

# Learning Disability Housing Strategy

2009-2014

# Thank You

## We would like to thank the contributors to this strategy

- Housing Sub-Group of the Learning Disability Partnership Board
- Care and housing providers in the Wigan borough (in house & external)
- Wigan and Leigh Housing
- Steve Sargent, Service Manager Housing Strategy
- Paula Daley, Housing Options Development Worker
- Bridget Hollingsworth, Service Manager Adult Provision
- Lesley Teasdale, Housemates Co-ordinator
- Angela Seddon, Learning Disability Partnership Board Co-ordinator
- Alison Perry, Social Worker
- Daycentre Managers and staff
- People with support needs who told us their housing stories
- Families and carers who provided information responding to the questionnaires
- People with support needs who participated in interviews



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# 1. Executive summary

This housing strategy for people with learning disabilities in Wigan has been developed through extensive consultation with people with learning disabilities, their families and carers, housing and social care professionals. The themes have emerged from this work which are:

- Need for better access to good quality information
- Being given the opportunity to plan for housing
- To have choices

We felt it was important to produce an easy read format of the strategy so that it could be used as a reference for people with learning disabilities. This is available as a separate document.

This report celebrates the strides that have been made in Wigan in recent years as well as discussing what needs to happen to make good, appropriate, supported housing a real possibility for people with learning disabilities. The progress made is highlighted by good news stories put forward by people with learning disabilities. These stories, together with the quantitative information shows how people in the borough, on a relatively small scale, have started to access an interesting range of



housing and support services. The good news stories are inspirational and we hope will serve as examples to other people with learning disabilities about what can be achieved. People talk about their new homes with pride and the examples used have included a whole range of accommodation types and support so that different people can identify with different models. Examples include individual tenancies, sharing with others, extra care housing and shared ownership schemes. They all show how important good quality housing with the right support is to enable people with learning disabilities to truly gain citizenship and inclusion in society. This housing and support base is a cornerstone of the progressive and long overdue policies of Valuing People Now 2008, referred to in more detail at the beginning of this document.

This report was commissioned by the Housing Sub-Group of the Learning Disability Partnership Board in Wigan. Their aim is to see fair access to, and good availability of a range of housing and support services across the borough. In carrying out the consultation and research for the strategy, the sub-group met a number of people who had significant problems around housing and support, compounded by the lack of good quality advice. Rather than just highlighting their issues within a report, the sub-group has taken a pragmatic approach to resolving the problems and crisis on an individual basis. Through the support and expertise within the group, innovative and personal solutions have been developed to the problems encountered. The primary role of the sub-group now will be to oversee the implementation of the action plan for this strategy.

The improvements in the housing provision and the start of joint working towards these goals are only the first stage. Like many other local authorities, Wigan still has a long way to go:

- It has become very evident during the research that there is a marked need for specialist information and advice for people who wish to take up the options discussed in this document. Through the Housing Advice Line, discussed in more detail in this plan, and the housemates seminars, Wigan officers have been able to tackle some of the more difficult problems that people with learning disabilities were facing in the area.

Although the numbers of people advised and supported have been comparatively small due to limited resources, the problems that people were experiencing were difficult and time consuming to sort out. From this relatively small sample, we can conclude that without specialist help and support, people with learning disabilities in the borough could struggle to achieve the housing and support they require.

- Wigan is moving towards new ways of provision of support and care through

‘personalisation’ and ‘individual budgets’ in line with national good practice and government agendas. This personalisation process will require good quality specialist advice and this advice could be provided either in house, or by asking outside agencies to provide independent housing brokerage services. There are many methods of doing this, but either way, this type of help and support needs to be in place to make the whole prospect of personalisation and individual budgets become a reality.

- Good housing, advice and support are vital components of a good life plan. It is therefore timely that the Wigan’s Housing Strategy for the wider population is being reviewed, as not only will create new opportunities for people with learning disabilities, but lessons already learned from developing innovative housing and support solutions for people with learning disabilities may be replicated to provide alternative solutions to wider housing problems . This strategy will therefore be a crucial link between the Housing Strategy, Supporting People Strategy and the Valuing People agenda.
- Attention needs to be given to people who are currently

supported but in need of more appropriate placements, whether this be shared or supported living schemes or those placed outside the borough and for those people with more complex and profound needs.

More appropriate solutions can be developed, but to make this a reality, careful and expert joint planning for the reviews is required alongside intensive, targeted support and management of the people making the moves otherwise the results will likely to be unadventurous, unsatisfactory and not cost effective.

A fully committed joint review panel with expertise in the range of housing options in the borough and a small expert team of advisors for any people moving to new homes are required to make this happen effectively. The appointment of Paula Daley as the Learning Disability Housing Options Development Worker has been invaluable to the progress of housing for people with learning disabilities in the borough. This expertise has to be continued and built upon through the expansion of housing brokerage provision.

*“This will mean Wigan is at the forefront of delivering excellent services to people with learning disabilities nationally...”*

- Our knowledge is still lacking in the borough about what is really needed. We estimate that we only know about 25% of what we need to know about the requirements for the future as this percentage of people represents the people currently known to social services, housing and supporting people departments. Based on national averages, there are likely to be many people with moderate learning disabilities in the borough who will benefit from appropriate housing and support without the full interventions of social services. There could also be people who are accessing services who have a more

profound need but are not considered to be a priority at this point, so no direct and informative planning can be done for the future in terms precise housing need.

We need to address the likely need of all of these people in the next 5 years by more detailed research and provision of pre-care planning for the future so that a better picture and provision will develop.

Wigan’s housing for people with learning disabilities in the borough is more exciting and realistic. It offers a far better approach to work together to achieve good quality, appropriate housing and

support using all the advances in new technology. This will mean Wigan is at the forefront of delivering excellent services to people with learning disabilities nationally, and is truly achieving a person centred and personalised service to people who are amongst the most vulnerable in the borough.

Inevitably, additional resources are required to deliver the plan, but as the sub-group have demonstrated, greater levels of input in the short term can lead to more appropriate and cost effective housing and support solutions in the long term.



Our main aim is:

**To enable people with learning disabilities and their families to have greater choice and control over where and how they live.**

**We will do this by:**

- Producing better information on housing and support options.
- Putting support in place that offers housing related advice, guidance and reassurance to people with learning disabilities and their families.
- Expanding the variety of housing options available.
- Using the support and care resources more effectively in a range of housing, including better use of new technology.

## 2. Introduction

**This strategy has been developed to address the future housing needs of people with learning disabilities in Wigan.**

It builds on the one written in 2004 for the Valuing People Team and is in accordance with the latest national government guidance and legislation.

It will form part of the overall Housing Strategy for Wigan and the Supporting People Strategy



The work was commissioned by the Learning Disability Housing Sub-Group and has been done by a housing consultant, Jayne Knight.

Jayne has researched housing in the Wigan area by:

- Writing to people about housing
- Talking to people about what they want
- Looking at what is going on locally and nationally

She has contacted 127 people in the borough in the above ways to help with her research.

**THANKS!**

**Thank you to everyone who has contributed such a lot of time and information to this valuable research. You are listed on page 2.**



### 3. What has happened in Wigan so far?

#### The Partnership Board created a sub group for housing.

The people who go to this Housing Sub-Group are:

- People who are interested in developing housing options and a strategy for Wigan.
- People who want to make sure that the strategy is working for people with learning disabilities and to plan future housing services.

You can find more information about the Housing Sub-Group and a list of the membership of the group in Appendix A.

#### We know that there are some excellent new developments in Wigan for people with learning disabilities:

- **Wigan** is working in close consultation with people who need services and support, families, carers and voluntary advocacy bodies and other professional bodies
- **Wigan** is taking the needs of older carers of people with learning disabilities seriously and planning with them for the future
- **Wigan** is reviewing respite services to offer a more modern and person centred approach to respite care.
- **Wigan** is planning with people with learning disabilities who wish to return from out of borough placements.
- **Wigan** is addressing the needs of people who need more complex arrangements for their housing and support, including forensic services.
- **Wigan** is planning to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities and dementia.
- **Wigan** is planning with people with learning disabilities for much better arrangements for their housing and support using self directed support.
- **Wigan** is working with young adults who have a high level of need and who require a good range of housing and support to help them in the future.
- **Wigan** has full details of people requiring a move who meet the Fair Access to Care Criteria.
- **Wigan** now has a whole range of housing options including shared ownership, low cost housing options and extra care provision for people with learning disabilities (but needs more).
- **Wigan** appointed a Housing Options Worker in 2007 to help move the housing agenda forward. (See appendix E.)
- **Wigan** now has some excellent examples of joint working with housing and other support and care services.
- **Wigan** had a joint development day for housing and social services to work together on creative options for housing and support. We plan to have more of these successful days.
- **Wigan** has trained self advocates in basic housing law and rights and plan to repeat the successful sessions.
- **Wigan** is developing a range of housing and support options in the borough to meet future needs.

*“We know that there are some excellent new developments in Wigan for people with learning disabilities”*

- **Wigan** has a recently launched a housemates scheme in the area to encourage people to share their home and lives with other people in a less formal way.
- **Wigan** undertook a full review of the Supporting People funding for people with learning disabilities.
- **Wigan** has identified several people in the Supporting People review that require more appropriate accommodation for their needs.
- **Wigan** is setting up a not for profit, social enterprise, to lease long term properties from the private sector and to make more secure arrangements for vulnerable people.
- **Wigan** is looking at new types of arrangements using extra care housing, assistive technology and schemes to support people with more moderate needs.

Members of the Housing Sub-Group



## 4. What is happening nationally?

The Valuing People White Paper was launched in 2001. It was a government document that aimed to alter the lives of people with learning disabilities in England. Since this was written a lot of things have happened that have improved the lives of people with learning disabilities.

Valuing People made it clear that people with learning disabilities should have more choice and control over where and how they lived. This meant that people with learning disabilities should be able to get good housing either on their own or with someone else and to have the right support and care.



### **The good news is that in Wigan many more people with learning disabilities are getting housing and support of their choice**

**In 2008, another strategy document called Valuing People Now was produced. It said that in England:**

- Since 2001, more people with learning disabilities are living in their own homes than before.
- But most people with learning disabilities still do not have their own home and live with their families or in residential care.
- The housing plans made for people through the Learning Disability Partnership Boards have moved many people into better homes.

- The work nationally is still not hitting all the targets and there are still barriers to people getting what they want.

So in England, the Department of Health and the Department for Communities and Local Government (who are responsible for housing) will work on a joint plan for housing for people with learning disabilities.

This will make sure people with learning disabilities get a fair deal from government housing plans.

**Valuing People Now says in three years time:**

- Local authority care managers should make sure that there are more people with learning disabilities living in their own homes or renting in safe tenancies.
- Anyone that provides support to people with learning disabilities should make sure they are helping people to live full lives-like getting a job, going to college and having a social life.



**This is all good news as it means that local authorities will have national targets and guidance about good practice in housing and support for people with learning disabilities to work towards.**

*“Valuing People made it clear that people with learning disabilities should have more choice and control over where and how they lived.”*

**You can get a copy of Valuing People Now on the internet, or at your local library. There is an easy read version too and it says a lot about housing and support.**

- Another document, published in 2008, that is very important to people with all disabilities is the Independent Living Strategy
- It says that Departments in the government should work together to improve the life chances and experiences of people with all types of disabilities, including people with learning disabilities.



## **THE GOVERNMENT STATES IN THIS REPORT THAT BY 2013:**

- People with disabilities will be able to control what support and equipment they need.
- The government will invest new money into the Independent Living Strategy
- It wants the help people with disabilities get to be made available in many different ways. These ways include self help and help from the voluntary sector.
- The problems that people have getting housing, transport, education, health and employment will be looked at seriously.
- But it wants everyone to work more flexibly and together with what money and resources they have got now.

### **Important to note**

If you want and need support and care anywhere in England you have to have an assessment under the Fair Access to Care Services Regulations.

This is the same for people with learning disabilities in Wigan. You can get more details about Fair Access to Care Services in Wigan from a Social Worker.

Wigan Council can and will help you get advice and information on where to get help if they cannot provide it. Wigan is thinking about new ways of making sure this is easier for you to access.

For people who can get support and care from Wigan Council under these regulations, there is a range of options that can be talked about and offered. But there is not enough money and housing to meet everyone's needs and so Wigan is thinking hard about how they are going to help more people in future.

*“People with learning disabilities can claim housing benefit to pay their rent for their home if they meet the criteria”*

## New ways of getting support

You may have heard about a new way of delivering services called self directed support or an individual budget. It is also sometimes called **In Control**. In Wigan it is called Personalisation.

This is through another government plan to help people with disabilities to control what goes on in their own lives.

- It is a new way of getting help and puts the person with a disability, and people that support them, in charge of how they live and are supported using their own budget.

- Remember though, once again, the person with a disability has to meet the rules of Fair Access to Care.

- In Control is clear that **housing** is an important part of a person life plan.

- There are many ways that Wigan is going to develop the housing plan locally for people with learning disabilities. You will be asked to comment on this local plan and to make any suggestions you feel will be useful.

## New ways of paying for housing

People with learning disabilities can claim housing benefit to pay their rent for their home if they meet the criteria. A new housing benefit, Local Housing Allowance (LHA), came into effect nationally from April 2008 and has set rent levels for property in Wigan. It only applies to new tenants of privately rented accommodation

at the moment. Council, housing association and tenants already in privately rented housing can still get housing benefit.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates in Wigan are about 20% higher than the housing benefit that was paid before. (Up to date rates are available at

council offices, libraries and on the council's web site)

This is good news as there is quite a lot of privately rented accommodation that is now more affordable for people on benefits or low incomes.

### Important note

- If you need a property that is more expensive to provide because you have additional needs, e.g. a particular location for additional support, high level of adaptations or easy access around the property, Local Housing Allowance may not cover this.
- If you require an additional room because a carer who does not live with you needs to sleep over, Local Housing Allowance does not recognise this.
- Local Housing Allowance is usually paid to the tenant who then pays the landlord. If this is likely to cause difficulties, it can be paid directly to the landlord.

## 5. What we found out from our research

People with learning disabilities and their families were asked for their views about getting housing, advice and support. These comments are listed in more detail at Appendix C, however three themes have emerged:

- Being given the opportunity to plan for housing
- Have choices
- Need for better access to good quality information and training for all (i.e. people with learning disabilities and their families and housing and social care professionals)

To determine how much new housing is needed for people with learning disabilities in Wigan, we talked to Social Workers and learning disability health professionals. We were able to get data for people known to services, school leavers, people living in 'out of borough' placements, residents of supported and hostel accommodation and details about the older population who are experiencing signs of

dementia in addition to their learning disability. We have not been able to predict how many people with moderate or mild learning disabilities who are not known to the Learning Disability Teams who may need housing or support, for example people who do not meet Fair Access to Care criteria.

Further research needs to be done. We particularly need better information around the housing needs of people with additional mental health problems, people in existing supported accommodation and older people with learning disabilities as there was no recognisably separate data.

The range of accommodation and support generally available to people with learning disabilities in Wigan is explained in detail at Appendix B. The appendix includes examples of people, who are living successfully in their own tenancy, or in a home which they have bought, or who have chosen to stay with their family.

We found that there is a need for a minimum of 207 new living arrangements in Wigan

over the next five years and have been able to categorise how urgently people need to be housed. This does not mean we need to provide 207 new homes: if a person needs to move out of their home because it isn't really suitable, that property could be ideal for another person. The issues are not just about housing, it also significantly affects the way care and support is provided. Full details are in Appendix D.



## 6. What we want to do now

### Our main aim is:

To enable people with learning disabilities and their families to have greater choice and control over where and how they live.

### We will do this by:

Producing better information on housing and support options through: available:

- Housing Options Information manual
- Newsletters
- Workshop events
- Putting support in place that offers housing related advice, guidance and reassurance to people with learning disabilities and their families.

Expanding the variety of housing options available:

- Making it easier for people with learning disabilities to rent properties that are owned by the council, housing associations or private landlords.
- Making sure that people with learning disabilities can access new shared ownership and low cost housing for options that are being developed as part of the council's overall housing strategy
- Developing new housing, including: extra care schemes, apartment dwellings, sheltered style houses, individual housing, ground level access and adapted housing
- Using the support and care resources more effectively in a range of housing, including better use of new technology.



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## A. Membership of the Housing Sub-Group

### The people who attend the Housing Sub-Group are:

Chair	Steve Sargent
Family Carer	Lesley Teasdale
Family Carer	Julie Smith
Family Carer	Jim Barton
Social Worker	Alison Perry
Housing Options Development Worker	Paula Daley
Housing Consultant	Jayne Knight
Valuing People Team	Angela Seddon
Supporting People	Julie McGregor
Trainee Assistant Practitioner	Joanne Williams



Minutes of the Housing Sub-Group are available on the Learning Disability Partnership Board web site at [www.wiganldpb.org.uk/housing](http://www.wiganldpb.org.uk/housing)

The main purpose of the Housing Sub-Group is to develop the housing strategy for people with learning disabilities and making sure that action set out in the strategy is undertaken.

It is a sub-group of the Learning Disability Partnership Board but has very strong links with the Housing Partnership and its Housing Strategy and the Health and Social Care Partnership and the Supporting People Strategy.

It meets regularly and it is an excellent mix of professionals and family representatives. New members are always welcome to attend the group.

In addition to the list above, other people receive copies of the minutes regularly.

At this point, there are no representatives from people with a learning disability although in there has been in the past. There has also previously been representation from Adult Services senior management. This stopped when the senior manager left their post, so the new post holder needs to be invited to attend.

It is hoped that through the housing advice training and the help and experience self-advocates will gain and give to others that they will be able to

have a positive role on the sub-group in the future.

Family members attend in their own time freely to progress the work of the group. Their contribution is valuable and crucial towards enabling decisions to be inclusive.



## B. Review of accommodation and support in Wigan

### How do people find out about housing and support?

Nationally, most people find out about housing through their family and friends (43%) and then usually Social Services followed by the Housing Department.

From information gathered by the Housemates helpline, Embrace and the Supporting People Learning Disability report it appears that Wigan follows this trend.

More detailed research would be required to get a better picture. In Appendix C, there are comments from people with learning disabilities and their families about their experiences of accessing housing.

There is a shortage of information for people with learning disabilities, their families and professionals about housing, particularly the range

of options and what is involved in each option. Information could be made available in paper format, for example as a manual or on-line or through training and information sessions.



### Social housing in Wigan

Wigan and Leigh Housing manage council housing stock on behalf of the council; this means they are the biggest landlord in Wigan. WALH manage 23,000 properties in the area. In addition, there are also 1946 general needs properties belonging to eleven housing associations in the area, 1438 of these are given over to WALH for re-letting.

Housing associations also have 416 units/ bedspaces of supported housing of which only 136 are wheelchair accessible. Obviously, anyone who needs wheelchair accessible property may well wait a long time so it is important that when such property does become vacant that it is re-let appropriately. This process might be most effective by having an 'adapted property register' or similar.

A lot of property that used to belong to the council is now privately owned by former tenants through the Right to Buy scheme. Also fewer people are moving out of social rented housing because of affordability issues. These factors combined mean that the number of vacancies that arise has halved in the last 10 years. This means we have to look for alternatives to renting property in the social housing sector, e.g. home ownership, private sector leasing, etc...

Allocation of vacant social housing is done through a choice based lettings system. It is recognised that choice based lettings is not user-friendly for people with learning disabilities and there has been a national review of these schemes which will make recommendations for how they can improve their access.

In Wigan, Homefinder is a service that can help people who find choice based lettings difficult, but it only helps people to bid for vacancies that are advertised in the Property Shop.

Because housing by the council is limited, we need to look at different ways of helping provide it. Wigan is working hard to develop good private landlord arrangements for lifetime housing in the area.

## Individual tenancy

There are various organisations that offer individual tenancies to people with learning disabilities. Wigan and Leigh Housing is the largest landlord with almost 23,000 tenancies in the borough.

Other housing providers are:

- Registered Social Landlords (RSLs),
- Not for profit bodies such as charities and
- Private sector landlords.

Choice of housing through Wigan and Leigh Housing or RSLs can be limited so the council is keen to develop new housing with the help of funding from the Homes and Communities Agency.

Wigan Council is also keen to progress this type of development with good private

landlords and developers and is looking at ways to make existing private sector housing more affordable and secure.

The tenant can be offered anything from a short term tenancy arrangement called an assured shorthold, which is initially for 6 months but only requires two months notice and so is less secure, to an assured tenancy, which is far more secure and the tenant cannot be asked to leave unless they have breached their agreement. The demand for single tenancies will increase in line with national trends for single households that are also increasing in the general population. Single tenancies can be in areas all over Wigan, but single tenancies grouped nearby each other can help where people might want/need to share support, for example a Living Support Network..

### Important note:

Whilst most private landlords are looking for good, long term tenants, they tend to offer the less secure, assured shorthold tenancies. This is because it is easier for the landlord to ask someone to leave the property if there is a problem. This short term letting arrangement does not offer security and is not acting in the tenant's best interests. A list of accredited landlords can be found on the council's website.



For a local story about an individual tenancy, see Michael Atherton's story.

## Paying for rented housing

People with learning disabilities can claim housing benefit to pay their rent for their home if they meet the criteria.

A new housing benefit, Local Housing Allowance (LHA), came into effect nationally from April 2008. There is more information about this in the section “What is happening nationally.”

Wigan is striving to offer more individual affordable tenancies to people with learning disabilities, both in supported housing and with mainstream housing with floating support as and when it is needed.

## Shared ownership

There are several schemes available nationally.

These schemes are through Homebuy, which are limited by what schemes Registered Social Landlords are building. There is other low cost ownership options, such as HOLD, (Home Ownership for Long Term Disability) which gives a greater choice of property on the open market.

Up and coming changes to housing benefit law began in 2008 and are likely to extend shared ownership for people with disabilities to private sector developers and a greater range of property. This will allow there to be a wider range of providers able to offer shared ownership.

People with learning disabilities who need to move to a property that better suits their needs, e.g. because of their disability, and

who claim certain benefits, can be eligible for the HOLD scheme.

The person with a learning disability owns a share of the home with the landlord. The person with a learning disability can access mortgage costs from the Department of Work and Pensions, if the criteria are met, on an interest only basis to pay a mortgage on the part they own. They can also access housing benefit for most of the rented part, again if they meet the rules for claiming that benefit.

Two of these local arrangements are with Great Places (formerly Manchester Methodist Housing Association) and six are with Adactus. The mortgages for people with a learning disability are being arranged through a private financial advice company, My

Safe Home. They are a national company that has worked in this area of finance for 10 years.

The shared ownership properties are in location of the person's choice, within a financial limit. Sometimes two people can arrange to share, again up to a financial limit.

Major repairs can be programmed into the scheme and also there is less of a problem if the property goes down in value (negative equity), as the landlord shares the risk .

### Important note:

If someone does not have capacity to enter into a mortgage arrangement for property then advice must be sought from Social Workers first about applying to the Court of Protection for a property order. This has to be in the best interest of the individual.

So far, the take up of HOLD has been good and it looks as though they will be in great demand in the future. It is likely that there will be more grants available in the future for more schemes of this type. Full advice and support is given if a person with a disability wishes to take up this arrangement. Valuing People Now wants to see more of these arrangements nationally.

Wigan has worked hard to encourage the local Registered Social Landlords to pick up the opportunities of shared ownership.

This has meant that in 2008, for the first time, there are 9 homes purchased by people with learning disabilities on a shared ownership basis.

*“Wigan does have a housemate’s scheme and a progress report and information about the scheme is included later in this strategy.”*

## Shared equity arrangements

The equity is shared at an agreed proportion between the occupier and another party, usually a housing provider. Upon resale, the equity may be split or the housing provider may retain their interest in the home.

## Outright owner

This is housing that offers complete choice for people if they are able to undertake this option.

Very few people with learning disabilities nationally have taken this choice of housing.

Without a substantial deposit it can be difficult to obtain a mortgage. However, if money has been left to an individual, for example, or parents wish to downsize and help out, it is a legitimate way of using up some of the financial resources. This could also be a method of acquiring a shared equity arrangement.

The owner occupier needs to meet the repair costs from their own income and the only type of mortgage is an interest only mortgage so there could be problems if there was ever negative equity.

Properties can be left to individuals, but advice must be sought in making a will as to whether a Discretionary Trust would be advisable. There is no problem leaving money in a will to someone with any capacity to be able to deal with it, and the property.

With a Discretionary Trust, the repairs and on going costs can be met by the Trust rather than a person worrying about this, provided there is sufficient income.

However, it may be that someone acting on the person’s behalf will have different ideas about how to use the finance than a parent or other family member may have wished them to use it. Any type of arrangement where there is being a Trust set up should be carefully examined.

## Disabled owner sub letting

This can be when someone with the permission of their landlord or building society decides to take in a sub tenant, or lodger, into their own home. The status of the lodger or sub tenant is not a secure status in these circumstances. It can help to support the tenant/owner and help with social isolation but there are possible reductions in benefit depending on what the arrangement is.

If it is a housemate, they do not have a tenancy as such. They have an arrangement to provide a service to someone with a disability and in return are offered accommodation. This is similar to the accommodation offered with a job such as a live in nanny.

Wigan does have a housemate’s scheme and a progress report and information about the scheme is included later in this strategy.



## Living with parents



The person with a learning disability lives in the family home. They may attend day services or have individual support and respite services. Some people with learning disabilities go to work maybe with help from supported employment.

Some of the risks of living with family, is that relatives may reach a point where they can no

longer provide support because of increasing age, frailty, illness, marriage break ups and then a move may be needed in a crisis.

There can also be problems inheriting a family home or tenancy.

In Wigan, we can see Jim and Martin's story as a positive choice. Their story is in the booklet that goes with this strategy.

Although living in the family home can be a very good source of safety and good support, it may not always prepare an individual well for independent living.

A recent survey of people undertaken nationally as part of the Valuing People programme shows that half of all people with learning disabilities are living at home with parents and 12% of people are living with other relatives.<sup>1</sup>



## What is supported housing?

**Supported housing is a way to describe a range of housing.**

When people in the past were vulnerable and needed housing in the community larger group homes and residential homes were built to house people.

Nowadays, there are different ways of supporting people rather than some of the solutions that were sought, perhaps twenty years ago.

There are some older examples and some very modern examples of supported housing to be found in Wigan today.

<sup>1</sup> National survey of adults with learning disabilities in England 2003-2004 reproduced by Housing Options fact sheet ref: 20 March 2008. [www.housingoptions.org.uk](http://www.housingoptions.org.uk)

*“There is now an increasing demand for support and care for people with a learning disability who are getting older and living longer. This is happening nationally too.”*

## Shared housing / group home

A group home is usually a shared tenancy with other people with disabilities. It is not a registered care home because everyone has an individual tenancy. Shared tenancies in Wigan tend to be for 2 to 4 people.

In Wigan, the ‘Supported Accommodation Service’ comes under this category and is a large resource in the area for supporting people with learning disabilities, often with 24 hour support.

## Registered care homes

In a registered care home the person usually has a licence to live there.

A registered care home is not a person’s own home.

A registered home is subject to the rules and policies of the owner of the home and the legislative and regulatory rules of Commission for Social Care Inspection, the body looking after care homes.

For people with learning disabilities, living in a care home their accommodation and care would usually be paid for by the local authority. Living in a care home means the person usually has little or no access to welfare benefits.

The tenant must have (what is known legally as) “exclusive space” to have a tenancy. This is generally the person’s bedroom where the tenant can have complete control over what goes on. However, it can sometimes be quite difficult to have the same level of choice in the communal rooms, like kitchen and bathroom.

Wigan Council encourages people to move into supported housing rather than registered care.

There is now an increasing demand for support and care for people with a learning disability who are getting older and living longer. This is happening nationally too.

In Wigan, there are 23 people living at the Pines hostel which is registered care.

There are approximately 40 people living out of the borough in registered placements. Some of these people are supported by the Primary Care Trust (PCT). There is a working group dedicated to looking at the

### Important note:

If personal care is given to anyone in the group home then it can run the risk of being classed as a registered care home if proper tenancies are not in place. This means the advice about safe and genuine tenancies for people with learning disabilities are so important. The advice from the Valuing People Now consultation backs this important factor.

needs of these people who are out of borough and their placements on return, if they wish, to the area.

Who pays for and supports people who are ordinarily resident in a certain area is a question that has not yet been resolved by the government.

Further in this strategy document there is a section on the increasing requirements of older people with learning disabilities and people who have learning disabilities and dementia.

## Lodgings, fostering and family placements

These are arrangements where a person lives with a family or a person who has their own home. Once a placement is chosen, the support comes from the people at the placement.

Housing benefit payments support this and the people that you lodge with, are paid at the family carer rates. It is used generally for younger people waiting to move on to their own tenancy. Adult placements are also available.

## Sheltered accommodation for older people



Sheltered accommodation is for older people aged 60 and over, although sometimes there can be an allowance made for people who are younger.

Sheltered accommodation varies. Some are flats with a care alarm system and no staff on site although individual home care staff might visit. Each flat has its own front door.

Some schemes in Wigan are very modern schemes that offer a full range of facilities, including support on site. These are called extra care or very sheltered schemes.

Older people with learning disabilities can access sheltered housing schemes. Some of the schemes haven't always been a

popular choice among older people whether learning disabled or not. There is a separate review of sheltered schemes in the borough. The purpose of the review is to get a better match between what people want and what is provided. This could involve some re-modelling of what is offered and provide more opportunities for people with learning disabilities to access this housing option.

Support to the individual could come through any of the following sources of funding: Supporting People funding, care funding, health funding, ILF, individual budgets and assistive technology.

Some sheltered schemes also have telecare and assistive technology. For example in Wigan, The Rowans has a fully adapted 'smart' flat. This can be used on a trial basis. There are more details of assistive technology later in this Appendix.

It is a way of helping older people to be independent for longer, engage with local communities and maintain social and family networks and get appropriate care and support. Levels of care are tailored to meet the older person's needs and regularly assessed to ensure that they remain appropriate.

There have been several pilots nationally for extra care scheme for people with learning disabilities. The Department of Health has invested money for extra care schemes in the past few years. They encouraged bids for schemes that included people with learning disabilities and demonstrated good practice.

See Sylvia's story in the booklet that goes with this strategy.

**“There have been moves to integrate older people with learning disabilities into extra care housing for older people. ”**

Wigan is taking the needs of its older people seriously and has planned to develop extra care housing as part of its portfolio of housing for the future. These types of scheme also benefit people with learning disabilities who may need extra care and support. They would not have to be older people if the schemes were specifically designed to assist people with learning disabilities. It is one of a range of options.

It could usefully focus on:

- People who need different accommodation due to changing needs.
- People who need specially designed or adapted dwellings including provision of enabling assistive technology.
- People who need enhanced housing, care and support.
- People with Down's Syndrome who are at greater risk of dementia at an earlier age.

As stated, it does not have to be designed solely for older people and can be a useful model for all age groups requiring this level of support.

There have been moves to integrate older people with learning disabilities into extra care housing for older people. This is a debate that Wigan must continue to develop. There are many advantages in this model of extra care but there are also factors that must be taken into account:

- People with sensory disabilities and learning disabilities may have different needs and may be unable to express these as easily as other older people
- People will be retiring later and day activities may be an important part of the older person's life style and source of friendships.

- People with learning disabilities may have fewer friends and relatives to see and do things with. They are unlikely to have children and so maintaining other relationships is very important.
- People with learning disabilities who live with other older people may find themselves ignored by other residents keen to distance themselves in order to ensure their own mental capacity is acknowledged.
- There will be a need for greater vigilance from staff if people are unable to communicate their feelings and comfort easily. (*A New Provision for older people with learning disabilities page 4 Nigel King, HLIP 23/12/2004. Factsheet no 3*)

There is good information available from the Housing Corporation on design for extra care housing on [www.housingcorp.gov.uk](http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk)

There is also excellent information on scheme design for people with sight problems and learning disabilities from the [www.rnib.org.uk/multidis](http://www.rnib.org.uk/multidis) website.

The GOLD (Growing Older with Learning Disabilities) programme supported 12 projects for older people with learning disabilities and is a very useful source of information. More information can be found at: [www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/our-work/person-centred-support/gold/](http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/our-work/person-centred-support/gold/)

## Assistive technology in Wigan

Assistive technology is a way that people can get help with their disability, either to help them do something such as a household task or to help them get help if they have a problem. Assistive technology can also help people use other technology such as telephones and the internet. Telecare is a system by which a person can choose to have some monitoring in their life to help them live independently, e.g. buttons that raise an alarm at a control centre.

There are also systems that monitor the person's well-being and/or environment. These trigger (even if the person is unconscious) a warning that the person's well-being has deteriorated, or that a problem has occurred. Some systems let the person themselves know there is a problem.

### Examples of Telecare devices are:

- Movement/non-movement sensors
- Falls sensors
- Fire/smoke alarms
- Automatic lighting sensors
- Food/water alarms
- Fridge activity sensors
- Window/door sensors
- Carbon monoxide sensors
- Bed/chair occupancy sensors
- Temperature range sensors
- Gas shut off devices
- Medication reminder systems
- Wrist-worn wellbeing monitors
- Safety confirmation devices



### Here are two examples of many uses of Telecare devices.

#### 1. Devices that predict problems

An example of a system that helps predict problems and alerts professional carers is the WristCare system that monitors a person's activity and environment. Spotting early changes in these can help predict and prevent problems. The system can also raise an alarm if the person wishes.

#### 2. Devices that prevent problems

A bed sensor can help prevent falls by activating a light when someone gets out of bed. This helps because the person does not need to reach for the light switch or move around in the dark. It can also raise an alarm if the person does not return to bed within a predetermined time. By getting help quickly, problems do not escalate.

*“Wigan is looking at the inclusion of KeyRing type arrangements in the borough.”*

## Living Support Networks

**KEYRING** is an example of one organisation that supports people in a Living Support Network. People live in ordinary housing in this model, so it could be a rented flat or a shared ownership for example.

A Project Worker, who lives nearby (within one mile) provides a limited amount of support to each member of the Living Support Network. A Network, is usually made up of 9 -10 people and each member is encouraged to support other members and get involved in their local community. A Living

Support network could be extended to include someone in sheltered housing or even someone living at home who wants to think about moving on. Wigan is looking at the inclusion of this useful form of housing and support for people with low to moderate needs, possibly with the addition of assistive technology. We are recommending in this strategy a bid to Supporting People to fund such a scheme in the borough.



**KeyRing**  
unlocking potential

Wigan is looking at the inclusion of KeyRing type arrangements in the borough. With the addition of assistive technology this is a useful form of housing and support for people with low to moderate needs. We are recommending in this strategy a bid to Supporting People teams to fund such a scheme in the borough.



## C. Quotes on accessing housing options

### Positive comments

"There is so much more opportunity now and I would never have imagined being able to own my own home."  
**Shared home owner**

"The Learning Disability Housing Strategy is helping us to give our daughter a brighter future, it is going to help us find a home from home for our daughter."  
**Parent of someone leaving home for the first time**

"My social worker takes me seriously and my son has set a target date for his move and he means it."  
**Parents**

"Social Workers taking training in housing is a brilliant idea."  
**Social Worker and tenant together at training course**

"As parents of a daughter with multiple disabilities we were very determined to find a home for her that would allow her to enjoy the same sort of life style she had enjoyed with us but also gave her total security of tenure for life. We could not have achieved this goal without the help and advice we received from Adult Services and the Housing Department. The shared ownership scheme gives our daughter what is effectively her own home, with and the backing of a housing association."  
**Parent of someone who has just bought her own home**

"I have been able to get information through the housing sub group and feel that the manual that Paula is doing will be really helpful to everyone."  
**Attendee Housing Sub-Group/parent**

"I am looking forward to moving out and getting my own place due to the help I have had from A, social worker who has supported Dad and I so well."  
**Future tenant living at home with Dad**

"They know how uncertain the future can be for our son. With the help of the Housing Options Development Worker we're in touch with the appropriate organisation for the Shared Ownership Scheme and we get help with any decisions needed. We are looking forward for a more secured future for our son."  
**Parents whose son has been renting privately**

"After your excellent training, S came back and talked about finding his own place. The Social Worker made enquiries straightaway for him."  
**Day centre manager**

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## Negative Comments

- “I have tried unsuccessfully to get any information about the range of housing options from the housing department of Wigan and Leigh Housing. My son is so disabled they feel it’s the job of Social Services.” **Frustrated parent**
- “Despite years of trying, I became very frustrated and there seemed to be no one to help me. Time was ticking by and if I had not had help from the Helpline then things would never have been sorted out. In fact I thought people in housing were trying to work against me. We are all so happy now my son is sorted in his own home.” **Now relieved parent and tenant**
- “What would we have done without you L.? We had reached the end of the road until we met you?” **Older parents**
- “It depends on what Social Worker you get and what area they work in as to whether you get one that knows anything about housing. I know some that are really knowledgeable and some who take no interest in it.” **Attendee/ parent at Housing Sub-Group repeating what had been said at local conference.**
- “This is all very well; all about choices etc., until you really want to make choices that are good choices and then you are told that is not suitable for your child.” **Carers**
- “No one seems to know anything about the range of housing in Wigan and Leigh and it depends on who you get to get even some information. I find out more from other families.” **Family member**
- “I want to plan but I have been told I can’t do this, as I am not a priority. If I knew I had planned properly I could relax about it now.” **Older parent**
- “I think there should be a one stop shop where we can go rather than to every pillar and post, being put on to one person and then another.” **Frustrated parent.**
- “We keep getting told there will be more opportunities but it does not seem to come our way.” **Older parent**
- “We need far more accommodation for people with physical and sensory disabilities and some positive good stories about it.” **Younger parent.**

## D. Predicted housing needs of people with learning disabilities

We have gathered data to predict housing need from a variety of sources:

### Adult Service accommodation lists

Each area Learning Disability Team (Social Workers) has a list of people who need housing and by when it is needed.

In the **South** of the borough, there are 31 people on the list (2007 figures) of whom 7 are urgent. There are 4 people who need housing as soon as possible and the others are from 1-2 years onwards.

In the **North** of the borough, there are 44 people on the accommodation list, (Feb 08) of which 18 are urgent or immediate priority. The priority of the others is not known. The accommodation needed includes:

- level access - 8 people
- shared living - 18 people
- living alone - 3 people

Age range:

- Up to 20yrs: 3
- 20 – 30yrs: 18
- 30 – 40yrs: 11
- 40 – 50yrs: 7
- Over 50yrs

### School leavers

School leavers identified for transition will be allocated an individual budget.

#### 2008: 14 young people currently in transition.

It will be necessary to plan individually for housing with this group of transition young people within one year of leaving school.

#### 2009: 45 young people in transition.

All meet FACs criteria. These all could potentially require accommodation in next five years.

From the person centred plans and individual budget work, the requirements for housing for young adults in transition needs

to be fed into the overall strategy for housing. See action plan.

Young People not meeting FACs criteria are signposted by the Transition Team to other services.

### Out of borough

#### 44 people live in Out of borough placements:

- 22 are behavioural placements
- 8 are forensic placements
- 7 are because of complex physical disability
- 2 are because of additional sensory disability
- Out borough returning (assess at 50%) 20

A piece of work is being undertaken at a senior level with Greater Manchester lead officers which will involve joint commissioning specialist providers of forensic or challenging behaviour support. A critical part of this is identifying housing and we want to look at shared responsibility i.e. reciprocal arrangements for people who cannot return to borough of origin.



*“In order for a property to meet the needs of someone with Dementia right up to the end of their life, the usual disabled access design applies. ”*

## People with learning disability and Down’s Syndrome that also have dementia

The Learning Disability Down’s Syndrome Team have identified 135 people with learning disability and Downs Syndrome in the borough:

- 35 people are of the age 50 or above
- 28 are in the 40-50 age group

Based on national prevalence (see appendix) we can expect that 21 people with learning disability and Down’s Syndrome in Wigan may currently be experiencing some symptoms of dementia.

- 3 people will need rehousing in the near future
- 13 people with dementia will need rehousing in next ten years

Some of these people may live in existing shared group homes. It is important that a stimulating environment is provided to people with Down’s Syndrome who are also experiencing dementia. Separate accommodation that includes Dementia specific support needs to be considered as an option. Even based on this scenario the housing need would still be 4 -5 properties.

The style of housing needed by this group of people would have to take account of Dementia in the later years and towards the end of life and be able to meet all physical needs. To aim for best practise in Dementia care it is important that permanent accommodation is provided as

early on in the diagnosis as possible.

In order for a property to meet the needs of someone with Dementia right up to the end of their life, the usual disabled access design applies. Further work needs to be done on determining that other specific design features are likely to be needed for example using assistive technology or extra safety features.

## Mental health

People may also have to have help with their mental health needs. Figures are not known, data needs collecting on this.

## Older people

We need to identify also the numbers who will require more specialist accommodation who are getting older e.g. in Supported Accommodation Services (SAS)

## The Pines hostel

The Pines is hostel for adults with a learning disability. We are aware that the Pines is not a modern facility but we need the views of the people that live there if we are to provide better accommodation and support. 23 people are permanently resident there (Aug 08), other people also visit for respite breaks.

## General

The 45 people identified by the Supporting People strategy for people with learning disabilities requiring more appropriate accommodation.

## Summary of housing needs

From above, there is a need for a minimum of 207 new living arrangements in the Wigan over the next five years. This does not mean we need to provide 207 new homes: if a person needs to move out of their home because it isn't really suitable, that property could be ideal for another person. The issues are not just about housing, it also significantly affects the way care and support is provided.

This is without considering the needs of people with more moderate disabilities.

More data is needed on housing needs of older people with learning disabilities, those with additional mental ill health (dual diagnosis) and people in existing supported accommodation.

2008	No.	Type of housing	By when	Other actions
<b>School leavers out of borough</b>	14	Unknown	Dec 08	Planning needed as a priority.
<b>On Adult Services LD</b> <b>'Housing lists:</b> <b>Ages:</b> <b>18 to 30</b> <b>31 to 55</b> <b>56 to 65</b>	79 41 32 4	16 ground floor accessible accommodation 33 were identified as being able to share 5 definitely could not share 2 detached properties 2 four bed bungalow to share 1 required a bungalow alone 4 people resident at the Pines	Now: - complete WALH application forms.  44 require housing within 1 year 35 require housing in 2-3 years	Housing plans needed
<b>People identified by Supporting People Strategy</b>	45	Requiring more 'appropriate' accommodation (some people are in SAS accommodation)	Oct 08	Find out the detail of who these people are, compare with adult services lists.
<b>People with LD, Down's Syndrome and Dementia</b>	3	Unknown, planning needed urgently	Dec 08	Housing plans needed with 13 other people identified by Down's Syndrome team
<b>Out of borough placements</b>	10	Unknown		Build better information base for return of Out of borough placements. Assist assigned SW and family to plan for housing. Inform bids for capital funding.

# E. Good News Housing Stories

## Andrea Teasdale

Andrea was the first person in the borough Council to buy her own home through the option of shared ownership. Living at home with Mum and Dad was not how Andrea saw her future and when she heard about being able to buy her own home it was a dream come true for her.

It took Andrea twelve months of battling against people who said it wasn't possible, and with the help of her Mum, her Social Worker, Alison Perry, Steve Sargent and a charity called Ling Trust, for her to achieve

her dream - her own bungalow, furnished completely to her taste and the right area for her active and varied life. This was a place she could really call her own.

Andrea set the scene for others to follow in the borough and her delight "to go where no one had gone before " was very clear for all to see. Lesley and Andrea have been an inspiration to many other families who wish to follow this route and Lesley is a passionate believer in people being able to fulfil their independence in this way.

For Andrea and Lesley it was a tough road to be pioneers for the borough, and it took a whole year, but the reward in the end was worth it.

Thank you Lesley and Andrea for showing us what can be achieved if you put your mind to it.

Now the borough can offer this opportunity to others and shared ownership is becoming an important part of the housing strategy for the future of local housing.

## Jim & Martin: Planning for family inheritance

Jim was thinking ahead as a lone parent and wanted to avoid a crisis when he was no longer going to be able to be his son, Martin's, carer.

Jim was the owner occupier of the family home, a 4 bed property and he believed, that when the time came, that Martin would not be allowed to stay alone in the property with a care package.

Jim and Martin considered a range of options including Martin renting his own place where Jim would still be his carer, but also gradually introducing other carers who

would eventually replace him in this carer role. However, this proved to be complicated because of Jim being a home owner so they had to turn to other options. Martin was clearly saying he wanted to stay with his Dad so the next possible solution was for them to buy somewhere smaller that Martin would definitely be able to stay in. They bought a modern tow bed apartment still near to the area they both know and the property forms part of Jims estate and is held in trust so that Martin can remain there as long as it is suitable or until his death.



Jim plans that the next stage is increasing Martin's independence so he is planning to have some extra holidays and short breaks over the next few years and this will help Martin to get used to having care and support in his own home from someone other than his Dad. Jim says that he has always had high expectations of the care and support for Martin and this way he gets the security of knowing that Martin has got a home for life.

*“My Mum and Dad and I all agreed that I should be thinking of taking my independence further.”*

## Elizabeth Hawkes

**Hi everyone, I am Elizabeth Hawkes, I am 25 years of age.**

I used to live at home with my Mum and Dad and I had job in Sainsbury's in Leigh where I worked as a Customer Services Assistant. I had been there for 7 and half years before I moved to the nursery where I work now. I like a lot of things in life but I am passionate about drama. My Mum and Dad and I all agreed that I should be thinking of taking my independence further. I own a share of my own house, Adactus own some of it too, but it is great owning my own home. It is near to Mum and Dad and my friend and I know the area well.

In one way, I am really pleased and excited about having my own home and I am getting used to it, but I also feel nervous and unsure about whether I can manage without my Mum and Dad for the first time. I am sure I will really enjoy it in time and I would like to thank everyone who helped me.



## Not always plain sailing, but that's life!

Thomas was living in his own Housing Association flat but found it be a lonely life. Then he started going out with Julie; they became a couple and moved in together. They followed the typical path of most couples; got married and started a family.

They were living in a council flat at the time, but it was way too small so they applied for a house. Before too long they were given a house, near shops and the community centre. This was not a good area though as it was a very noisy place with a lot of people hanging round that made them feel very uncomfortable. They are now settled in Tyldesley and this has proven so much better. They are very happy with their semi and they have not had any trouble from anyone.



*“Paul once lived in a hostel but when it closed he moved into a lovely bungalow with two friends.”*

## Big change for Michael

Michael has lots of support from his family and his sister-in-law is also his Support Worker. She is going to help him make his tea each day. Michael is getting used to dealing with bills and budgeting his money too. He is going to have his own bank account and his Mum will help him pay what he needs to each week.

Michael was one of our participants on the Self Advocates Basic Housing Law and Rights course. Just in time for moving to his new home!



Here's Michael making a cuppa in his new flat. He says he is enjoying having some time to himself, but he is also looking forward to being able to have friends over.



Michael with one of his first visitors, his nephew, Mathew!

## “Moving to somewhere better suited to my needs”

**This is what Paul says about moving house...**

Paul once lived in a hostel but when it closed he moved into a lovely bungalow with two friends.

Due to changes in Paul's mobility, his current bungalow just won't meet his needs any longer. He cannot use the bath and the corridors and doorways are very tight and he worries about catching the paint work with his wheelchair!



In his new home, he'll also have lower work surfaces in the kitchen so he can help out at mealtimes and a car port so he won't get wet if it's raining when he is getting out of his car.

Staff help Paul with managing his money but he is used to going to pay bills, usually at the Post Office. Pauls doesn't know much about his landlord but he knows it is English Churches and staff will ring them if things need doing.

*“Being able to welcome visitors and being friendly with his neighbours are important parts of Frank’s day ”*

## Every man’s home is his castle! : Franks story

Frank Smith lives in his own bungalow in a small close at Lowton. He has lived there four and a half years. Frank moved to his live on his own after sharing his home for many years with other people. Often the people Frank lived with were chosen because they had the same label as Frank, learning disability, and were seen to have the same or similar needs. Frank did not have a choice over who he lived with.

Frank has also lived in a large hospital at one time.

Frank is now a tenant of Wigan and Leigh Housing. He claims Housing Benefit to pay the rent and has Support Workers who help him to pay all his other bills and manage his home and lifestyle.

IAS Services provide Frank with support every day and they sleep at Frank’s each night. Frank has a small team of people supporting him and they know him well, this is important

for Frank’s health and general well being.

Being able to welcome visitors and being friendly with his neighbours are important parts of Frank’s day and he also has a friend living nearby who he runs errands for. Frank decides his own routine and he likes to start the day early at 7am with cup of tea and a cigarette before having a long shower.

Frank helps with keeping his house and garden clean and tidy and he does some hovering and mopping the floor and plants daffodil bulbs in tubs in the garden. The garden has a bench where Frank can sit when the weather is good or when he is having a smoke.



Because Frank has his own staff team he can get out and about a lot. He works a half day each week as a receptionist, he likes to visit friends or go to the cinema and he has a season ticket for Wigan Athletic.



*“Veronica enjoyed being able to have friends visit her flat and having her own front door key.”*

## Veronica's Mum was getting older...

**Veronica had always lived at home so it was difficult when it was time for Veronica to try living away from home.**

Veronica then went to live with three other ladies in a shared group home. At her new home, Veronica had staff around all day and night to help out but Veronica was still able to go out alone.

After Veronica had been there a while, her Social Worker suggested that she might like to try living in her own flat.

Veronica decided to give this a try and she moved into a housing association flat about a 15 minute walk from where she was living, central to the area Veronica already knew. She was pleased that her friends could still come and take her to church and she still went to work and to meet her brother in Leigh.

Staff that had supported Veronica in the shared group home still came to lend a hand every day with cooking a hot meal and making sure Veronica was safe. Veronica liked to be able to make her own decisions, like some days Veronica liked to go to the chippy for her lunch and she got to know her neighbours and they were helpful and looked out for her



which Veronica thought was good but just occasionally they were a little bit nosy too!

Veronica enjoyed being able to have friends visit her flat and having her own front door key. Like many people though it was a good job she had entrusted a spare key to her support staff because one time (or maybe two!!) she locked herself out!

Sometimes Veronica was worried about children sitting on her garden wall and she talked to the local police about how best to deal with them. The children worried her sometimes and the police couldn't always come to help. After a while Veronica, her support staff and her Social Worker reviewed how Veronica was doing.

Veronica liked her flat but found it lonely living alone. After much deliberation, Veronica moved back to her shared group home so she could feel safer and have a think about what might suit her better than living alone. Veronica is still thinking about things and it does not mean that this is where she will live forever. She has tried her own place and now has more idea of what she likes and does not like in her home.

*“The Manager of Graham and David support team heard of a smaller house being vacant and suggested that as David and Graham were doing so well ..... they might want to move on to live somewhere together that was smaller.”*

## Graham and David move on to live together

Graham and David used to go to a day centre together and decided they would quite like to live together one day so when they felt ready to be independent they moved together to a new house.

It was a large house shared by two other people where they would get staff support every day. The house was newly built, in part by a local church, and they were very impressed when they saw it.

Because it was new, it had been designed to have plenty of room for wheelchair users and although it wasn't quite finished when they visited it was still quite impressive.

The manager of Graham and David's support team heard of a smaller house being vacant and suggested that as David and Graham were doing so well and they didn't need some of facilities of a purpose built bungalow, they might want to move on to live somewhere together that was smaller.

Graham and David agreed this was a good idea, visited the 'new' house and started to plan for moving on. They agreed they will still have staff offering support when they are at home and overnight but without other co-tenants.



In their new home Graham and David will be tenants of a private landlord and although their Support Workers have always managed Graham and David's money, it will be easier for them to get involved with their budgeting and paying bills once it is only their household.

However, mostly Graham and David are looking forward to being able to cook a meal for their families and David is going to take charge of the weekly food shopping! Graham on the other hand wants to throw wild parties and is going to be really glad that he doesn't have to listen to Daniel O'Donnell anymore – the crooning favourite of one of David's current co-tenants!

*“ I looked at other places but only ever wanted to be here. ”*

# Something extra special

## Sylvia



**My name is Sylvia Freeman and I am 60 years old. This is my story about my move to Wickham Hall, Extra Care scheme.**

As a child, I lived with my Mum and Dad in Diggle Street, Wigan which is just around the corner from Wickham Hall. I used to work in the bakery that my parents owned. It has been knocked down now but I can see where it was from my window at Wickham Hall. My Dad died first and then my Mum died at aged 64 years. I was 30 years old then and went to live with my Aunt. Over the next few years I lived at my Aunt's and had some respite. I got a flat that I could share with another woman with a learning disability. The Social Worker thought we would be fine without any support, apart from family visits but we didn't really get on.

After 4 years, I wasn't happy. I moved to a flat on the 10th floor in a high-rise block of flats where my Aunt was lived on the

bottom. I lived in this place for 20 years on my own with support from my Aunt downstairs. I always felt safe as I could see the Police Station from my kitchen window. My Aunt was concerned that as she was getting older, now aged 89 years, she couldn't help me and she wanted me to move into "care" before anything happened to her.

My Social Worker helped me to think about where I really wanted to live. I told her that I wanted to go back to be near my mum. I wanted to go back to my family roots, my church, near Diggle Street.

The Social Worker persuaded my Aunt to have help in her own flat. This convinced her that if someone has help in their own home they don't have to go into "care". This worked well.

I moved to Wickham Hall (round corner from Diggle Street) on 20th February 2006, I was 59 years old. Wickham Hall usually only takes people over 60 usually but my Social Worker persuaded them that I was an exception to the rule because I need the extra care that is available. I looked at other places but only ever wanted to be here. I am one of the youngest tenants here.

At Wickham Hall we can have our cooked meal at lunchtime together and then we have our own flats to have our own time in. I like bingo in the lounge, Play Your Cards Right and entertainment evenings at Wickham Hall. We have buffets and parties on special occasions. I have good friends here and a particularly nice neighbour. I also have one to one support one day a week so that I can go out for the day, I really looking forward those days out. My Support Worker has organised for me and a friend to go to see Daniel O'Donnell at Blackpool, there are just the two of us from Wickham Hall going.

# cial about Extra Care!

*“Veronica has her own studio flat with has a bathroom and kitchenette.”*

## Veronica

**Veronica also lives in an Extra Care Housing scheme, Eliot Gardens, in Wigan. The scheme is owned by Adactus has 26 flats and is a popular new development.**

Veronica has her own studio flat with has a bathroom and kitchenette. She has enough room for her own armchair, TV and storage cabinet, as well as wardrobes, a rise and fall bed and a table for her budgerigar!

At Eliot Gardens, there are care staff on site and Veronica asks them to help her with having a shower, making breakfast and tea and taking her tablets. There is a choice of meals for the full cooked lunch every day and it is served in the dining room so Veronica gets to socialise each day too.

Before moving to Eliot Gardens, Veronica lived in a bungalow in Lowton. She didn't like it there and she lived with another woman. She was treated badly by her co-tenant and says she is really glad to now to away from her.

The bungalow was also too far from the shops so Veronica didn't get to go out much. Veronica says she likes it at Eliot Gardens where there is no-one telling her what to do.



Another tenant, Gladys, is a friend of Veronicas and they have a cup of tea and chat regularly.

Veronica also has other support. A Support Worker, Leanne, from Adult Services who helps her with her money and paying bills and once a week a Support Worker from Wigan Link who takes her out.

Leanne always explains what is happening with Veronica's money. She arranges to pay bills and then Veronica knows that what money is left each week goes in her purse and is hers to spend.

With Wigan Link Veronica usually goes out she says although she's really happy

where she lives now if one thing could be better it would be a little bit more support just for an occasional day out somewhere.

*“Where Eric lives is a very residential area and well served by local pubs and small shops.”*

## Eric is a new man!

**Eric had always lived with his family, but as none of them were getting any younger, he went stay a while in a residential care home.**

His family chose one that looked decent and said they could take care of Eric’s needs. Eric wasn’t happy at the care home and he says there was a man who was always shouting and he didn’t like that. Eric had his own room and his own TV but spending so much time in his room on his own meant he was quite isolated too. His family say this showed in the way he started to hunch his shoulders and his mobility deteriorated.

After a few years, the home was going to close. Eric’s Social Worker knew another man of a similar age to Eric, Tommy was looking for a flat mate and Eric went along to visit... ..and he moved in within a week!

Eric had temporary furniture at first but once he’d settled in he gradually got new wardrobes and pictures of his favourite film stars, John Wayne and James Bond.

Eric says he likes living with Tommy and he likes to kid him. The laughing and joking seems to be mutual and they’re certainly a good match as far as



joking with each other. Eric and Tommy are now planning a holiday together in a posh hotel. They sometimes hire a car for a few days so they can get out and about a bit more. They had a car over Easter and Eric says he really enjoyed going out for pub lunches and going to the Trafford Centre.

At home, Eric dries the dishes after a meal and he empties all the bins regularly. Eric likes to have the bags with tie handles as he finds these are better to fasten up... ..and Eric should know! Eric proudly displays on his bedroom wall a long service award from Wigan Council. He worked for over 30 years as a bin man. His job was to bring all the bins and the bags out to the road for when the bin wagon came (and that was in the days before wheelie bins!!)

Eric and Tommy share 24 hour staff and they sleep over at night. All of Eric’s bills and budgeting is organised by his support workers and he and Tommy put in to a household pot and pay for things like food shopping together.

Where Eric lives is a very residential area and well served by local pubs and small shops. There is also community centre and social club round the corner and Eric says he enjoyed the Christmas party there and watching everyone dancing. His family are still able to visit Eric and are really pleased at the big change in Eric since he moved in with Tommy. Eric has also made friends with some of his neighbours and has been invited to visit for a cuppa.

## F. Wigan H.O.L.D. Scheme (Home ownership for long term disability)

**Shared ownership is where the ownership of your house is shared, at an agreed proportion, between you and a housing association. Rent is charged by the housing association on their share.**

Each HOLD scheme has a housing association partner. A housing association may have additional criteria that applicants have to satisfy. This policy relates to referrals for the HOLD scheme that the council will make to housing association partners.

Wigan Council does not provide funds for shared ownership.

### The criteria

Applicants to the HOLD scheme must:

1. Be in need of housing which will better meet their needs. Shared ownership is not an option if someone wants to stay in the house they already live in.
2. Be in receipt of a qualifying benefit. At present, these are Incapacity Benefit, Income Support or JSA and you must have been receiving the benefit for a minimum of 13 weeks. People who are employed, or who intend to get paid employment, will

need to continue to be in receipt of Income Support.

3. Have the capacity to sign, or make their mark on, legal financial documents relating to a mortgage OR have a court appointed deputy, in which case it must be agreed by the deputy and other key people (e.g Adult Services Social Worker), prior to applying for HOLD, that home ownership is in the best interests of the potential home owner.



***“Shared ownership is where the ownership of your house is shared, at an agreed proportion, between you and a Housing Association. Rent is charged by the Housing Association on their share.”***

4. Be aware that the financial commitment required is a long term one, in the same way as for anyone who enters into a financial arrangement such as mortgage or lease. For this reason where the HOLD applicant is leaving home for the first time, careful consideration needs to be given to whether home ownership is the right housing option. Where two or more people wish to live together this must be on the basis of a sound mutual relationship and not based on people being considered ‘compatible’ because they share similar labels or similar needs.

5. Have sufficient savings to pay the legal costs of buying your own home (approx £3,000) plus initial moving costs, redecoration, minor repairs, which can be up to £1,000

6. Have a sufficient support package in place, or agreed by Adult Services, so that he/she can then live in the property in which they own a share.

7. Know that the property they can purchase a share of, will be limited to the number of bedrooms they are deemed to need. For example, one person living alone who needs overnight support, is limited to buying a property with a maximum of 2 bedrooms; one for themselves, one for a support worker. DWP and Housing Benefit will not cover mortgage interest payments for more bedrooms than the claimant is deemed to need.

Priority for the HOLD scheme will be given to:

- People at risk of homelessness
- People living with family at risk of breaking down
- People for whom it is otherwise difficult to find housing due to the lack of accessible social housing, for example ground floor level access property,
- People who can reduce their care and support package through having better housing.



# G. Housing Options Development Worker & Brokerage



**Funded through the Learning Disability Development Fund (LDDF), Paula Daley was appointed as the Housing Options Development Worker in September 2007 for 22 hrs a week.**

The post was originally funded for 2 years and has been extended by a further 2 years. Her remit is to develop innovative solutions to housing problems faced by people with learning disabilities and produce a menu of practical housing and support options. This includes developing links with partner agencies that may provide housing and support for people with learning disabilities and to promote choice, provide practical support and act as an advocate for people seeking accommodation. Paula is also supported by Lesley Teasdale who effectively acts as a housing broker (and very good

friend) to people with learning disabilities and their families.

The work they have done so far has been extremely successful and includes:

- Working with LD Social Workers with people on their caseloads who need advice on housing options and delivering more innovative solutions to clear blockages. For example: One middle aged man living with his dad, causing issues amounting to breach of tenancy, threatened eviction of dad and son. Social worker sought help with appealing eviction. Alternative accommodation found so son could move on and be better supported and dad's threatened eviction was stopped. See "Good news housing stories" for more.
- Advising people with learning disabilities and their families interested in pursuing home ownership as an option, sharing information with families, developing understanding in terms of implications for capacity to consent to a mortgage and getting appropriate care packages in place and supporting them through the process. (8 people with learning disabilities have so far become home-owners)
- Delivering training and development workshops:

"Understanding Housing for Disability Social Workers" and "Basic Certificate in Housing for Self Advocates"

- Developing more effective working relationships and better understanding of issues that affect people with LD for housing providers.
- Developing ways of helping people with learning disabilities and their families to plan for housing and support.

Their work over the next 2 years will mirror the objectives of this strategy, promoting a person centred planning approach, producing housing and support solutions that best suit the person, even if it hasn't been tried out before. Their biggest challenges are limited time (they both work part-time) and limited resources. There can be conflict between promoting planning for housing and support moves and the resource implications for Adult Services.

# H. Action Plan

Priorities	Actions	When?	Who?
<b>Strategic theme: Better information</b>			
<p>Improve information for people with learning disabilities, their families and carers and housing / social care professionals on the range of housing and support options</p>	<p>Hold information and advice sessions (min 4 per year)</p> <p>Continue to provide training and development workshops for people with learning disabilities and social workers. Roll out to include families and carers.</p> <p>Produce a range of leaflets that celebrate and publicise housing successes.</p> <p>Produce an accessible Housing Manual, &amp; consider feasibility of other formats e.g. DVD.</p>	<p>March 09 on</p> <p>March 09 on</p> <p>December 09</p> <p>December 09</p>	<p>PD / LT / Sub group PD</p> <p>PD / LT</p> <p>PD / JK / SS</p>
<p>Build on existing data on housing need of people with learning disabilities. In addition to people already known to the teams, also include people not meeting FACs criteria, people with moderate LD and people already accommodated but for whom that property is not suitable long term.</p>	<p>Work with area based Learning Disability Teams and attend accommodation meetings / consider Housing Options Plans as tool to record baseline information.</p> <p>Develop better information about the housing needs of young people in transition from Children's to Adult Services. e.g. Letter to families of school leavers offering Housing Options plans.</p> <p>Store data in a way that can inform housing and service development, e.g. age, ethnicity, additional needs (Dementia), minimum support options linked to housing (KeyRing) etc.</p>	<p>Aim to have more accurate data by March 09.</p> <p>May 09 then annually for each group in transition.</p> <p>2009-11 in line with boroughs development of personalisation.</p>	<p>SS / BH / PD</p> <p>PD / CR / GM</p> <p>PD</p>

Priorities	Actions	When?	Who?
<b>Strategic theme: Expand variety of housing and support options</b>			
Make better use of full range of property provided by private sector landlords.	Support development of Wigan Housing Solutions in development of ‘social lettings agency’ and private sector leasing scheme.	April 09 on	PD
	Consider how to overcome discrimination against people with support needs within the Local Housing Allowance scheme. (Doesn't cover costs of additional rooms needed for carers in private rented sector)	September 09	PD / SS
Increase opportunities for shared ownership for people with support needs.	Work with RSL partners to support bids for Housing Corporation HOLD funds.	March 09 on	PD / SS
	Promote shared ownership as a housing option.	April 09 on	PD / LT
	Develop a HOLD allocation policy to ensure transparency and equal access to this housing option.	May 09	PD / Hsg Sub-group
Develop accommodation options for people who do wish to share or live as a small group.	Work with Wigan Housing Solutions to access affordable private sector property, including non registered housing associations.	April 09 on	PD
	Identify RSL partners to bid for Homes and Communities Agency capital funds based accurate information on housing need.	June 10	SS / PD

Priorities	Actions	When?	Who?
<b>Strategic Theme: More Effective / Efficient Use of Resources</b>			
Ensure make best use of existing housing and support resources	<p>Ensure make best use of nominations agreements with RSL's</p> <p>Ensure needs of people with learning disabilities are taken into account as part of the council's review of its housing allocation policy</p> <p>Undertake review of Supported Accommodation Service (including in house and external providers)</p>	<p>April 09 on</p> <p>April 09</p> <p>December 09</p>	<p>PD</p> <p>SS</p> <p>BH / SS</p>
Ensure that the use of assistive technology is considered in housing options plans	<p>Assess the feasibility and demand for an assistive technology seminar</p> <p>Incorporate assistive technology at learning disability resource panel as a dimension of the resource allocation.</p>	<p>September 09</p> <p>December 09 on</p>	<p>PD</p> <p>BH</p>
Determine feasibility and desirability of specialist accommodation for people with learning disability and Dementia	<p>Develop options appraisal</p> <p>Identify RSL partners to bid for Homes and Communities Agency capital funds based on housing needs</p>	<p>December 09</p> <p>June 10</p>	<p>PD / SS / BH</p> <p>SS / PD</p>
Consider how the roles of Housing Options Development Worker and housing brokerage can be expanded and incorporated into mainstream services.	<p>Evaluate success of work, whether role should continue beyond life of current temporary funding &amp; if so review management arrangements and how can be incorporated into mainstream services.</p>	<p>March 10</p>	<p>SS / BH</p>

# I. Contact information

## **Learning Disability Housing Strategy 2009 - 2014**

This strategy has been produced by independent housing consultant Jayne Knight, the Housing Strategy Team from Wigan Council and the Housing Sub-Group of the Learning Disability Partnership Board

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