

CHAPTER 1: A HOME

“The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned”
Maya Angelou

Maya Angelou, Poet, storyteller, activist and autobiographer.

WE ASKED AND YOU SAID

When we asked people during The Big Housing Conversations what was important to them about home and family life, many of the responses echoed rights enshrined in the UNCRPD but are often yet to be realised. These are some of themes from the responses we received.

A lot of people said everyone should be able to choose where they live and who they live with

They said this is their Human Right, the same as for people who do not have a learning disability

People said the law needs to work better

People said they think it is wrong that people with a learning disability are made to live in areas that are not safe

There was concern that more people will be made to live in care homes and hospitals because of a lack of money

HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

The right to respect for private and family life is enshrined in Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The UNCRPD provides a more detailed account of the rights of disabled people.

ARTICLE 19 – LIVING INDEPENDENTLY AND BEING INCLUDED IN THE COMMUNITY

States Parties to the present Convention recognize the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and shall take effective and appropriate measures to facilitate full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community, including by ensuring that:

- a Persons with disabilities have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement;
- b Persons with disabilities have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community;
- c Community services and facilities for the general population are available on an equal basis to persons with disabilities and are responsive to their needs.

Inclusion Europe explain more about Article 19 and how it works [HERE](#).

You can find more information about these rights [HERE](#)

HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

IDEAS WE CAN WORK ON TOGETHER?

We have gathered ideas of things we can work on together to improve the lives of people with learning disabilities in the areas they said are important to them and their families.

- We need to recognise the importance of the right home. This should be based on person-centred planning. The opportunity for people with learning disabilities, their families, housing providers, social workers etc. to come together and plan how to get the home they want and need. This would require 'needs led housing development rather than build and fill'.

- There needs to be investment in information, resources and skills to support people to know and understand how to get access to housing that suits them.
- There needs to be a quicker and less bureaucratic way of accessing grant funding from NHS England to develop housing for people who need to leave an assessment and treatment unit.

- The government needs to recognise the pivotal role of housing and create a more comprehensive and integrated national and local planning and policy framework for supported housing. This should be designed to ensure that supported housing receives an appropriate share of available resources and that local commissioners have access to the tools and information required to address changing needs.

- Government should create the conditions for growth of supply by allocating a higher proportion of the new affordable homes programme to new housing for people with learning disability and autism.
- A long-term sustainable, consistent housing benefit regime for supported housing should be created.

- In social housing there should be the adoption of a rent standard that supports the commissioning and funding of new supported housing for people with high support needs.
- It should be possible for people to have a home close to their families and other supporters; this helps to build on local connections and 'natural' support.

- Advocacy support should be routinely available for people who don't have family to support them to exercise their housing rights.
- A recognised 'national standard' should be created detailing what housing rights and options people with learning disabilities are entitled to. Local councils should have to meet this standard.

- We need to develop a consistent approach to support people with learning disabilities to hold a tenancy without recourse to a (Court of Protection) appointed deputy; this approach should be promoted to general housing providers.

- There should be recognition and acceptance amongst professionals and housing providers that people with learning disabilities may want to move home at different times during their life; just like other people choose to do.

- Funding should be available which supports people to live good lives, fosters independence and enables contribution. This should be in addition to money that pays for personal care (for people who need that as well as support).

WHAT GOOD MIGHT LOOK LIKE (HOW WILL WE KNOW WE ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK)

GOOD EXAMPLE 1

The Learning Disability and Autism Housing Network created a Learning Disability and Autism Housing Network Charter with the aim of providing, developing and promoting quality homes and housing services for people with a learning disability and autism.

“I think it’s also important that we get more people with learning disabilities out of long stay hospitals, ATU’s and Residential homes where possible and back into the community in housing that is suitable. The money needs to be available to do this”

Gary Bourlet, Membership and Engagement Lead, LDE

GOOD EXAMPLE 2

The Home Ownership for people with Long term Disabilities (HOLD) scheme is very positive and it has been life changing for some people. If a person has a long-term disability, the HOLD scheme in England could help them buy any home for sale on a shared ownership basis (part rent/part buy). They can buy a share of their home (between 10% and 75% of the home's value) and pay rent on the remaining share.●

“Our goal is to see people with learning disabilities in the mainstream of life, living in ordinary houses and ordinary streets, with the same range of choices as any citizen, and mixing as equals with the other members... of their own community”

David Towell

David Towell 'An Ordinary Life in Practice: Developing Comprehensive Community based Services for People with Learning Disabilities'
London: The King's Fund, (1988).

GOOD EXAMPLE 3

Paradigm have produced the Reach Standards which they describe as ‘a guide dedicated to people who want to raise expectations, continually question and improve the world around us’●

Reach Standard 1
I choose who I live with

Reach Standard 2
I choose where I live

Reach Standard 3
I have my own home (with
a tenancy or ownership)

WHO DO WE NEED TO ENROL/ENGAGE?

As can be seen by the range of ideas we can work on together some, such as changes to the benefits system require systems change at a government level. Strong advocacy will be required to push this agenda.

Others, such as recognising and prioritising the right to a home and family life can be built on relatively quickly through sustained citizen action. Focused attention needs to be given to strengthening alliances with housing, advocacy, carers and human rights organisations. Actively raising aspirations based on respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights provides a unifying framework for this work.

NEXT STEPS/FIRST STEP

There seems so much to do that it would be easy to get despondent, however that does not make things any easier for learning disabled people and their families.

When things are difficult, more than ever, we need to be inspired by the power of the possible. Our first step should be to build on the good examples we have detailed above.

FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

We need to recognise the importance of the right home. This should be based on person-centred planning. The opportunity for people with learning disabilities, including an understanding of the priorities of Black Asian Minority Ethnic people and their families, housing providers, social workers etc. to come together and plan how to get the home they want and need. This would require 'needs led housing development rather than build and fill'.

People's rights and security of tenure should be enshrined in all planning and delivery of housing for people with learning disabilities guided by the Real Tenancy test.

FOR GOVERNMENT

Government should create the conditions for growth of supply by allocating a higher proportion of the new affordable homes programme to new housing for people with learning disability and autism that will support 'needs led housing'.

In addition Government should create a more comprehensive and integrated planning framework for a range of housing options (including Supported Housing), update the rent standard for social housing and ensure stability in the welfare benefits system for tenants to maintain their home, particularly in relation to Housing Benefit.

FOR COMMISSIONERS

Local Councils should make sure all housing options meet a set of core standards for the options, and quality available to people alongside rights including the Real Tenancy Test.

Funding should be available which supports people to live good lives, fosters independence and enables contribution. This should be in addition to money that pays for personal care (for people who need that as well as support).

FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES

There needs to be investment in information, resources and skills to support people to know and understand how to get access to housing that suits them.