



Starts at Home: Supported Housing works, but we need to invest in it

**A blog by Ian Gilders, Executive Director of Housing, Advance
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Earlier this month I hosted a visit from Alicia Kearns MP at one of our supported housing schemes in Melton Mowbray.

It was great to see residents – each of whom has needs related to mental health or learning disability - taking the opportunity to engage with their MP and share their views about everything from the services [Advance](#) provides to their enthusiasm for the possible revitalisation of the local Melton market.

The visit was timely, too. Only the week before (4th August 2022), the influential Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee published its [second report](#) on its inquiry into the long-term funding of adult social care in which they described a "ravaged" care system in need of both a financial injection and a long-term plan to ensure the sector can meet immediate cost pressures and be sustainable in the years to come.

For those of us who work in the social care and supported housing sector, the findings are a welcome acknowledgement of what we already know:

That there is not enough money to sustain quality service provision and support a dwindling social care workforce already on its knees.

That we are not investing enough in the right kind of housing to support the current, let alone growing demand from people with disabilities, mental health conditions or other support needs.

Ultimately, that we are already failing people with support needs.

Since 2016, the number of new requests for support in England have increased by 5.6% and costs have gone up by more than a quarter. But, investment in funding per person for social care has reduced in real terms by 12% since 2010.

In our discussion, I highlighted to Ms Kearns, that supported housing has proven to be a successful and cost-effective way of supporting people with severe mental health needs, learning disabilities and many other needs to live full and meaningful lives in their communities. Yet current policy and funding arrangements do not support adequate provision.

At the same time, complex funding arrangements make supported housing on social rents a very unattractive proposition for housing providers (with the exception of large schemes for older people) resulting in many of them backing away from this type of provision.

One politician's visit doesn't change things overnight and I realise we have a big hill to climb as social care has once again quietly slipped back down the agenda against the backdrop of war in Europe and a cost of living crisis.

But I'm glad that Ms Kearns took the time to come and see. To talk to our customers and learn for herself how important this type of provision is to them. How important this type of provision is for all of us if we want to live in a society where all citizens are able to live full and meaningful lives.

When people hear 'adult social care', they tend to picture older people. But half of adult social care public spending is on working age adults with disabilities.

So, we need more politicians visiting and speaking with people with learning disabilities and mental health conditions so they can better understand what this group of people want and need, and to ensure they feel valued and included in a society where they are currently too often overlooked.