rights:** Meaning that People with learning Disabilities should have the right to full access to all types of housing and they can become tenants or owners of their own home, should they so wish and have the capacity to do so.
- **Supported Independence:** Means planning ahead with people with Learning Disabilities and their families / carers by providing easy-to-read information and advice on the various housing and support options to assist in the move to appropriate housing.
- **Having more choice;** Means the provision of a range of different housing options so that people with a learning disability can have choice in deciding how and where they live, who they live with and be able to live as independently as possible.
- **Being included:** Meaning having the same housing options as other people including ordinary general-needs housing within the borough so that people with Learning Disabilities are able to lead fulfilling lives and are included within society.

National Context

According to a recent study carried out by Cordis Bright (commissioned by Mencap), there are 172,000 people with a learning disability in England and Wales known to Social Services Departments.

The most common housing arrangements for people with a learning disability known to Social Services currently are¹:

Housing Arrangements	Number of People	Percentage
Living with family or friends.	65,000	38%
Living in Registered Care Homes.	38,000	22%
Living in Supported Accommodation.	27,000	16%
Living as Tenants in accommodation provided by LA's and Housing Associations.	20,700	12%
Living in Privately Rented Accommodation.	5,700	3%
Living in owner occupied / shared ownership homes.	4,200	2.5%
Living in Adult Placement Schemes.	4,100	2.4%
Living in registered nursing homes.	2,800	1.6%
Living in acute/long-stay healthcare residential facilities or hospitals.	2,000	1.2%
Living in other temporary accommodation.	1,600	1%
Living in sheltered housing/extra care sheltered housing.	1,000	0.6%

Table 1: Housing arrangements for all people with Learning Disabilities known to UK Social Services Departments.

A survey conducted by Mencap (2011) showed that most people with a learning disability want to live independently, whether by themselves (43%) or by sharing a home with friends (30%). The survey showed that 13% want to live with another family in the community, and another 13% expressed a desire to live in residential care.

Over the next 15 years, based on population growth of adults with a learning disability known to social services (and assuming no change in the make-up of where people live), the following provision will be needed in England and Wales:

- **19, 860** new registered care home places.
- **14, 122** extra supported accommodation places
- **10, 766** extra general needs tenancies with local authorities and housing associations.
- **2, 967** extra private tenancies.

The research also found that it is likely that an additional 33,000 people with a learning disability will continue to live with their parents or family. These requirements are likely to change, with more emphasis being placed on the provision of supported accommodation and other forms of independent living arrangements, and the move away from residential accommodation to living independently in the community.

Local Context

Wirral's population has declined from over 355,000 during the 1970s to 308,800 in mid-2010. The population is skewed towards older age groups, with a lower proportion of younger adults and a higher proportion of older people in Wirral than the averages for the rest of England and the North West.

Emerson and Hatton's work on the prevalence of learning disability (Emerson and Hatton, 2004) offers estimates that have been used by the Department of Health's Learning Disability Task Force. They have estimated that the current 'true' prevalence of learning disabilities in England (i.e. the total number of people with learning disabilities) is 2% of the population but the proportion of people using specialist learning disability services is 0.46%. Based on this research, prevalence of learning disability in Wirral

¹ Percentages do not fully add up to 100% as numbers have been rounded up. The numbers are estimates based on FOI requests, POPPI and PANSI, Emerson & Hatton (2008), NI145

amongst Wirral adults for **2011** (18 years and above) can be estimated:

- 1144 with moderate and severe learning disabilities expected to be using services (administrative prevalence) of which 166 at age 65 and above;
- Approximately 5,600 true prevalence (total) including people with mild to moderate learning disabilities.

The following table estimates the age profile of people with Learning Disabilities in Wirral in 2011 and the projections over the next twenty years.

People aged 18-85+ predicted to have a Learning Disability in Wirral*					
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
People aged 18-24	687	612	537	533	569
People aged 25-34	794	911	914	837	774
People aged 35-44	972	806	808	929	947
People aged 45-54	1016	1023	910	759	765
People aged 55-64	916	883	934	936	829
People aged 65-74	649	736	773	750	799
People aged 75-84	418	432	469	554	580
People aged 85 and over	155	181	212	251	297
Total number of people aged 18-85+ with a Learning Disability on Wirral.	5607	5584	5557	5549	5560
*POPPI/PANSI Website					

Table 2: Estimation of Adults with Learning Disabilities in Wirral aged 18-85+

Based on the Mid year ONS projections (May 2010) for the next 20 years the above estimates show the percentage of people with Learning Disabilities to be in the region of 1.8% of the total population. As with the trend in the number of people with Learning Disabilities this remains static up to the period 2030.

Current accommodation type used by people with a learning disability

Determining the current types of accommodation occupied by people with Learning Disabilities is difficult. Many people may not be receiving care or support services by any statutory agencies and are often living at home with family members. Whilst the following section gives an overview of the current information held we are committed through the development of the Plan to understand the full picture to help determine additional accommodation needs both for short and long term planning.

The following map of Wirral shows the geographical positioning of all Nursing, Residential and Supported Housing Services by postcode.

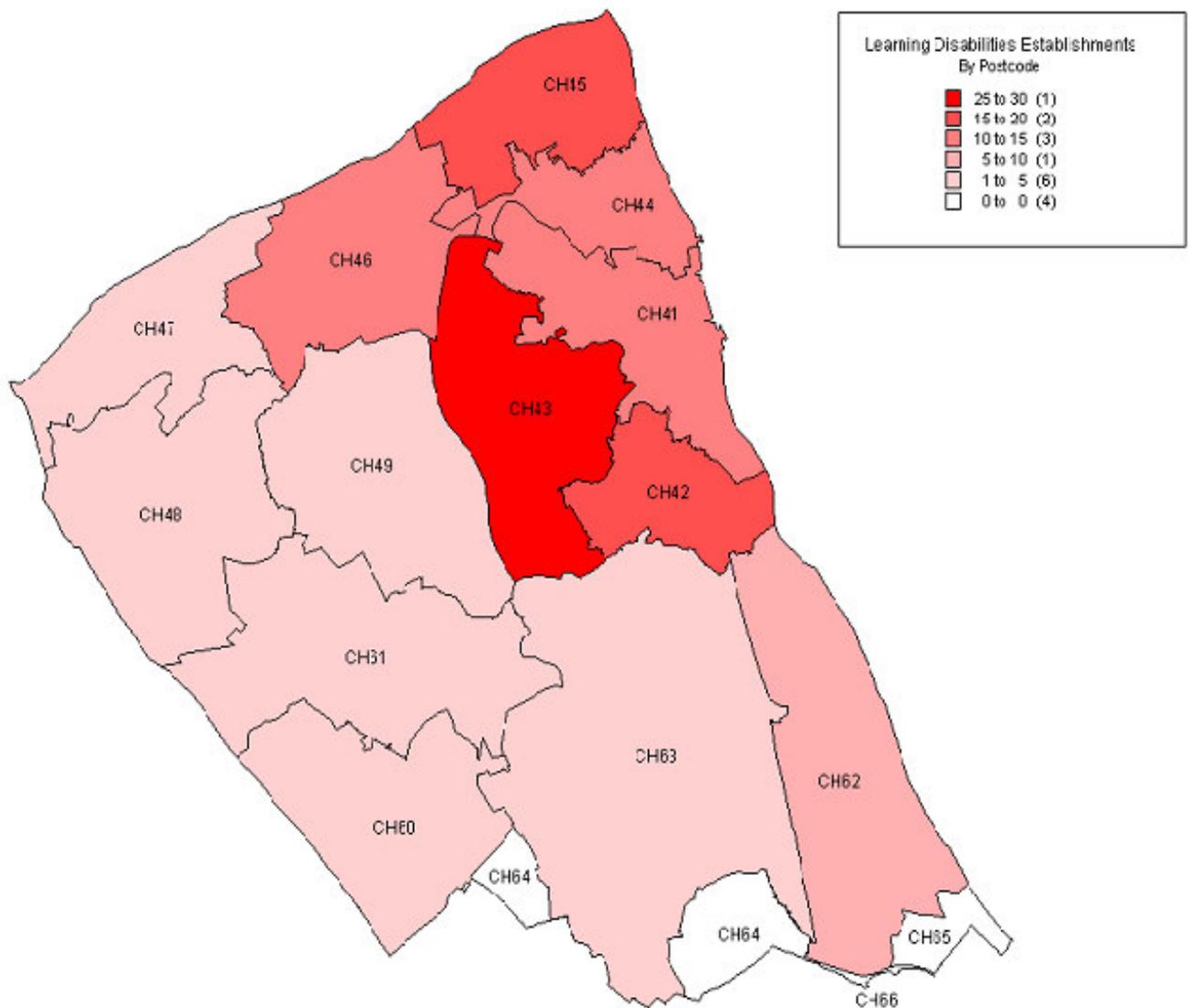


Figure 1: Geographic location of all specialist housing services for people with Learning Disabilities.

The Wirral Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)² indicates that, as at March 2011, the people with Learning Disabilities known to DASS were accommodated in the following settings:

- 122 people in residential/ nursing care homes
- 170 people in supported housing schemes
- 16 people in adult placements
- 14 people in independent / NHS long stay hospitals

This makes a total of **322** people

DASS have further advised that there are approximately **614** people with learning disabilities who are living with carers (in most cases, family members of varying ages)

This makes a combined total of **936** people with learning disabilities known to DASS in various accommodation types.

² JSNA – Joint Strategic Needs Assessments describes the process that identifies current and future health and wellbeing needs in light of existing services, and informs future service planning taking into account evidence of effectiveness.

The Chart opposite shows the number of people with learning disabilities known to Wirral Council the categories include³;

- **Settled Accommodation** –includes owner occupier/shared ownership, tenant (local authority or private landlord), living with parents, accommodation supported by staff or resident caretaker, adult placement scheme, probation hostel, sheltered housing mobile accommodation for Gypsy/Roma or Traveller
- **Unsettled Accommodation** – includes Rough sleeper/squatting, temporary accommodation accepting self referrals, refuge, temporary accommodation by Local authority (e.g. bed and breakfast), Acute long stay hospital/residential facility, registered care/nursing home, prison and any other temporary accommodation.
- **Unknown** – includes unknown accommodation status and those clients who were not assessed in the year April 2010 to March 2011 therefore information on their current accommodation is not, at the present time, held.

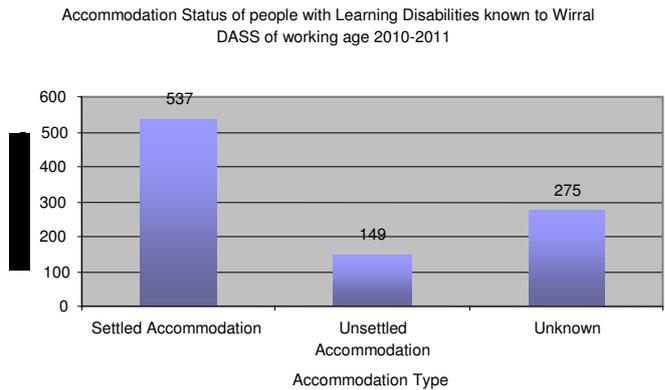


Chart 1: Accommodation status of all people with Learning Disabilities of working age known to DASS 2010/11

NI145 is a performance measure which illustrates the percentage of adults with learning disabilities known to Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities (CASSRs) aged 18-64 in settled accommodation at the time of their assessment or review in the financial year regardless of who had received a service, as well as those assessed and/or reviewed but who have not received a service.

Chart showing NI145 (Percentage of Adults with Learning Disabilities in Settled Accommodation) 2008-2011

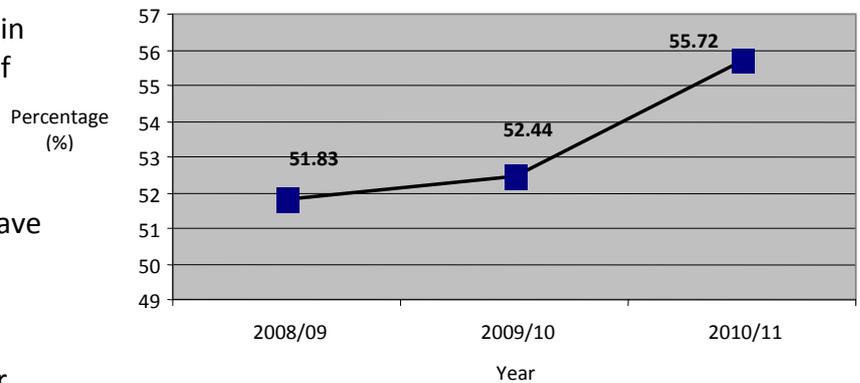


Chart 2: Percentage of Wirral Adults with Learning Disabilities in settled accommodation

The indicator is intended to improve settled accommodation outcomes for adults with learning disabilities – a key group at risk of social exclusion.

People with Learning Disabilities living with Family Members / Other Carers.

It is likely that those people whose accommodation is not recorded are living with their family or otherwise independently outside formal schemes.

³ It will be apparent that the figure of 537 identified in the chart does not tally with the information derived from the JSNA referenced on the previous page. It is however important to note that the JSNA data represents a 'snapshot' whereas the chart above represents 12 months worth of data.

Many carers are reaching retirement age or are already retired. As they grow older carers have increasing health problems. Confronting health issues and death is difficult. Some carers and the person with learning disabilities are mutually dependent on each other for day to day life. All these issues need sensitive handling and time to resolve.

Whilst there is a Carers Register, registration is voluntary therefore not every carer in Wirral will be included on the register. The lack of a comprehensive carers register means that obtaining accurate figures for people needing services is difficult. There are one or two referrals a month for people with learning disabilities aged 40 yrs+ who were not previously known to services.

The table opposite shows the age profile of the carers known to Social Care. Despite the growth in independent living, most people with learning difficulties still live in the family home. As their life expectancy increases, a growing proportion will continue to live with very elderly family members, usually parents, and will survive them. Research carried out by the University of Sheffield reviewed previous research, policy and practice on service provision for adults with learning difficulties living at home with older family carers and spoke with carers, users and staff.

Carer Age Bandings ⁴	
<60	188
60-69	127
70-79	79
80+	38
Not known	182
TOTAL	614

The study found that Older family carers and their relatives wanted effective external systems of support which would serve as a safety net in the event of an emergency and which would put in place an appropriate package of care as a permanent alternative once family care begins to break down.

'Move-on' from the family home generally occurs only after a crisis, rather than as a planned progression.

Historically, people with learning difficulties have been excluded from the more independent types of community placements which have increasingly replaced institutional care, despite many expressing a desire to move on. The perception of the family carer as being a barrier to the greater independence of their relative with learning difficulties over-simplifies complex family relationships and gives a distorted view. However, many family carers do have serious misgivings about their relative leaving home which can stem from a number of factors; such as dissatisfaction with the range and quality of care available, their belief that their relative does not want to leave, and their own inter-dependent relationship with their relative for companionship or practical or financial support.

It is clear from the current evidence base that work needs to continue to be done in identifying the current needs of people with Learning Disabilities. This will be essential in meeting our priorities to ensure that we have a clear understanding of the housing and support need, now and to help in shaping future services.

People with Learning Disabilities placed in out-of-borough services

There are 48 people placed out of Wirral by the NHS or the Department of Adult Social Services. This has reduced from 50 people at February 2010. The breakdown is as follows⁵:

⁴ Data provided by DASS Intelligence Unit

⁵ Wirral JSNA August 2011

Type of Accommodation	Number of People
Secure Hospital or Independent Hospital	6
Nursing Home	2
Residential Home	28
Supported Housing	12
Total	48

Table 3: Numbers of Wirral residents with Learning Disabilities placed out-of-borough as at 2/10

People who are placed out of area must be reviewed regularly by health or social services professionals to ensure the continued appropriateness of their placement and where possible, to start planning their return to Wirral. Nine Wirral people are placed in neighbouring local authorities (Ellesmere Port & Neston or Liverpool) to maintain links with relatives, but it is expected that approximately half of these 48 people could return to Wirral over time.

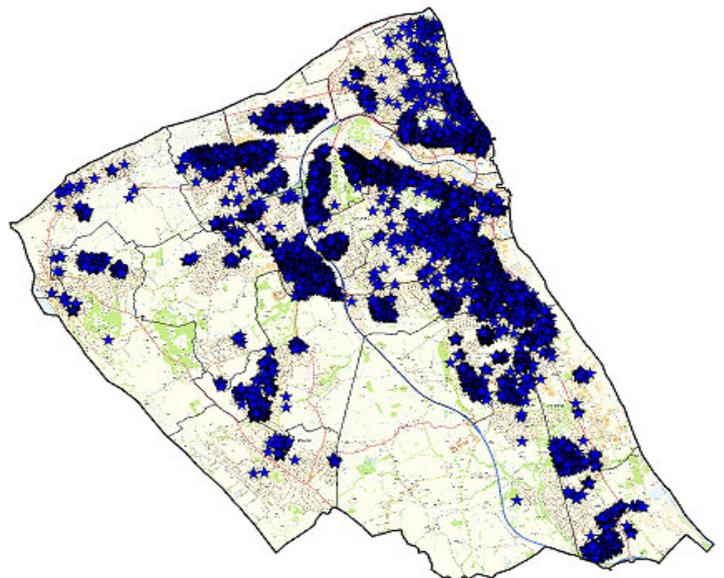
Current Housing Options

Wirral has a mix of accommodation provision including a high percentage of home ownership, housing association stock and privately rented accommodation. There are over 145,000 properties across the borough, of which over 73% are owner-occupied, which is higher than that for England as a whole (67%) but lower than the overall North West average (89%). The private rented sector accounts for just over 14% of the private sector, or nearly 12% of the total housing market which is lower than the rate for England as a whole which stands at 16%. However, a disproportionately high number of private rented properties are in the east of Wirral.⁶

Social Housing , Wirralhomes and the Disabled Persons Housing Register

Social Housing is housing that is let at low rents and on a secure basis to people in housing need. On Wirral, it is provided by not-for-profit Housing Associations / Registered Providers (RP). Wirral has approximately 22,000 social rented properties which have an important role in housing provision. The majority of social housing provision in Wirral is located in the East of the borough. There is a high level of demand for social housing and as demand for the social sector surpasses supply, the Council is actively seeking to provide access to a wider choice of housing.

RSL Stockbase April 2011



Most RP's who own property in Wirral are partners in the Wirralhomes Scheme, the name given to Wirral's Choice-Based Lettings System (CBL). CBL refers to schemes that are designed to introduce an element of choice for people who apply for Housing Association homes. CBL allows people applying for a home to express their interest on available social housing, which is advertised by

⁶ Private Sector Housing Strategy 2007 – 2010 Wirral Council

Wirralhomes in Council 'One-Stop-Shops', the Wirralhomes website (<http://www.wirralhomes.net/>) and the offices of participating Social Landlords.. In July 2012, the Wirralhomes System will be replaced with Property Pool Plus which is a new system managed by Wirral, Liverpool, Halton, Knowsley and Sefton councils, in collaboration with local registered providers of social housing. The new system will operate in a similar manner as Wirralhomes, in as much as applicants will 'bid' on eligible properties. There are some notable differences however, particularly the ability to express interest in properties in other participating authorities regions.

Affiliated with Property Pool Plus is the Disabled Persons Housing Register (DPHR) which was set up in 2007. The DPHR provides a service to clients with disabilities to promote access to available adapted and accessible social rented properties. This approach makes best use of the few adapted properties that become available each year. Applications to the DPHR are made via Wirralhomes, and require an award of Urgent Need Status (UNS) for re-housing on medical grounds or disability. Eligible clients with the UNS award and who require adapted properties are then matched, by a dedicated officer, to available and appropriate properties. The person is then able to express their interest through the usual CBL route.

As of September 2011, over 400 clients were registered with the DPHR which represents an increase of 13% from 2010. There is considerable demand for adapted and accessible properties in Wirral. Between July and August 2011, a total of 41 properties were advertised, with each receiving an average of 41 expressions of interest of which 11 were from clients of the DPHR. Demand data from the DPHR is used to inform the commissioning of future new homes.

Many Landlords already accommodate people who have a learning disability whether that is mild to those with more complex needs. For example , Wirral Partnership Homes, the largest social provider in Wirral have recorded as at May 2011 they have 71 tenants who have a learning disability and a further 62 non tenants living within households. It is important to stress that many of these people are not necessarily FACS eligible therefore data held is of people who may not be recoded via statutory agencies.

Private Rented Sector (PRS)

The PRS is an increasingly important provider of easily accessible, flexible accommodation and more households are recognising the advantages of the sector as a tenure that provides choice. This ease of access, coupled with supporting tenants to sustain existing tenancies, is something Wirral continues to use as both an aid for homelessness prevention and in meeting housing need. This is being achieved and will continue to be delivered through linking services ranging from housing advice and information, tenancy support and assistance with bonds, alongside increased access to accredited private rented homes through a social lettings agency or property shop.

The Council works closely with the private rented sector to promote access to, and ensure homes offered meet high property and management standard through the Landlord Accreditation Scheme (LAS). The LAS is a free, voluntary scheme for private landlords that recognise good quality, well-managed private-rented accommodation.

The principal drawback with the PRS remains the lack of security of tenure. The Housing Act 1996 made Assured Shorthold Tenancies the standard tenancy for those renting privately. The only security this type of agreement gives the tenant is that the landlord cannot evict them for the first six months of a tenancy. After that, however, unless a new tenancy is signed, the tenant can be evicted at any time with a minimum of two months notice.

The current situation creates a lot of problems for tenants. The lack of security provided by an assured

shorthold tenancy has a number of negative effects, including: lack of stability, less power for tenants to enforce their rights, and increased homelessness as a result of eviction.

CASE STUDY: The Keyring Model

The 'Keyring' Model is based on the idea of 'living support networks'. Small networks of up to nine people with learning difficulties are established in a particular neighbourhood, using ordinary social housing. Each individual has his or her own flat, all within walking distance of each other. The process of starting a network begins with the appointment of a 'community living worker' whose role is to help people settle into the network, and to provide continuing support. In return for free accommodation (plus the payment of some household bills) the community living workers commit an average of ten to twelve hours a week to assisting members of the network. The community living worker lives as part of the network, in the same neighbourhood as the KeyRing tenants. Indeed everyone in the network will know where everyone else lives and will have their phone number.

The community living workers are themselves supervised and supported by network managers, who also work directly with tenants. Mutual support by tenants is encouraged and facilitated through a tenants' group in each network.

Residential, Nursing and Supported Accommodation

The development of supported housing and other approaches to housing and support provision, (including own tenancies or ownership), which provide for greater independence and choice for service users than under residential care, has expanded significantly over the decade. As the move towards further personalisation, self-directed support and personal budgets gathers momentum, against a backdrop of ever increasing financial constraints, this has also led to further innovation and a range of new initiatives to improve the cost-effectiveness of service provision.

Supported housing arrangements have usually meant a considerably lower charge against social services budgets than residential care, as the associated housing costs are usually covered by housing benefit or local housing allowance (LHA), and living costs paid by service users themselves, out of their additional benefits and allowances received. The use of supported housing has accelerated in the last four years or so, arising from the personalisation policy, government performance indicators and the efforts by local authorities to make their increasingly tight budgets go further.

There has also been considerable innovation in the housing options available, and in the ways in which those with learning disabilities can be supported more cost effectively, which offer financially viable and more affordable support options for the future. These include shared lives and extra care housing options, together with more flexible and imaginative ways to include unpaid as well as paid personal support, under self-directed support, and greater use of assistive technology.

Residential Accommodation

A residential care service includes both the provision of accommodation and care with on site care being available 24 hours per day. People living in residential care services are outside the mainstream housing market, i.e. there is typically no formal security of tenure within a residential care home.

The major growth in use of residential care provision came when most of the long-term hospitals for people with learning disabilities were closed. Commercial, as well as 'not for profit' providers responded to the opportunity to develop a spectrum of residential care options, ranging from three or four bedroom houses to six bedroom and even larger converted houses.

The six bedroom house became a popular, standard configuration allowing for good economies of scale and efficient shared staffing arrangements, and frequently affording a good level of return for providers. Outcomes for residents were probably generally a lot better than in the long-term hospitals, but arguably, with hindsight, still offering limited choice, independence and outcomes.

There has been an over reliance on residential care as the default option for people not living with their families.

Learning Disabilities Nursing Homes

Distribution By Postcode

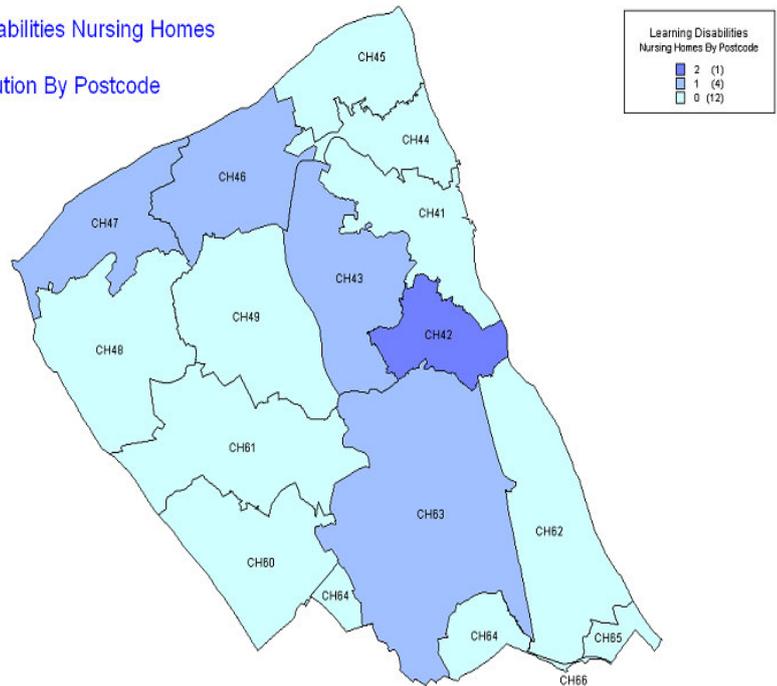


Figure 2: Geographical location of Nursing Care services

In July 2011 in Wirral there were **43** residential and nursing care homes offering **366** beds for people who have a learning disability. As at January 2010, 130 beds in Wirral were purchased by either Wirral Council or NHS Wirral. This is 34.5 % of the total capacity. However, a high proportion of beds are also bought by other local authorities and PCTs placing their citizens out of area, but these people are not necessarily known to local services.

Learning Disabilities Residential Homes

Distribution By Postcode

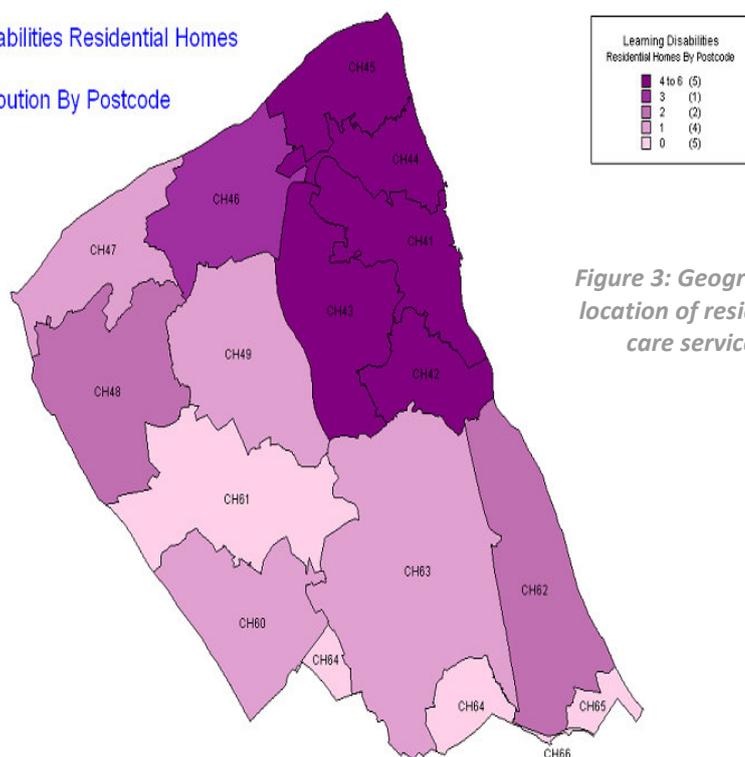


Figure 3: Geographical location of residential care services.

Services have been changing from Residential Care Home status into Supported housing services for more than 10 years.

However, there is increasing emphasis being given to ensuring that people who use services should be offered greater choice and control on how their services are delivered. This approach reflects the moves towards the implementation of the personalisation agenda and applies equally to the services delivered to people with learning disabilities.

The newly published Government policy document: *“A vision for Adult Social Care: Capable Communities and Active Citizens”* acknowledges that some people are placed in residential care because there are limited alternatives.

“Think Local, Act Personal: Next Steps for Transforming Adult Social Care” makes clear that personalisation and community are the key building blocks of the reform agenda which includes a changing offer from providers. The partnership agreement identifies micro-providers and social enterprises offering community based, affordable and niche support as well as larger providers offering more flexible community options. Including a greater focus on the development of suitable housing and supported housing options in the transition from outmoded models and housing stock.

Supported Housing

Nationally, a whole range of supported housing has been developed progressively over the last twenty years or more, to meet diverse individual requirements, taking account of different types, sources and amounts of funding available. The move towards supported housing has been predicated on the basis that many people with learning disabilities would prefer to choose who, if anyone, they wished to live with, and would generally prefer to live either in an individual flat or house, or to share, but only with a small number of other people, personally selected.

Supported housing enables individuals to have their own tenancies, with the flexibility to move house, or remain in the same house, but change their support provider if they wish to. Supported housing care provision does not need to meet the space requirements for housing introduced for residential care under the National Minimum Care Standards in 2002. This has allowed some shared accommodation to be offered relatively cheaply, with smaller bedrooms, without en-suites, and in some cases with limited communal

space.

Learning Disabilities Supported Living Homes

Distribution By Postcode

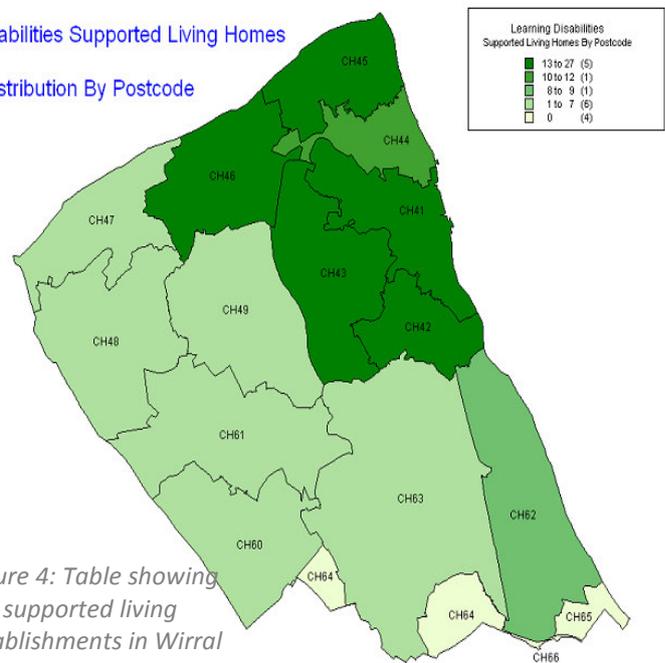


Figure 4: Table showing supported living establishments in Wirral

Care and support is provided to an individual in their home either by the landlord or by another organisation(s) or through a completely personalised 'bespoke' arrangement.

This includes self-contained housing and shared housing.

Locally, the current range of supported accommodation for people with Learning Disabilities is limited. There has been limited development of and growth in housing and support options

for people with learning disabilities. There is a lack of diversity of supply and therefore a limited range of choice of housing and support options. Most of the supported housing is shared accommodation.

Supporting People (SP) funded Supported Housing.

The Supporting People Programme aims to prevent individuals experiencing crises and requiring more costly service intervention; and to enable vulnerable people to live independently through the provision of front-line housing-related support services.

Currently, the SP Programme allocates approximately £2m, representing 24.2% of the overall SP budget, to supported housing for People with Learning Disabilities. This investment provides 222 bed-spaces in total.

Homebuy

HomeBuy is the name given to a range of Government-backed schemes promoting home ownership for social housing tenants and first time buyers (people who have previously owned a home may also qualify). The schemes are available only to people whose household income is £60,000 a year or less.

Home ownership can provide people with learning disabilities with a new way of accessing housing for those who want to live more independently, in line with the general policy to enable disabled people to have as ordinary life as possible. Home Ownership will help break the reliance on a limited number of options available to disabled people, such as the shared living model, where the individual may have limited choice in location, property type and who they live with. Shared ownership remains an option where a substantial deposit and/ or alternative income streams such as family investment or trust funds can be accessed.

There are two main types of Homebuy scheme:

- Shared ownership (part-rent, part-buy)
- Shared equity (part-mortgage, part-equity loan).

Shared Ownership: HomeBuy shared ownership allows a person to buy part of a property, whilst sharing ownership with a HomeBuy agent, typically a housing association. Rent is paid on the housing association's share of the property, with the other share being purchased through a combination of savings and a mortgage.

Shared Equity: Equity loans are only available for newly built properties on specific housing developments in England. With shared equity schemes, the individual buys and owns the whole of the property. The purchase is funded in part by the person, through a combination of mortgage and savings, and in part by an equity loan. Depending on the scheme, the equity loan can fund up to 30 per cent of the property value, and is provided jointly by the Government and the house builder.

Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI)

SMI describes a way a disabled person can buy a property with the help of additional Income Support payments. Income support can meet the interest payments on a mortgage up to £200,000. Property for sale on the open market can be purchased outright but more commonly SMI is used to buy part of a property being sold by a housing association offering shared ownership.

One reason for SMI being linked to shared ownership is that until January 2009 the maximum loan limit was £100,000. In most areas this was insufficient to buy a suitable property outright but it would allow for example, the purchase of a half share of a £200,000 property, so was more affordable.

Obtaining SMI is dependent on meeting the criteria set out in Schedule 3 of the General Income Support Regulations (paragraph 4, sub-paragraph 9). In essence this says:

“Housing cost shall be met in any case where the loan was taken out, or an existing loan increased, to acquire alternative accommodation more suited to the special needs of a disabled person than the accommodation which was occupied before the acquisition by the claimant”

The criteria are:

- The owner must be disabled – the test is eligibility for a disability based benefit. The applicant must be in receipt of DLA and one or more of: Income Support, Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Pensions Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance or income-based Job Seekers Allowance.
- The Applicant must be eligible for an income based benefit (i.e. Income Support, minimum guarantee Pension Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance or income-based Job Seekers Allowance) once eligible
- housing costs have been taken into account
- The Applicant must require alternative accommodation more suited to the special needs of a disabled person

Support Options

In acknowledging that this is a Learning Disability accommodation plan it must also be noted that independent housing is of limited value without the provision of appropriate support. There is not scope in this plan to go into full detail on the range of support options available, but the following list provides a checklist which illustrates the principal variations of support:

Support Type	Description
Family Carer	Half of all adults with a learning disability are supported by relatives. Carers themselves may need support and have rights. This may be periodic respite care, day services or other help. Carers may provide some care, with the individual also receiving other forms of care.
Domiciliary Care	Provision of service in a person's home typically to deliver personal care – Can be provided by an agency or alternatively from an individual.
Floating Support	Teams of workers who move from individual to individual to provide assistance tailored to their needs which may change over time. Support is not tied to a particular tenure type and may be provided in almost any type of accommodation.
Keyring Network	In this model typically 10 disabled people living close proximity to each other but have their own property. Some may share if they wish. In the centre of the network is a project worker whose role is: to provide very limited support to each member such as getting to appointments, paying bills etc; and to help establish and maintain a social network amongst members together for meetings, organising activities and pairing up members building on their abilities. E.g. A physically-disabled but articulate wheelchair user is linked with a physically fit but non-verbal member of the group.
Care Package / Direct Payment / Personal Budget	Each disabled person may be entitled to a package of care following assessment from the Department of Adult Social Services determining national 'Fair Access to Care Services' criteria. Historically, Social Services provided much care directly. Today, most care is contracted with independent care providers. All disabled people now have a right to have a Personal Budget to manage their own package of care if they wish.
Support Tenant	Some disabled people share their house with someone who is also a tenant. Arrangements vary but typically in return for providing some low-level support (like helping to make a meal several times a week, doing a sociable thing with the disabled person each week) the support tenant lives rent free. They may also get a small payment but contribute to household bills.
Community Service Volunteers	Volunteer workers who could also be support tenants.

Table 4: Support options available to people with learning disabilities.

Use of Assistive Technology

The use of assistive technology (AT), or what is also frequently now referred to as personalised technology, in learning disabilities provision, has been slow to catch on, compared with the much higher and earlier take up in the care of older people.. However, this is now changing, as the benefits to service users and financial payback are being increasingly demonstrated in practice and the best practice approaches to adoption are evolving and being communicated.

AT include an increasingly wide range of technology devices and techniques, often combined, to increase service user abilities to live independently, as well as to be able to monitor their actions and risks in the home remotely, so that they are able to live safely, whilst not needing so much on-site support, and thereby reduce both unnecessary staff intrusion and staff support costs. Applications have enabled people to have more confidence that they can operate unsupported at times and reassure them that help will be alerted if problems arise, increasing 'home alone' time where desired, reducing hours of support needed during the

day, and also, significantly, at night, both in relation to 'waking nights' and 'sleep-in' support.

Applications are frequently low cost and include activity monitoring systems, using sensors, which can provide evidence, for example, of service user activity at night and help draw conclusions regarding whether a sleep-in staff resource is really needed on-site, or whether the home can be linked to remote support, so that assistance is only provided on an ad hoc 'as needed' basis, shared between more service users, thereby saving costs.

Tele-care, the wider range of AT of which activity monitoring forms a part, commonly consists of a set of monitoring devices, linked to a dispersed alarm unit that can call for help if needed, either from nearby staff (or relatives), or via a Central Control monitoring service. Monitoring devices will typically be of two types:

- Environmental monitors, like intruder, smoke, fire, temperature extremes Sensors can provide information on a variety of predetermined situations, to send alerts to pre-determined telephone numbers as pre-set protocols – for example, to send warnings about safety issues, such as in relation to fires, residents moving about, leaving the premises etc.
- Devices to monitor or assist a person, including in relation to fall detection, enuresis alarms and epilepsy alarms. These are referred to as Telehealth (using remote vital signs monitoring equipment to determine someone's state of health, to allow earlier intervention than otherwise – for example, to check whether medication has been taken at appropriate times, coupled with a prompt system, to remind the individual when to take their medication.)

In addition, very simple to operate mobile phones and land-line handsets can be used for more able service users, to enable them to more readily get in touch with support staff if they need to, particularly when they are out in the community. AT needs to be focused first on addressing the particular support needs of each individual, and identifying opportunities to help support them, where practicable, with specific assistive technology solutions, to improve their safety, independence and well-being.

Whilst some applications may be capable of providing early, immediate benefits, the learning curve for individuals to learn to use other AT equipment effectively may be much longer, for those with low capability and high support needs, requiring coaching and support over a considerable period of time.

Deployment of AT where individuals may still be living with parents at home can also help defer or avoid the need for a move into residential care, and can more widely provide benefits to carers, in reducing their support workload and helping them to better manage risks.

Personalisation

The policy of Personalisation aims to give people greater choice and control over their lives and is at the heart of the long term, cross-party goal of public service transformation. It springs from the belief that people themselves ultimately know best how to make their lives work well and that public expectations have changed – people are less deferential than they were, even 20 years ago, and expect services to be tailored to their particular needs and aspirations

In the UK, the focus for personalisation has, so far, been strongest in adult social care and support. The 'Putting People First'⁷ vision of the last Government set out strong cross sector commitment for the

⁷ *Putting People First: A shared vision and commitment to the transformation of Adult Social Care, HM Government, Dec 2007*

personalisation programme and was a significant step towards delivering personalised care services, but has represented just one element of a much broader programme to transform public services across the piece.

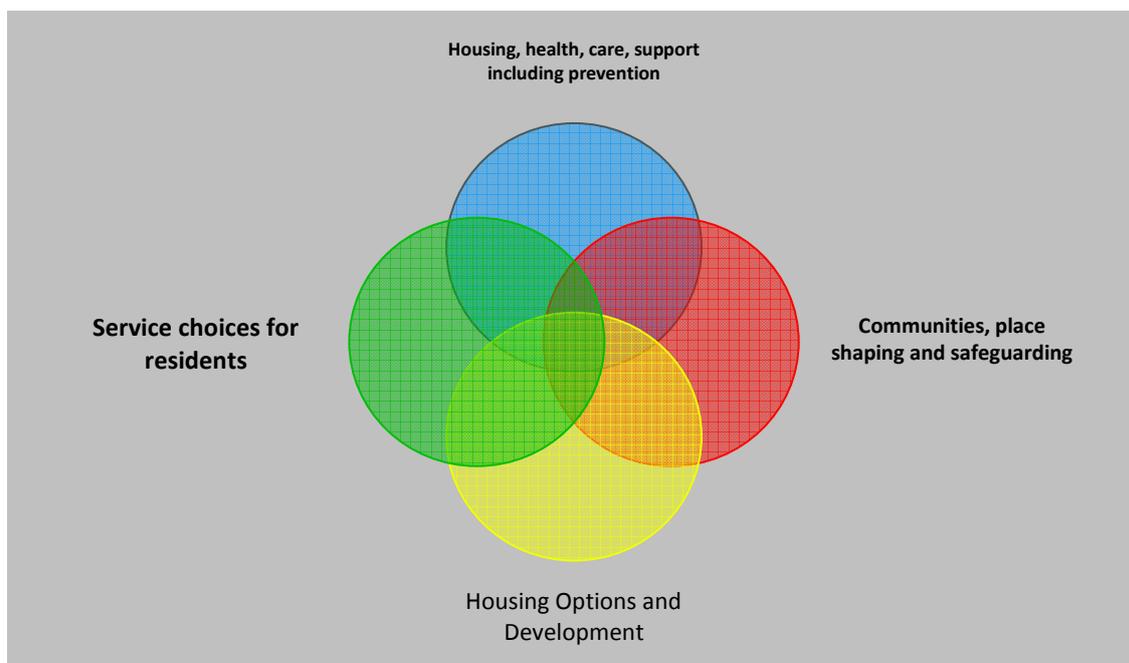
The 'Big Society' public sector reform programme, as well as earlier reports from the Cabinet Office such as 'Power in People's Hands'⁸, supports the principles of personalisation – to put more power and opportunity into people's hands – principles that are seen as key to delivering responsive services that meet people's demands and expectations in the 21st century.

The principles of personalisation are not systematically embedded in the policies and practices of mainstream housing providers, local authority housing providers or of strategic housing authorities. Strands of housing policy and practice are, however, increasingly allowing and encouraging customers to exercise choice and control, such as:

- Choice-based lettings – an accepted means of matching individuals' aspirations with the housing available.
- The new focus on outcomes for tenants and tenant scrutiny, including the Local Offer, within the Tenant Services Authority's new regulatory system for all social housing tenants.
- A range of financing options from full rent to full purchase.
- An increased focus on 'customer insight' and developing service menus.
- Accessible information and advice on housing options to support greater choice.
- Tenant Management Organisations, Commonhold and Community Land Trusts – providing collective choice for ownership and management.
- Flexible and person-centred housing related support for people regardless of where they live

⁸ *Power in People's Hands: Learning from the world's best public services, Cabinet Office July 2009*

Breaking the housing and community service offer down into four service areas allows personalisation to be understood differently in different circumstances. The four areas are:



Personalisation and community based services are the key building blocks of a reform agenda, shaped around an individual's own expertise and resources. When people need ongoing support, this should help them to retain or regain the benefits of community membership including living in their own homes, maintaining or gaining employment and making a positive contribution to the communities they live in.

Personalisation and self directed support is about much more than Personal Budgets, it is about understanding and establishing the key principles and ensuring that all customers have a 'personalised' approach to the provision of their own care and support.

Self-directed support should be available wherever people live, including in residential and nursing homes. Simple but powerful person-centred approaches to practice have been shown to work within such settings – without additional costs - helping people retain their dignity and stay connected to their families, friends and communities.

- Personalisation- increasing choice and control
- Quality – driving improvement in care standards
- Safeguarding – ensuring vulnerable people are safe
- Economic wellbeing – access to employment and appropriate benefits
- Carers – providing services, breaks, support and training
- Supporting Independent Living – early intervention and prevention
- Ensuring Value for Money – effective and efficient provision and intelligent commissioning

Personalisation and the associated policies and procedures that underpin it represented a significant shift in the way that the Council supports people who use services. Activity in this area is subject to change, reflecting national and local developments; consequently the Council needs to review continually the way it

works, it aims to enhance the quality of life for people who have care and support needs through accessing and receiving self directed assessment and a personal budget; it, therefore, needs to ensure that its policies and procedures are appropriate and robust to support the people who use services.

Two national guidance documents have shaped this thinking. Putting People First: a shared vision and commitment to the transformation of adult social care (Department of Health: 2007) and the Think Local, Act Personal Partnership (TLAP) in 2010 both give clear guidance for organisations engaged in change and personalising services.

TLAP states that personalisation and community are the key building blocks of a reform agenda, shaped around an individual's own expertise and resources. When people need ongoing support, this should help them to retain or regain the benefits of community membership including living in their own homes, maintaining or gaining employment and making a positive contribution to the communities they live in. Experience has shown that most progress in implementing personalisation is made where:

- Local leadership focuses on cultural change, just as much as systems change, encouraging concentration on outcomes determined by people and communities and engaging solutions beyond the narrow definitions of social care.
- People have real control over the resources used to secure care and support, with commissioning strongly guided by their decisions.

Housing, health, care, support including prevention

Housing and housing support are integral elements of an individual's care and support. They can also play a major role both in preventing situations from deteriorating and in delivering speedy and sustainable responses to crises. DCLG has emphasised the contribution of Supporting People to early intervention and prevention services and how the Quality Assessment Framework and individual support plans demonstrate that some services are already flexible and person centred. Working with people as individuals has increased their likelihood of finding settled accommodation solutions, and this has had a measurable impact on the number of homeless people and people living in bed and breakfast accommodation.

People can be helped to thrive by finding appropriate settled housing solutions as their circumstances change, and having more scope to live independently. If people are generally more settled and under less stress, suitable solutions that support independent living and are less expensive than residential care options can often be found.

Communities, place-shaping and safeguarding

Changes to investment programmes, and new measures around involvement, are starting to deliver a new focus on 'place'. The Homes and Communities Agency's Single Conversation and 'Local Investment Planning process'⁹ is re-focusing housing investment so that decisions are made in the context of other capital investment being made in a place, and the 'Duty to Involve'¹⁰ is ensuring that communities are increasingly involved in developing the long-term local vision. The Total Place¹¹, and Total Capital, initiatives are similarly geared to identifying the totality of resources available in a particular area and to redesigning the planning and delivery of services, in order to achieve better outcomes for all citizens from the bottom up.

⁹ *Single Conversation, Local Investment Plans, Local Investment Agreements, Homes and Communities Agency*

¹⁰ *Duty to Involve* <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=15391881>

¹¹ *Total Place: Better for less* <http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace>

At the same time, some housing providers and local strategic partnerships are taking a significant role in safeguarding adults¹². The Dept of Health, Home Office and Criminal Justice System are taking steps to strengthen this role in safeguarding partnerships and to enhance the role of safeguarding boards in hearing the voice of the local citizen. New guidance will look at ways that citizens can be supported to keep themselves safe, and the roles housing providers and commissioners might play in assisting them to do so.

Vulnerable people are helped to thrive within a safer, more inclusive neighbourhood that caters for their particular needs and aspirations and helps them to keep themselves safe.

Adult social care benefits because neighbourhoods are designed to meet the changing needs and circumstances of all individuals, and vulnerable people are empowered to look after themselves within more inclusive communities.

Housing Options and Development

People change their housing circumstances from time to time, often coinciding with other changes in their lives such as the birth of a child, bereavement of a partner or loss of mobility. These change-points are times when people are more focused on making choices and where personalisation can help them to achieve better solutions. Older people are often faced with the need to change their housing circumstances in periods of acute needs and when they feel most vulnerable. They can benefit from support to make the most appropriate choice, not just to meet their immediate needs but also in considering how their needs and capabilities may change in the future.

Vulnerable people are helped to thrive because, as citizens, they're offered more choice and support to live safely in accommodation and more information to help to access housing that suits them throughout their lives.

Adult social care benefits because people who are more settled in their accommodation are frequently more settled in other areas of their lives and therefore need lower levels of support.

Service Choices for Residents

The more providers understand their customers and potential customers, the better able they are to diversify their offer – potentially providing menus of services from which individual tenants and other residents can choose

Steps towards personalisation in this service area might include:

- LANDLORDS setting up systems to gain insight into the preferences and behaviours of their tenants and other customers.
- THE DEVELOPMENT of service menus that allow residents to make individual and collective choices in relation to housing and other services that they receive.
- THE EXPANSION of services to other residents, such as home owners and private renters, living nearby

¹² *Safeguarding Adults: Report on the consultation on the review of 'No Secrets'*
www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Responsestoconsultations/DH_102764

Vulnerable people are helped to thrive because housing providers are flexible and responsive in relation to the services they offer both their own tenants and other residents.

Adult social care benefits because more of their clients' needs and aspirations can be met by housing providers— as landlords and as agents of service delivery within their communities

Transition

For young people with a Learning Disability their transition into adult life can be a difficult period full of making choices about what they want to do in the future. What we do know is that having a place to live away from their family is as important to someone with a disability as it is for any other young person; as yet this choice is not available in quite the same way with information, choice and availability locally.

In 2010, a new Wirral Service was created to improve the transition process for young disabled people – Transition Services. This is predominantly a Social Care led service of staff from both Children's and Adult Services designed to work directly with young people from the age of 16 through to their adulthood. Important links however are in place with key partner agencies of Health, Connexions, Education, Housing and Employers.

Vital to future information gathering, Wirral Transition Services are now developing a Data Base that will include all young people with a statement of Special Education Need and those subject to School Action Plus from age 14 upwards. This will inform agencies of future needs and demand trends and will provide relevant future Housing requirements; liaison with Education Department colleagues will ensure a housing question will be asked of the young person and their family from their Year 9 (14 years of age) Annual Education Review within Schools.

The development of Personal Budgets across the Department of Adult Social Services has provided much greater choice and control for young people entering their adult life. Choice of appropriate housing and the purchase of necessary and required support to live as independently as possible is rapidly developing. Today, there are several examples across the Borough where this has been successfully implemented for young people; our aim is to make this choice more widely available to meet the aspiration of the young person as they approach their adult life.

Consultation & Engagement

During the development of this plan, significant consultation took place with the following groups:

- Chair of the Enabling & Fulfilling Lives Group.
- Representatives of the Carers Development Committee.
- LDPB Housing Sub-Group.
- LDPB Executive Group.
- LD Planning Day held on 10th October (including Stakeholders and Self-Advocates)
- Supporting People Commissioning Body.
- Supporting People Core Strategy Development Group.
- Self Advocates.
- LDPB.
- Supporting People Provider Forum.
- Strategic Housing Partnership.

However, in order to gain the views of as many people as possible regarding the direction of the Plan, a full public consultation exercise was recommended. This was proposed to Cabinet on the 12th January 2012 who endorsed this recommendation.

A dedicated webpage on the Wirral Council website provided the platform for this consultation, which involved:

- Standard and Easy-Read Versions of the Housing Plan
- An online survey.
- A standard questionnaire
- An Easy-Read questionnaire

The consultation period ran from February to March 2012

In total, 42 people participated in the consultation exercise (26 online participants, 16 paper submissions). A full analysis of the responses can be found in Appendix 1.

Challenges in Implementing the Learning Disability Housing Plan

Identified through this plan are some of the current challenges which need to be addressed and /or impacts such as the Welfare Reforms on the development of services for people with Learning Disabilities for the future.

Before detailing the required actions needed in moving forward, summarised below are the key challenges in developing a Housing Plan for people with Learning Disabilities.

Insufficient data on the housing needs of People with Learning Disabilities

There is a lack of data locally about the housing needs of people with Learning Disabilities. There has not been a systematic method for collecting and using data in relation to the housing needs of people with learning disabilities; the lack of data and therefore evidence of housing need and demand has resulted in very limited development of new housing options.

In relation to young people it is expected this will significantly improve with the introduction of the Database (previously referenced in the 'Transition' section) when information will be gathered from the age of 14. This information will be instrumental in informing future housing requirements for a wide range of young people with disabilities including those with a diagnosis of autism and those returning from a period of residential education provision.

There is a significant increase in the number of younger people identified as being on the autistic spectrum who may also fall within learning disability services and a significant number of young people transferring to adult services who will be in need of accommodation over the coming years. Too little is known about the needs of these young people leaving specialist residential schools. Advance planning and consideration of the accommodation options by the key agencies concerned is limited. This group are likely to have complex needs. It is therefore important to know what happens to them and whether they and their families are receiving good support in the transition from education to adult social care and health services.

Intelligence around the future housing requirements of people with Learning Disabilities is also limited. It is expected that demand for housing is also likely to come from the growing number of adults with learning disabilities who live with elderly or infirm parents who may not be able to continue caring for their children indefinitely. In addition there is a growing desire to bring back to their home area the people with disabilities who have been placed in 'out-of-borough' accommodation. This data will need to be quantified in order to effectively plan for future housing requirements.

In order to identify future demand for housing, and support, amongst the local population of people with learning disabilities (particularly adults who would not be captured through the work of Transition Services) a series of key questions need to be addressed and answered. These will be pertinent in identifying the true needs and demand locally and will be fundamental to the future planning and delivery of services which need to be improved

in order to ensure the needs of People with Learning Disabilities are adequately met:

- 1 How many adults (over 18 years old) with learning disabilities living in the local authority area are living with older carers where there is an already identified risk of the family circumstances being unsustainable over the following time periods:
 - Short term – within 6 months
 - Medium term – between 6 months and 2 years
 - Long term – over 2 years
- 2 How many children and young people (aged from 14 years to 18 years) with learning disabilities, often referred to as being in 'transition', are identified to the Adult Social Care department (typically by the local authority Children's Services)?
- 3 What is the overall need profile of these young people (aged from 14 years to 18 years) with learning disabilities, for example including people with complex physical and sensory disabilities?
- 4 Where are children and young people (aged from 14 years to 18 years) with learning disabilities currently living/ accommodated?
- 5 What is the known population of adults and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)?
- 6 What is the known population of adults with learning disabilities aged over 18 years who fall outside of the local authority's current application of Fair Access to Care Services (FACS)?
- 7 What is the breakdown of the local population of adults with learning disabilities over 18 years from Minority Ethnic Groups?
- 8 What is the known demand and need for housing and accommodation amongst adults with learning disabilities aged over 18 years from existing data sources:
 - Previous housing need surveys specifically of people with learning disabilities?
 - Previous housing needs surveys and assessments of the overall local population?
 - Previous assessments of housing and support needs of vulnerable people that included people with learning disabilities?
- 9 What is the known demand and need for housing and accommodation amongst children and young people with learning disabilities aged 14 to 18 years from existing data sources:
 - Previous housing need surveys specifically of children and young people with learning disabilities?
 - Previous housing needs surveys and assessments of the overall local population?
 - Previous assessments of housing and support needs of vulnerable people that included people with learning disabilities?

- 10** What information is available currently that specifically identifies housing need and demand amongst people with learning disabilities aged over 18 years from a range of sources including:
- Local authority (or sub contacted) housing register information?
 - Local authority care management data that identifies specific housing need?
 - Local authority Children’s Services data identifies specific housing need?
- 11** What is the known or estimated demand for housing amongst people with learning disabilities who are currently living ‘out of area’ but may want to return if suitable housing and support was available?
- 12** Does the LA have a mechanism in place for recording the housing needs of people with learning disabilities i.e. a Housing Needs Database?
- 13** What are the known features and characteristics of housing need amongst the local population of children and young people and adults with learning disabilities, including:
- Volume of housing units required?
 - Locations of housing required?
 - Types or ‘models’ of housing required?
 - When housing is required, i.e. breakdown of the housing units required over a 5-10 year period?
- 14** What is the projected and/or known demand for care/support services and arrangements amongst the population of people with learning disabilities with identified housing needs?

Lack of housing and support options for people with learning disabilities

Current accommodation provision is strongly oriented towards residential care homes. This limited range gives people little choice in the kinds of services they receive and where those services are located. Feedback indicates that there are:

- Insufficient support services for those who wish to continue living at home and who may require more than a minimum amount of service
- Lack of opportunities, for people living in the family home with elderly carers, to be supported to move on to supported housing
- Lack of move on opportunities for people in residential care, who have been assessed as no longer needing that level of support
- Lack of consistent planning for services to meet the housing needs of ageing people with learning disabilities

The supply of both supported housing and ordinary properties within general needs housing should be increased significantly in order to address the imbalance

However, the scope to expand the range of housing and support or to improve existing provision is determined to a large extent by the capital resources available to build new homes or improve existing properties to a good quality standard along with the revenue resources available for support and care services. In Wirral, as in other local authorities, the projected long-term decline in funding from commissioning bodies to fund support services is of serious concern. This has to be addressed at central government level.

In order to improve the range of housing and support options available to people with Learning Disabilities, Wirral Council will:

- Work closely with the Landlord Accreditation Scheme to make better use of the full range of property provided by Private Rented Sector Landlords.
- Examine the feasibility of shared ownership for people with support needs.
- Develop accommodation options for people who do wish to share or live as a small group.
- Make best use of existing housing and support resources.

Insufficient information and advice on housing and support services.

Good quality advice and information is essential if people with a learning disability and their parents and carers are to make informed decisions about what would suit them best in relation to their housing and support choices. This should additionally be provided in an 'Easy Read' format together with an easier and simplified system of applying or registering for local housing.

Transition Services now hold an annual event 'Your Future, Your Choice' to which Housing are a major contributor. This has greatly publicised housing provision locally and enabled information to be distributed and demand collated/

Widening the housing and support options available creates the potential for choice, however many people with a learning disability will need advice and support to do this. This advice should include the strengths and weaknesses of different options within the context of the four key principles – Rights, Independence, Choice and Inclusion.

The availability of effective information about housing and support options is essential to ensure that people with a learning disability and/or their carers are able to make decisions about the kind of housing and support that will meet their needs and preferences to assist them in planning for their future.

People's needs for housing and support and care vary and change throughout their lives and as such they need to be able to make informed decisions about what will suit them best at particular stages of their life.

A person with a learning disability has the same rights to own or rent a home as anyone else and therefore subject to the same obligations and responsibilities. To do this a person must have the capacity to agree and understand what the legal consequences of entering into a contract are. Appropriate types of occupancy agreements will therefore be applied to reflect the capacity of individuals and also the model of accommodation. Joint working across housing and social care professionals will ensure individuals understand their

responsibilities and those of their Landlord.

At this time there is insufficient information available about the provision of housing and accommodation and types and styles of support that is available and hardly any at all about the range of options individuals or groups of individuals could pursue.

It is therefore important that the provision of information, advice and advocacy is integrated and coordinated, available and consistent by all agencies involved in the delivery of accommodation services to people with learning disabilities.

To improve the quality of housing and support advice targeted at people with a learning disability and their family and carers it is essential that:

- There is provision of better advice, information and advocacy on housing and support options.
- The advice and information is appropriate, in a variety of formats and available in a variety of settings.

Housing, social services, health and voluntary agencies need to raise awareness of the housing and support options available to people with a learning disability among other professions and to establish ways of ensuring that the information provided is of an appropriate quality and consistency. Similarly, the same information should also be available in appropriate formats and settings for people with a learning disability and their family and carers.

To improve the range of information and advice about the housing options available to people with learning disabilities, Wirral Council will:

- Develop appropriate 'easy-read' literature that explains the various housing options, their advantages and disadvantages, how housing can be accessed and appropriate people to contact.
- Give consideration to the development of a DVD that will highlight some of the stories of people who have moved from one type of accommodation to another.
- Arrange regular work-shops and information-giving events to provide an opportunity to share information and to discuss local housing issues and solutions.
- Ensure that housing representatives have a consistent and regular presence at meetings for Carers and Service Users to answer any questions.

Housing Benefit Reforms

Housing Benefit (HB) is a national benefit paid by the Council to help people pay their rent. Entitlement to HB is dependent on a number of factors such as income and savings.

A particular challenge for the future, that will impact on people's ability to afford a private rented home are the government's proposed announced changes to welfare legislation, including HB and the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), to be introduced in 2011/12 and 2012/13. It is estimated that, in the North West, 49% of people claiming assistance with their housing costs will have their allowance reduced, with the average loss being £11 per week. This may leave some households having to choose between reducing their housing

costs, making up the shortfall from other income (and lowering their general standard of living) or falling into arrears if they remain dependent on HB.

As of February 2011, there were 29,214 HB Claimants in Wirral of which 9426 were receiving LHA. As some of these reforms were introduced in April 2011, the authority has been proactive in trying to gauge the impact of the LHA cuts which affect residents when they renew their claim for this assistance. However, the extent of the changes will not be fully known until fully introduced in 2015. Issues that may impact range from the excess payment being removed and a reduction in LHA for 5 bedroom properties, although these claimants do have transitional protection.

The Government changes to LHA will have a significant impact on young people in Wirral. It is intended to raise the age threshold of the current single room rate in 2012, a special low rate of HB, which is available to people under 25 years to the new age threshold of 35 years. The single room rate is set at £64.50 per week for 2010/11. The changes will mean that young people, up to the age of 35 years, will face greater challenges to access affordable accommodation.

Wirral Council will need to work with our partners to minimise the impact of changes on reducing people's income by looking at a range of initiatives including new ways of letting accommodation. This could include shared tenancies and financial inclusion initiatives such as working with organisations like Wirral MoneyLine to provide financial advice.

Housing and Mental Capacity Issues

The Mental Capacity Act is very clear: everyone should be considered to have mental capacity unless it is established that they lack capacity to make a particular decision for themselves at the time the decision needs to be made. The Act provides a statutory framework for decision-making and determining someone's ability to make a decision. It protects people with capacity to make their own decisions and provides core principles and methods for making decisions and carrying out actions affecting people who may lack capacity to make specific decisions about issues for themselves.

If a person without capacity to understand and commit to a tenancy signs a tenancy agreement then the landlord cannot enforce that agreement so a landlord who has any doubts about capacity of a person having made efforts to engage with the person is unlikely to grant them a tenancy. Instead they would wish to see a person appointed to act on that person's behalf.

Some registered charities and other housing providers may decide that the strict rights they have need not be enforced against the person and will go ahead anyway and grant a tenancy if they receive confirmation that a tenancy is in that person's best interests.

If someone has capacity, they should sign their own tenancy agreement. For some people, intensive instruction and support can help to develop or maximise their capacity. There are many tools that can be used to enable this such as pictures, photos, activities, visits, DVDs and so on.

Professionals should take a pragmatic approach to assessing whether someone has capacity to sign; they are not expected to understand every clause in the tenancy agreement, but

should realise that:

- It is their own home.
- A payment is due for living there
- They have rights
- They have responsibilities

However, some private or other landlords may wish to take a more cautious approach. In which case, the Court of Protection can be approached for an order for the tenancy agreement to be signed. It is important to remember that it may take several weeks for an order to be issued by the Court of Protection. Staff, family and friends should not sign on behalf of the tenant unless they have been specifically appointed by the Court of Protection with the appropriate powers otherwise they will, by law, and then become the tenant themselves.

Wirral Council will ensure that, when project planning, the issue of capacity to sign a tenancy agreement will be raised early in the process to allow capacity-building work to take place, time to negotiate with landlords regarding tenancies and for applications to the Court of Protection to be made, if necessary. Although capacity is presumed if there is reason to believe someone does not understand a decision then a best interests decision will be needed. If someone has been placed in accommodation under s21 then an independent mental capacity advocate should be involved in the process.

There will be a number of decisions that feed into the housing process. The issue of capacity is assessed for each decision so for example the fact someone may have capacity to understand a tenancy agreement and what it entails does not mean they have the capacity to decide who they want to live with or where they want to live. Those are three separate decisions.

Barriers to Home Ownership

This plan makes reference to the Homebuy Scheme which enables people with disabilities to part buy and part rent housing. Clearly, in the majority of cases, for this to be a viable option for most, then there will be a need to apply for, and be offered a mortgage. There are however some inherent problems in applying for mortgages whilst on state benefits as mainstream lenders are reluctant to lend to people who are in receipt of benefit. Furthermore if a lender believes a person does not have capacity to make a decision to enter into a mortgage then the lender will not progress the matter and will want a deputy appointed to deal with that person's financial affairs with regard to the specific mortgage product. In the same way as a tenancy signed by someone who lacks mental capacity cannot be enforced by the landlord so a mortgage that a person without capacity has signed cannot be enforced by the lender. However, From 1 October 2010, Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) previously referenced earlier within this plan, has been paid at the level of the Bank of England's published Average Mortgage Rate - currently 3.63 per cent. It will only be adjusted in future when the published average mortgage rate differs by 0.5 per cent or more.

Prior to 1 October 2010, the rate of interest paid was fixed by the Labour Government at 6.08 per cent. This rate was higher than many mortgage lenders charged and in some cases allowed some homeowners to not only cover their mortgage interest payments but use the

remainder towards their arrears or capital repayments which was not the intention of SMI.

The changes made by the current Coalition Government on coming into power, to the percentage rate used to calculate SMI mean that:

- Some people will not receive enough to cover their mortgage interest payments, increasing the risk of mortgage arrears, while others have mortgage products at very low rates will continue to receive more than they need to meet the intention of SMI, thus reducing arrears and capital originally borrowed

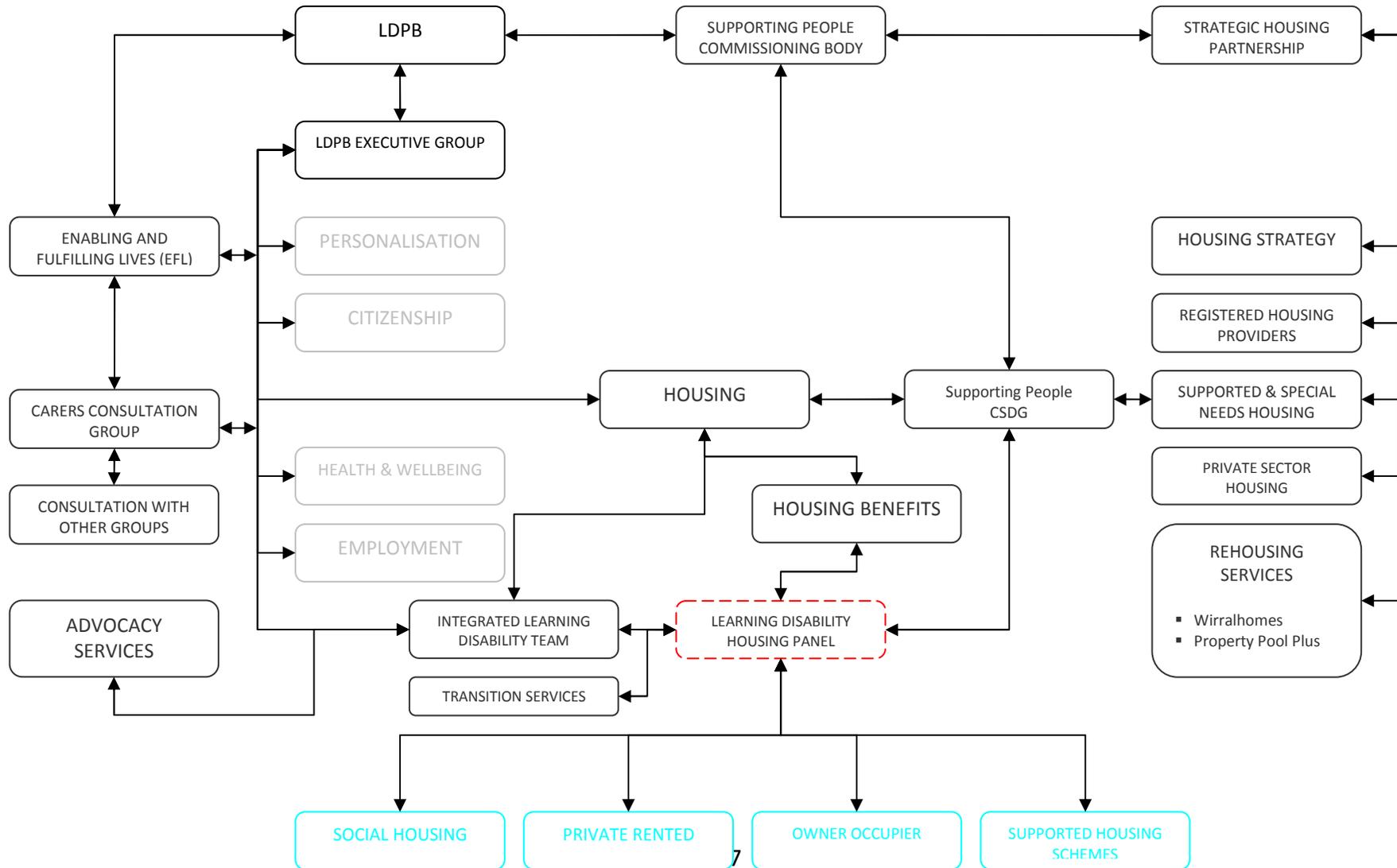
Implementing the Plan

There are a series of actions which need to take place to improve the access to housing for People with Learning Disabilities. This will need to be undertaken using a strategic co-ordinated approach to achieve the aspirations set out in this plan. In order to ensure the current needs of People with Learning Disabilities are immediately met it is felt that the first priority should be the introduction of a Learning Disability Housing Panel into the existing Learning Disability governance structure arrangements. The introduction of this Operational Panel will also help feed any strategic issues directly to the Learning Disability Housing Sub-Group to inform future strategic planning for services.

The following sections sets out the intended aims of the Learning Disability Housing Panel and how this will operate and sit within the overall governance structure.

Figure 6: Diagram showing the current Learning Disability Governance Structure and the proposed introduction of the Learning Disability Housing Panel at Operational Level.

LEARNING DISABILITY HOUSING GOVERNANCE / OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE



Governance and Operational Structure

Governance Structure

At the centre of the Governance Structure is the Learning Disability Partnership Board.

Learning Disability Partnership Boards (LDPBs) were set up in all local authority areas following the publication of the Valuing People White Paper in 2001. The role of these LDPB's is to oversee interagency planning and commissioning to achieve social inclusion for people with learning disabilities. Valuing People Now the revised and updated national strategy for people with a learning disability was published in February 2009. It stressed the pivotal role of LDPBs as the key vehicle for ensuring that people benefit from Valuing People Now.

Accountability for the operation and effectiveness of the LDPB rests with the Director of Adult Social Services and the PCT Chief Executive.

There is also an **Executive Group** providing the technical managerial expertise that will support and be accountable to the Partnership Board.

The **Enabling Fulfilling Lives Group** makes sure that all people with learning disability and carers are properly represented in the work of the Learning Disability Partnership Board and its sub groups. The Enabling Fulfilling Lives Group will hold Elections for Board members every year in March. People elected on to the Board should agree which of them should best champion each work area.

The Transition Governance and Strategic Planning Groups as defined in the Transition Protocol of November 2011 will also take account of young people's needs to be represented into the Partnership Board.

The Board's main areas of work come from the priorities set by the Government in Valuing People Now and other national guidance, or from other local inspections and assessments and consultation exercises.

The Priorities for 2011 -12 are

- **Health:**
- **Housing:**
- **Employment:**
- **Personalisation:** (Increased choice and control, & Transition)
- **People as Citizens:** (Making a positive contribution for adults with a learning disability)

The Board has sub-committees working on each of these priorities.

Housing Sub-Group

The Housing Sub-Group currently comprises representatives from the Housing Division, the Department of Adult Social Services and Registered Providers. The Sub-Group has a series of objectives:

- To develop a housing plan for people who have a learning disability;
- To develop an action plan to ensure that we increase the number of people with a learning disability living in settled accommodation.
- To make sure that the housing needs of people with a learning disability are recognised and addressed

in Wirral Council's Housing Strategy 2011 – 2026.

- To develop an action plan to ensure that we increase the number of people with a learning disability living in settled accommodation
- To assist with the Identification of housing needs of people with learning disabilities including identifying the number of people with learning disabilities living with family carers over 70 and those with complex needs.
- To evaluate current information available regarding housing options, research, Good practice, what is available elsewhere and how this would work in Wirral.
- To develop information material where this is not currently available linked to the agreed access protocols / routes into housing
- To develop protocols to address pathways into housing, between Housing Dept / DASS/PCT/ RSLs
- To assist the Department of Adult Social Services in confirming arrangements and responsibilities for reviewing new clients, both FACS and non-FACS housing needs

The Housing Sub-Group will establish a performance framework as part of the Housing Plan against which progress will be monitored. This will be communicated to the Commissioning Body, the Core-Strategic Development Group and the Strategic Housing Partnership. Feedback and comments from the respective groups will be communicated to the Housing Sub-Group by the identified representatives to ensure there is an agreed strategic approach to delivering this Housing Plan.

Operational Structure

Currently, at an operational level, the arrangements relating to access to accommodation for people with learning disabilities are piecemeal. This has resulted in a lack of consistent understanding about what is actually required in terms of accommodation, the range of accommodation types and the means by which accommodation can be accessed. It is therefore proposed that a Learning Disability Panel is developed which will act as the focal point for all accommodation queries relating to people with learning disabilities. A tripartite agreement will be established that will identify the respective roles of the professionals involved in the provision of care, support and accommodation. This will promote a wider understanding between agencies about meeting the housing needs of people to ensure relevant, timely and accurate information and advice is provided to individuals, their advocates, family and friends.

It is envisaged that the Housing Panel act as the conduit between the accommodation requirements of individual clients, as identified by Care Managers and the availability of accommodation as determined by Housing Providers (Private & Social) and Supported Housing services.

Since 2007, the Councils Supporting People Team has operated the Housing Priority Panel, which seeks to facilitate access to permanent general-needs accommodation for residents of short-term services such as homeless hostels, young people's hostels and refuges for women fleeing domestic violence. The Panel comprises senior operational staff that meets on a monthly basis to consider applications from relevant services for clients who have been identified as ready for the move to independent living. A successful application to the Housing Priority Panel will result in the award of Urgent Need Status which has the effect of prioritising the individual applicant for social housing through Wirral's Choice-Based Lettings system (soon to be re-branded as Property Pool Plus)

It is suggested that the Learning Disability Panel follows a similar model, whereby Care Managers will make referrals to the Panel for individuals that require accommodation, with the Panel acting as a broker with the various accommodation providers. Property Pool Plus will have the capacity to register applicants with learning disability who are seeking accommodation now or in the future and thus measure current and future demand in addition to advertising vacancies in specialist supported or shared accommodation when it

becomes available. The Panel will ensure appropriate care packages are approved and funded (where relevant) in advance of offers of accommodation being made.

Potentially, the LD Housing Panel could maintain a register of vacancies within supported housing services and these could be advertised through Property Pool Plus and also identify future general vacancies that may meet the needs of identified individuals or groups (e.g. Sheltered Housing, House/flat as shared accommodation etc.)

Realistically, the membership of the group would need representation from Care Managers, Housing Division staff and Housing and Support Providers.

It is suggested that the information flow would be as follows:

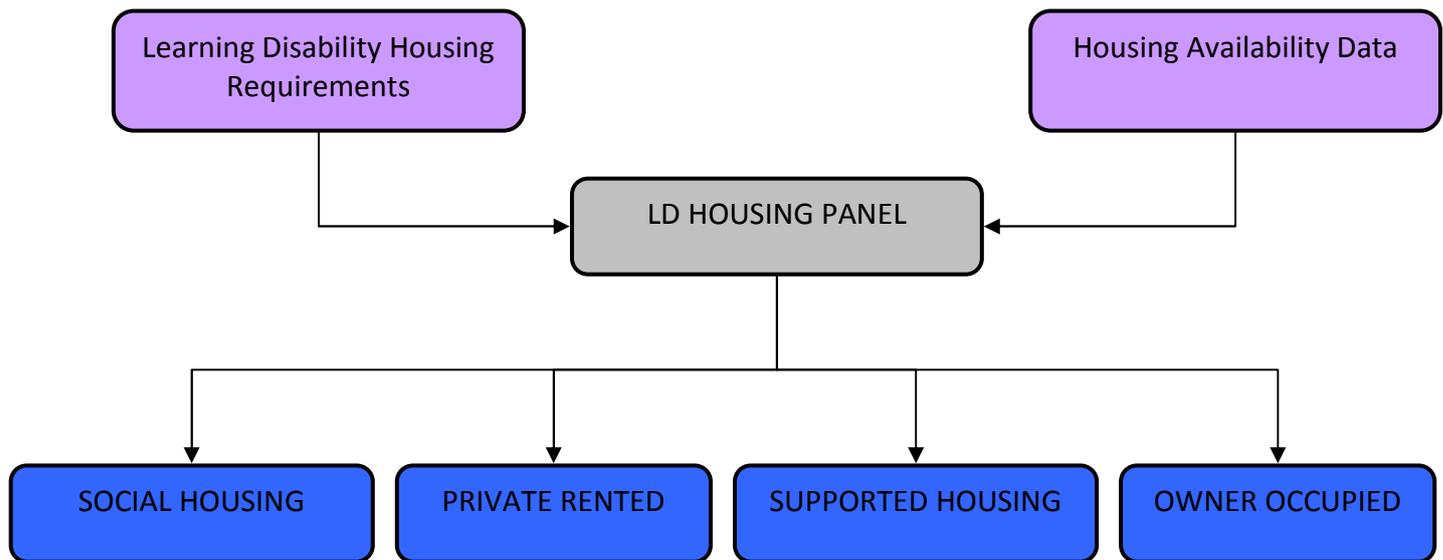


Figure 7: Suggested Learning Disability Housing Panel Information flow

The LD Housing Panel would have a number of key objectives:

- To ensure the effective use of accommodation and support services by people with a learning disability within Wirral.
- To achieve the best match between people's needs and the available accommodation.
- To identify the extent of unmet need or surplus provision and to inform Housing and Learning Disability Services in order for planned strategy and commissioning to take place.
- To work towards ensuring there is a range of appropriate housing options and support provision and delivery within Wirral to meet needs and provide choice.
- To ensure that any individual being referred knows and understands the allocations process and that their wishes are fully taken into account.
- To ensure Health and Social Care professionals understand the social housing allocations process, enabling them to make appropriate referrals based on assessed need.
- To ensure Health, Social Care and Housing work collaboratively in the provision of housing through agreed protocols.
- To ensure that the needs of people with a learning disability are met through joint provision from Supporting People, Housing Options, Housing Providers, Social Care and the NHS.
- To achieve a high level of successful placements into all housing types within Wirral.

- To ensure effective utilisation of all levels of supported housing, and promotes progression through to independent living wherever possible.
- To explore and investigate opportunities for joint funding of services to better meet the needs of people with a learning disability
- To ensure the process does not introduce unnecessary delays for service user's requiring urgent accommodation and support.
- To monitor the effective implementation of the Housing Plan through the development of a relevant performance framework with agreed targets, timescales and outcomes.

Consultation & Engagement

During the development of this plan, significant consultation took place with the following groups:

- Chair of the Enabling & Fulfilling Lives Group.
- Representatives of the Carers Development Committee.
- LDPB Housing Sub-Group.
- LDPB Executive Group.
- LD Planning Day held on 10th October (including Stakeholders and Self-Advocates)
- Supporting People Commissioning Body.
- Supporting People Core Strategy Development Group.
- Self Advocates.
- LDPB.
- Supporting People Provider Forum.
- Strategic Housing Partnership.

However, in order to gain the views of as many people as possible regarding the direction of the Plan, a full public consultation exercise was recommended. This was proposed to Cabinet on the 12th January 2012 who endorsed this recommendation.

The findings of the consultation have been incorporated into this plan. The detailed responses can be found in Appendix 1.

Future Actions

The following sections sets out further actions needed to be taken to improve access to housing for people with Learning Disabilities. These priorities will form the basis of an annual action plan which will overseen by the Learning Disability Partnership Board and its associated housing sub-group, the Strategic Housing Partnership and the Supporting People Commissioning Body.

PRIORITY 1: DEVELOPMENT OF A ROBUST EVIDENCE BASE TO INFORM FUTURE HOUSING PLANS

A robust evidence base will enable both the Housing Division and the Department's of Adult and Children's Social Services to ascertain the current and future housing needs of people with learning disabilities in order that this information can effectively inform the development of housing plans and initiatives.

In order to develop an effective evidence base, the following data will need to be provided on a regular basis:

Population Profile Data

1. The current living arrangements of all people with Learning Disabilities known to DASS.
2. The housing needs of people living with Carers over the age of 60
3. The total number of Young people (14-21) in Transition and their potential housing needs? What is the overall need profile of these young people with learning disabilities, for example including people with complex physical and sensory disabilities?
4. Where are these young people with learning disabilities currently living / accommodated?
5. What is the known population of adults and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and what are their housing needs?
6. What is the known population of adults with learning disabilities aged over 18 years who fall outside of the LA's current application of FACS?

Housing Data

1. How many different organisations provide residential care and what types of organisations are there?
2. How many people with learning disabilities are living in a home that they own or part own?
3. What is the known or estimated demand for housing amongst people with learning disabilities who are currently living 'out-of-area' but may want to return if suitable housing and support was available?
4. Details of the housing needs of people currently living in residential/nursing accommodation who are inappropriately placed and who could live in more independent accommodation settings.

Housing needs of clients known to DASS

To ensure that the housing needs of individual clients are considered as part of all future Care Assessments and their subsequent reviews.

To achieve this, the following will be required:

1. The development of housing needs questionnaire to be used by Care Managers when completing Care Assessments, which should also look at the use of tele-care and other assistive technologies that could be used to maximise independence. The assessment should also make reference to specific mobility needs which may impact on the type of accommodation needed and should also include the housing/support needs of carers, with a priority for older carers.
2. The development of effective links within the Education Department to ensure appropriate information is gathered from young people's annual education review from 14 years upwards that reflects their future housing requirements.
3. The effective transmission of the information gained through this assessment to the Housing Division.

4. The subsequent analysis of this information and its inclusion in future planning.

PRIORITY 2: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN HOUSING PATHWAY THAT PROVIDES A RANGE OF ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS THAT PEOPLE CAN PROGRESS THROUGH TO LIVE AS INDEPENDENTLY AS POSSIBLE

It is proposed that a Learning Disability Housing Panel is developed that will act as the focal point for all accommodation queries.

The Housing Panel will act as a conduit between the accommodation requirements of individual clients, as determined by Care Managers and the availability of appropriate accommodation, as determined by Social and Private Housing Providers and Supported Housing Services

The development of a single point for housing / learning disability enquiries will result in a standardised and consistent approach to the linking in of accommodation options and people with learning disabilities.

In order to develop this Panel, the following actions are proposed:

1. To develop lines of communication with accommodation providers to ensure that Panel is aware of all accommodation that is available to people with learning disabilities.
2. To establish a robust referral procedure in order that DASS Care Managers can refer their clients to the Panel.
3. Identification of appropriate Panel Members and formalise the governance / operational structure as proposed within the LD Housing Plan.
4. Arranging a briefing session to explain roles and responsibilities of panel members.

PRIORITY 3: TO INCREASE INFORMATION AND ADVICE ABOUT HOUSING OPTIONS

In order to ensure that, Service Users, Carers and Care Managers have appropriate information about the housing options available to people with learning disabilities, the following actions will be carried out:

1. To produce and distribute a detailed housing options leaflet that is accessible and understandable for people with learning disabilities.
2. To organise an annual event to raise awareness of the housing options available to people with learning disabilities and continue to support that Transition Services annual event 'Your Future, Your Choice'
3. To make housing information available on the Wirral Council and 'Teen Wirral' Websites.
4. To engage with the Black and Minority Ethnic communities to ensure that those in need of a learning disability service, their families and carers are given access to adequate information.
5. To produce literature in an 'Easy Read' format for Service Users to find out about different models of support to help them make informed choices.

6. To assist people to access housing so that they can organise support for themselves through a range of 'self-directed support' options via use of Personal Budgets.

PRIORITY 4: TO ENSURE THAT ACCOMMODATION IS PROVIDED WHICH IS FIT-FOR PURPOSE IN TERMS OF DISABLED ACCESS.

To achieve this we will:

1. Ensure that when any new specialist re-housing schemes are commissioned they include units of accommodation for people with specific mobility needs.

Assist clients with physical disabilities to move from accommodation that is no longer suitable for their needs.

2. To make available a range of self-directed support options for all young people coming through transition and for those who want to move or whose needs are changing so that they can access services specifically tailored to their needs.

3. To assist people with learning disabilities to access Disabled Facilities Grants where appropriate in order to maximise their independence.

PRIORITY 5: TO INCREASE THE RANGE OF SERVICES/ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS AVAILABLE LOCALLY.

To achieve this we will:

1. Ensure that when any new specialist re-housing schemes are commissioned they include units of accommodation for people with specific mobility needs.

2. Assist clients with physical disabilities to move from accommodation that is no longer suitable for their needs.

3. To make available a range of self-directed support options for all young people coming through transition and for those who want to move or whose needs are changing so that they can access services specifically tailored to their needs.

4. To assist people with learning disabilities to access Disabled Facilities Grants where appropriate in order to maximise their independence.

Appendix 1

Detailed Consultation Findings

A dedicated webpage on the Wirral Council website provided the platform for this consultation, which involved:

- Standard and Easy-Read Versions of the Housing Plan
- An online survey.
- A standard questionnaire
- An Easy-Read questionnaire

The consultation period ran from February to March 2012

In total, 42 people participated in the consultation exercise (26 online participants, 16 paper submissions). The 42 respondents are broken down in the chart opposite:

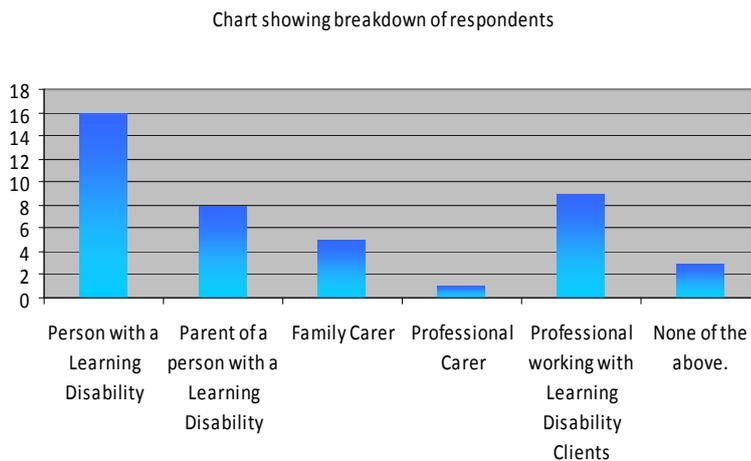
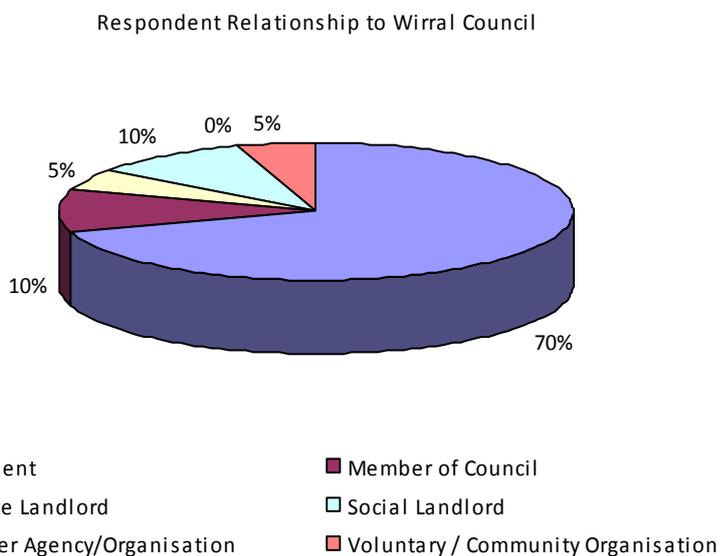


Chart 2: Breakdown of Respondents



Respondents were asked to identify their relationship, if any, to Wirral Council. The chart on the right shows their response.

n.b. Two Respondents skipped this question.

Chart 3: Chart showing respondent relationship to Wirral Council

Respondents were asked to identify the area of Wirral they live in and, if appropriate, the area of Wirral they worked in. It can be seen from the table that the large of majority of respondents identified themselves as living in Leasowe, Moreton or Saughall Massie. This is probably in no small part due to the fact that a significant number of responses were submitted from a supported-living provider who had canvassed their tenants in services within these areas. *Note: 13 Respondents skipped this question*

LIVING IN WIRRAL	
Answer Options	Response Count
Bebington or Clatterbridge	1
Bidston, St James or Claughton	1
Birkenhead, Tranmere or Rock Ferry	5
Bromborough or Eastham	0
Heswall, Pensby or Thingwall	1
Hoylake, Meols, West Kirby or Thurstaston	4
Leasowe, Moreton or Saughall Massie	12
Liscard or Seacombe	0
New Brighton or Wallasey	2
Prenton or Oxton	1
Woodchurch, Greasby, Frankby, Irby or Upton	2

WORKING IN WIRRAL	
Answer Options	Response Count
I work in all areas	6
Bebington or Clatterbridge	0
Bidston, St James or Claughton	1
Birkenhead, Tranmere or Rock Ferry	3
Bromborough or Eastham	0
Heswall, Pensby or Thingwall	2
Hoylake, Meols, West Kirby or Thurstaston	2
Leasowe, Moreton or Saughall Massie	2
Liscard or Seacombe	2
New Brighton or Wallasey	2
Prenton or Oxton	1
Woodchurch, Greasby, Frankby, Irby or Upton	1
I don't work in Wirral	0

Respondents were asked to quantify their perception of the importance of a range of housing-related issues, these being:

- *Gathering information about housing needs*
- *Clear routes into a range of housing options*
- *Increase information and advice about housing options*
- *Provide homes for people with a range of disabilities*
- *Increase housing options and support available*

The findings are detailed in the table below:

	Not at all important				Very Important
Gathering information about housing needs	0	0	1	8	29
Clear routes into a range of housing options	0	0	4	5	29
Increase information and advice about housing options	0	0	4	6	28
Provide homes for people with a range of disabilities	0	1	0	3	34
Increase housing options and support available	0	0	2	5	31

It can be seen that the significant majority of respondents agreed with the priority actions identified within the draft Housing Plan.

Respondents were also asked to indicate if they felt that there were other housing priorities which should be included in the Housing Plan. A significant number of respondents indicated that a safe, secure environment is critical to the successful housing of people with Learning Disabilities. Other responses are detailed in the following table:

Respondent	Comment
1	These adults are very vulnerable, and therefore need a safe environment and community to live in, with the right support. A large number of adults can isolate themselves very easily as they may have very low esteem and insecurities, it is important to recognise this as part of any housing accommodation.
2	Ensuring options are understood and preferences are made for anyone who might have to be housed in an emergency e.g. serious illness or death of carer. It is vital this process is undertaken as soon as possible for the peace of mind of carers and to avoid last minute discussions in an emergency.
3	Include housing option which has a house with a "house mother" and say 4 to 6 young adults, same sex with learning disabilities, as per Derwent College model which had such a setup in Oswestry in 2007/8 The house mother helped plan the adult's day to day routine and supported as required. There was always a carer on the premises.
4	Access to which services they need, that are important to them, in relationship to where the housing is available
5	Not only should the needs and wishes of the person with a learning disability be taken into consideration but also the needs and wishes of their carers. It could be that, given a choice, the person would want to stay with their family and wouldn't understand that their carers may no longer be able to carry on in that role.
6	Understanding individual needs and equipment/support needed.
7	Adults with Mental health issues should be supported to live as independent as possible
8	Information gathered from parents currently caring for a child/adult with learning disabilities which may feed into future planning and form a clear idea of what sort of accommodation and what level of support is needed to ensure long term stability and well-being.
9	Independent living for younger clients rather than shared housing
10	Often people fail to get a diagnosis and can be border line cases, and therefore fail to get an official diagnosis. This often means that they do not meet the criteria for specialist accommodation projects and are too high needs for mainstream projects.
11	To make sure [the] area is a safe place for them to live in.
12	Not putting vulnerable people in dangerous areas.
13.	Not to put vulnerable adults in a bad neighbourhood.
14.	To always keep safe and not to be put into dangerous environments.
15.	More space and furniture
16.	Not putting vulnerable people in dangerous environments.
17.	I think that they should make sure not to put vulnerable people in a rough area, or with bad neighbours.

Respondents were asked to identify other potential sources of information that could assist in informing housing need:

Respondents	Response Text
1	I don't really understand this question but I would have thought other councils who have already been through this process.
2	Also to find adults of a similar age group: contact all carers with adults who have attended Derwent College, these young adults have already experienced being away from the parents family home contact all who attend the various specialised learning disability clubs and all who attend Wirral Met special courses
3	Adult training centres and carers networks,
4	Transport services, Medical services, relevant clubs, prospective pt time employment.
5	This has been done before, both by Social Services and by Wirral Mencap but not for several years. Wirral Mencap has a newsletter (five issues a year) which could be used to send out forms to carers and families, many of whom do not have access to the internet. The problem we always have is that we often don't get enough notice about consultations which close before the next edition is due.
6	'Home Buy' has been mentioned as an option for part ownership funding. Is it applicable though for those suffering from Severe Learning Difficulties, and therefore will not be receiving an income from a job? Another scheme for funding part ownership mortgages was 'My Safe Homes', but the availability of mortgages over the past year has been non existent because of the changes to the SMI referred to in this document and no mortgage company was able to offer them. It is also some concern to be that to qualify for these mortgages, that a person has to move to new accommodation to take on a mortgage, and that a person cannot remain in an existing property or to have modifications carried out to it, if perhaps rented. This I believe is due to Housing Benefit rules. It seems a nonsense for those with disabilities to be unnecessarily uprooted if they later find themselves in a position, may be an inheritance that they cannot transfer from a tenancy to a mortgaged property.
7	Wirral Family forum
8	The plan should be linked into the statementing review at year nine to ensure they know who are coming through the system and therefore predicting what will be needed in the future.
9	Information from day services and social work teams, support providers both professional and friends/family of the

	individual.
10	RSL stock and relevant Managing Agents to support tenants
11	Contact local accommodation projects, housing providers, schools, and Response.
12	At each individual in each home
13	Ask the people with the Learning Disability what they would like, or parents carer.
14	Wirral MIND
15	Wirral MIND or staff in supported living.
16	To the staff who look after us
17	Talk to the people with learning disabilities and ask them what's important
18	Ask people.
19	Community Learning Centres / Local Disability Care Teams
20	They could look to Wirral MIND staff or the staff at Lighthouse Road.

Respondents were asked to state whether they were familiar with the range of housing options available to people with Learning Disabilities. The findings indicate that almost 80% of respondents were unclear as to what housing is available for this client group. Respondents were also asked to identify what the range of options actually were available on Wirral, their responses are shown in the table opposite:

It should be noted that almost 50% of respondents failed to answer this question which could indicate that they are simply unaware of any housing options available to people with learning disabilities. This seems to reinforce the requirement for publicity material which describes the range of housing choice available.

Answer Options	Response Count
Shared Housing	11
Home Ownership	4
Rent from a Housing Association	16
Rent from a Private Landlord	10
Supported Housing	17
Sheltered housing	11
Extra Care Housing	8
Residential Care Home	15
Nursing Home	8

When asked whether more housing options should be made available to people with Learning Disabilities, almost 90% of respondents indicated that they felt there should be. The different types of housing options suggested by respondents are identified in the following table:

1	Independent Living, Community friendly
2	Small flat or bungalow with 24 hr support.
3	People should be given choice to live where they want, and not just placed somewhere that isn't suitable for them or others.
4	They could offer clients accommodation so they can live independently.
5	If the person is at a level that they could support & care for themselves.
6	Small flat or bungalow with 24 hr support.
7	More care homes, support centres.
8	People would like to be at a place they understand
9	They could offer individual houses to tenants if they are capable of being independent.
10	Don't know enough to be able to say
11	'house-mother' option, someone to provide long-term "real care" and take an interest in the welfare of the young adult not just feed and water.
12	That when the time comes when parent-carers can no longer look after their loved ones, that they will be able to live in the family home with 24 hour support,
13	More places like Wirral Autistic Society has.
14	There is already a wide range of housing options but not enough and not always in the right place. People need to stay in the areas they are familiar with and where they can still have support from families. Because West Wirral in general has higher housing costs this means there is a dearth of provision on that side of the peninsular
15	Possibly more housing provision solely for individuals on the autism spectrum who are vulnerable and easily led. Although there is housing as in question 9, this is very hard to access and not a lot of it.
16	They should have the full choice available to ensure they live as independent fulfilled life as possible anything other would be a disservice
17	(No facility to tick 'unsure' for this question) People with learning disabilities should have the same options available to them as those without a learning disability but there are always compromises to make - regardless of whether or not you have a disability of any sort.
18	Provision should be made for those who have diagnosed and un diagnosed learning disabilities.

When asked whether the Council provided sufficient information on the range of housing options available to people with learning disabilities, 70% of respondents indicated that they did not feel that there was adequate, freely-available, information. Respondents were further asked how they would like housing information to be communicated to them, their responses are listed in the table opposite:

Answer Options	Response Count
Leaflet	26
Posters	11
Roadshows or public events	23
Appointment with a member of staff	9
Internet	20
Social networking websites e.g. Facebook	4
Text message	2
Online learning disability forum	17
Email	12
By phone	3

Respondents	Other (please tell us)
1	education
2	Mencap, and learning disability clubs
3	Adult training centres.
4	through local voluntary organisations
5	Also social worker and transition team.
6	As above, appointment at One Stop Shop
7	In the post
8	You could send a letter through the post
9	In the post
10	In the post

Respondents were also asked whether there were any other methods of communication that could be utilised to disseminate information - their responses are in the table opposite.

