Quality is up my street:

Measuring and monitoring the **quality** of housing services for and with people with learning disabilities - Key findings from commissioner and service provider surveys

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Thanks also to those who helped develop and disseminate our survey and to everyone who took part. Hearing directly from commissioners and service providers will help inform our ongoing work around housing services for people with learning disabilities.

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Background to the project

The National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) is working on several research projects around housing services. Most adults with learning disabilities who need support and a place to live are offered either residential care or housing with support (called supported living). The idea of supported living is that it gives people more rights and control over their lives. However, very little is known about how good these services are.

This report forms part of a crowdfunded research project exploring what is important to different groups in terms of housing decisions¹. We aim to provide evidence to support more informed decision-making by commissioners in this area and to gain a better understanding of what matters to people in terms of their housing and support. This report presents the data from surveys of commissioners and housing service providers.

Prior work has included:

- Two focus groups exploring what is important to people with learning disabilities and family carers
- Interviews with three commissioners and two housing and support providers
- Survey of family carers² to explore their role and input
- Reviewing guidance, resources and tools re quality measurement/monitoring collated into an accessible format³.

These findings will be published and are feeding into a larger piece of research examining the quality and costs of supported living and residential care for 200 adults with learning disabilities⁴.

^{1.} You can find out about the key findings of these initial consultations at: https://www.ndti.org.uk/assets/files/Housing research findings Final.pdf

^{2.} https://www.ndti.org.uk/news/family-carers-survey

^{3.} You can access Equality Street at: www.ndti.org.uk/resources/equality-street

^{4.} https://www.ndti.org.uk/projects/evaluating-supported-living-and-residential-care-for-adults-with-learning-d



What we did and why

This project involved an online survey of commissioners and service providers to explore current practices around measuring and monitoring the quality of housing services for people with learning disabilities.

The survey questions were devised by NDTi researchers, building on the literature, and exploring issues raised in NDTi fieldwork. The survey was sent out by an email link to a diverse range of individual commissioners and service providers. They were identified through relevant housing forums and networks, and sharing was encouraged. The survey was also distributed via social media such as Twitter. As snowballing methods were used, these survey respondents will not be representative of commissioners and housing service providers in general. Those who completed the survey were motivated to do so. This goodwill and willingness to share views and experiences may indicate they are exemplary or innovative individuals and organisations, and our findings must be viewed through this lens.

This report presents the key findings from the views and experiences of 56 respondents; 17 commissioners and 39 service providers. The data from this self-selected group of respondents offers insights into the provision of good quality housing and support which can feed into NDTi's ongoing in-depth housing research projects⁵.

Quality means a good environment in which I myself would like to live. Good quality support from an experienced staff team who are valued employees, motivated and committed to working with individuals to promote their wellbeing and life choices

Commissioner

⁵ As N4



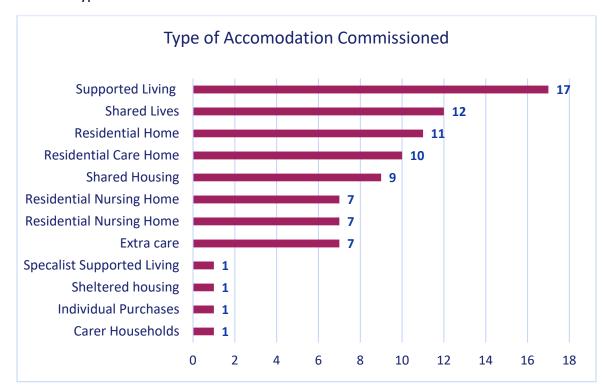
Commissioners

Seventeen commissioners responded to our survey. See below for their roles, location and types of housing service they commission:

Job Role	Number
Senior Commissioning Manger	4
Commissioning Manager	5
Joint Commissioning Lead	1
Commissioning Officer	3
Commissioner	1
Project Manager	1
NHSE	1
Social Work	1

Location	Responses
London	2
South East	2
South West	6
East Anglia	1
North East	2
North West	4

Chart 1: Type of accommodation commissioned





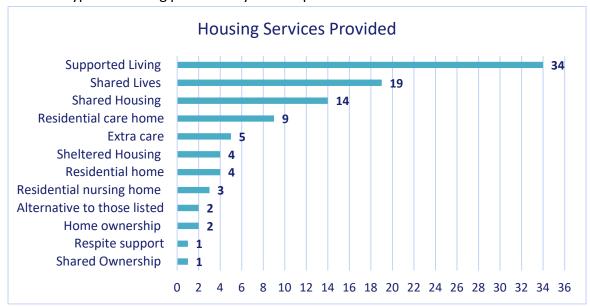
Service providers

Thirty-nine service providers responded to our survey. See below for roles and location and type of service provided by respondents⁶:

Location of Services	Number
Channel Islands	1
East Anglia	5
East Midlands	8
West Midlands	7
South East	18
South West	12
London	8
North East	6
North West	17
Yorkshire and the Humber	6
Scotland	2
Wales	6

Job Role	Number
CEO	8
Deputy CEO	1
Director of Services	4
Heads of Services	7
Area Managers	2
Managers	12
Quality Auditors	2
Shared Lives	3

Chart 2: Type of housing provision by service providers



⁶ Please note that some respondents covered more than one geographical area.



What does quality mean to commissioners and service providers?

We were interested in what quality means for commissioners and providers of housing for people with learning disabilities. The responses for both groups of survey respondents were analysed separately. However, as commissioners and service providers identified very similar key components of quality, their responses have been amalgamated below.



Good Standard - commissioners and service providers agreed that accommodation should be safe, clean, comfortable and accessible, meeting individual needs in terms of adaptations and location. Service providers added that it should be well maintained and managed and said residents should be involved in all these aspects.



Affordable - some commissioners mentioned cost to the taxpayer; others voiced concerns about the level of rents charged and the tying in of care and support. They said transparency in costing and value for money is important. Service providers said that accommodation should be affordable and sustainable for people with learning disabilities and their families and said benefit rates/regulations are an issue.



Choice & flexibility – there was agreement that individuals, carers and families should have choice and flexibility in: type of housing, where they live, who they live with and how they are supported. Service providers said the environment should be non-institutionalised and feel like home - freedom to decorate, choose fixtures and fittings was important.



Quality Staff – respondents agreed that sufficient numbers of appropriately trained and well supported staff were vital, saying creative and proactive staff support independence and full lives. Service providers said values-based recruitment, ongoing training and development were key to recruitment and retention. Commissioners and service providers agreed that quality means individuals having a choice of who supports them and how they are supported.



Person centred & strength-based provision – treating people with dignity and respect and supporting individuals to live the life they want, was a marker of quality for both commissioners and service providers. Providers said that support should be flexible and responsive to change, focusing on peoples' strengths, goals, happiness and fulfilment. Commissioners agreed that personalised outcomes were important.



Values-led - service providers emphasised values in terms of mutual respect, community inclusion, communication, rights, avoiding institutionalisation. Commissioners said quality providers go beyond traditional support, focusing on independence and positive risks. They said good leadership, supportive management and landlords who understand learning disability is crucial for quality services.



Input from individuals, families and carers - commissioners and service providers agreed that quality provision meant involving people with learning disabilities, advocates and families in all aspects of service delivery. They said that ongoing communication (in accessible formats), seeking and acting on feedback were important and required resources. Quality checking by residents/peers was also identified as key.



Community links, friendships and activities – respondents agreed that quality services should be close to or within communities, with residents supported to maintain their existing relationships, make new connections and explore their interests. Providers said that residents should be supported to participate in non-segregated ordinary activities.

Commissioners and service providers agreed that meeting the legal and regulatory requirements for housing and support were important aspects of quality. However, they were keen to stress that that good housing and support was not an end in itself, but that it provided a back-drop, enabling individuals to get on with living their best life.

The maintenance of someone's tenancy is the least of their worries, leaving them to build the life they want, including being citizens in their community.

Provider

Commissioners said they looked for transparency, open reporting, learning from mistakes and partnership working. Service providers emphasised strong teams, good management and working together to overcome issues. Providers also stressed flexibility and choice, in particular enabling residents to live with compatible people or friends.

Quality means knowing the person as a unique individual and supporting him/her to live their life in the way that makes them feel good about themselves, content, secure and fulfilled.

Provider

Very basically, if people are happy then it is a sign that they are achieving the outcomes they have set for themselves in life and that the provider is supporting them to achieve these. We obviously use a lot of complicated metrics to reach that conclusion!

Commissioner

For me mainly it is the support that means the most in providing quality, people with many needs, including Learning Disability can have their needs met in ordinary housing, I think we can get too tied up in the label of Supported Housing.

Provider



How do commissioners and service providers measure and monitor quality?

A diverse range of guidance and standards have also been developed to support quality in the commissioning and provision of housing services for people with learning disabilities in each of the four nations of the UK. A comprehensive list of resources/tools can be found via this link⁷.

We asked what quality guidance tools were being used by the commissioners and service providers who responded to our survey. These are listed in Appendix 1 (commissioners) and Appendix 2 (service providers).

Commissioners

Commissioners were asked if, and how, they incorporated the measurement and monitoring of quality into the commissioning of housing services for people with learning disabilities. Most (12) commissioners said that they did this, 3 did not and 2 were not sure.

Commissioners gave examples of how they incorporated quality measurement into their working practices. The range and depth of methods and data used was diverse. Some commissioners had an internal quality monitoring team, some visited services several times a year, others worked with independent quality checkers who inspected services and looked at tenders.

When commissioning or re-commissioning services, we draw on the findings from our quality assurance processes, further qualitative feedback, as well as any performance metrics/KPIs relating to quality (including, for example, outcomes measures) to make assessments of quality.

Commissioner

For recent supported living tenders there has been one question on capability of the provider to meet the service specification, and another on a case study where the provider has to demonstrate how they would support the adult to meet their outcomes. This question is co-written by adults with learning disabilities.

Commissioner

Most stressed the importance of partnerships, working together with service providers on contractual compliance, quality and performance/audit with a focus on outcomes for individuals.

⁷ Equality Street at: <u>www.ndti.org.uk/resources/equality-street</u>

Examples of how commissioners incorporated quality measurement into working practices:

- Contract monitoring process quality criteria specified in contracts
- Internal quality assurance programmes/teams
- Using guidance or quality tools (see Appendix 1)
- CQC data look for a provider's track record of 'good' or 'outstanding'
- Using data including performance metrics (KPIs), outcome measures etc.
- Quality checkers –inspecting services, part of tender evaluation team (including people with learning disabilities)
- Service visits separate focus on management, staff and residents
- Feedback from service users, families and staff e.g. case studies, reviews, surveys
- Managing safeguarding alerts and monitoring complaints
- Involving people with learning disabilities e.g. designing questions around outcomes

Service providers

Service providers were asked if they measured and monitored the quality of their housing services for people with learning disabilities. Most (36) said they did monitor quality and that they included this data when bidding for tenders. Two did not and one was unsure.

Service providers gave examples of how they were incorporating quality measurement into their working practices. There was a wide variation in what providers did, and the methods and data they used. Service providers agreed with commissioners that partnership working was important; they also identified good relationships with staff, residents and families as

key to measuring and maintaining quality. Quality measures/tools such as the Real Tenancy Test were utilised.

Most service providers said they involved people with learning disabilities and their families/carers in monitoring the quality of their service. They said having internal and external quality checkers, facilitators or consultants, some of whom were people with learning disabilities was important.

We undertake housing audits to check if we are delivering the service to residents that we have promised to. We are also developing a wider housing quality framework to look at more strategic issues including strengthening the voice of tenants and other residents.

Provider

Examples of how providers incorporated quality measurement into their working practices:

- Compliance checks, contract reviews
- Using quality tools/measures see Appendix 2
- Internal auditing and monitoring processes
- Reviews/evaluations of the service
- Internal quality policy/frameworks

- Visits/inspections of properties
- Monitoring complaints, compliments and safeguarding alerts
- Checking maintenance log
- Person-centred reviews using outcome measures at key points
- Feedback/satisfaction data from residents/family
- Staff feedback, training, competency assessment, spot checks, supervision
- Diary observations, surveys/questionnaires of residents
- Quality checkers independent and in house (including people with a learning disability)

Close relationships with the person being supported, their team and their family and friends allows us to know each person well and to work with them and their team and family to get things right and to adjust that support as required.

Provider

We have an internal quality framework that runs throughout our services. This is monitored by our quality team supported by our compliance and risk team. They work closely to ensure we are supporting people and following their person centred plan that has been devised together.... We also use internal audit to examine all our support methods.

Provider



What aspects of quality are most important to commissioners and service providers?

We asked respondents about the aspects of quality that they considered most important in their commissioning or provision of housing services for people with learning disabilities. Their priorities are illustrated in the word clouds below.

Our previous work has indicated that commissioners and providers feel curtailed in their quality ambitions by a range of factors. We explored this in the survey by asking respondents to rank key components of quality in terms of what they **had** to consider and what they would **like** to consider. We developed these factors from established standards of quality, including the five key questions CQC asks of all care services⁸ and the Reach Standards⁹. The rankings of these factors are presented in Appendix 3 (commissioners) and 4 (service providers). It was encouraging to find that for these respondents there was little significant disparity in these rankings. The main area of note for commissioners was that they ranked having your own tenancy highly, which appears to indicate a preference for supported living. It was surprising to us that, overall, commissioners ranked the cost of the service as being of relatively low importance in both what they have, and would like, to consider. Less of a surprise was that service providers indicated that the focus on safety issues might constrain their aspirations for people in their service by ranking safety lower in their ideal scenario than it is currently.

In their qualitative responses (see below), commissioners and service providers described some of the barriers and enablers they have experienced in terms of prioritising the elements of quality that are important to them.

⁸ https://www.cqc.org.uk/what-we-do/how-we-do-our-job/five-key-questions-we-ask

⁹ https://paradigm-uk.org/what-we-do/reach-support-for-living/

Commissioners



Commissioners said it was important to place people locally for continuity and for community links to flourish. Some highlighted the challenging housing market in their locality – especially the lack of suitable housing having an impact on their commissioning. They also said there was a high demand for services, and that the lack of resources impacted on their ability to deliver the high quality of commissioned services they would like.

Commissioners prioritised individual choice and good quality support as key elements of quality. They were aware of how staffing, recruitment and retention issues within services impacted on quality. Commissioners were keen to work closely in partnership with service providers. They also stressed the importance of working with individuals with a learning disability and their families or advocates to co-produce the right outcome focused support.

Commissioners said they were conscious of financial constraints, limited budgets and benefit rates that impacted on quality for individuals and families. This seems to contradict the low ranking that they gave to the cost of the service as a factor they have to consider; further exploration may help to clarify this. Value for money was an issue for commissioners; one suggested assessing cost effectiveness at tender stage.

Service providers



Service providers emphasised values in terms of community inclusion, dignity, rights and avoiding institutionalisation. Like the commissioners, they prioritised individual choice — where people live, who they live with, how they are supported and who by. They aimed to match support services to the individual but pointed out that audit tools may not pick up subtleties, and commissioners did not always understand the cost implications of personalised support. It was suggested the best commissioners were those with a background in service provision themselves.

Compatibility was a big quality issue for providers in this survey. They said that the importance of residents living with others of their choosing was not always understood by commissioners, and that commissioning pressures led to placing incompatible individuals together. They suggested that commissioners should use compatibility tools and listen more to providers about compatibility issues. They said that communication with, and the involvement of, individuals and families is an important aspect of quality and said that this requires resourcing.

Service providers said affordability was important, with cost being a barrier. They said that benefit regulations can impact on the ability of individuals to access a good quality service. Other barriers for quality service provision included lack of time, resources and staff. Providers said that that a mixed team of skilled and motivated staff enable person-centred support with a focus on each individual's quality of life. They said that supporting staff to promote independence and support people to pursue their interests and ambitions — including accessing volunteering or paid work where possible - is important. They also said that staff insights can provide vital feedback on services from the inside.



Key Learning from our surveys



 Commissioners and service providers agreed on what a quality service should look like: affordable, values led, personalised, with choice, flexibility, good staff, community links and the involvement of the person and their family in all aspects of service delivery.



2. Service providers and commissioners in our survey prioritised choice, good support and community links.



3. Service providers emphasised the importance of compatibility and matching – of housemates and support staff.



4. Barriers to quality for commissioners and service providers are costs, affordability, lack of time and limited resources, including suitable housing and staff.



5. Commissioners and service providers want to work together on quality issues, in partnership with people with learning disability and their families.



Appendix 1. Quality guidance, resources and tools used by commissioners in our survey

Author/ publisher	Name or Title	Date	Туре	URL
Care Quality Commission	Equally outstanding: Equality and human rights - good practice resource. How can a focus on equality and human rights improve the quality of care in times of financial constraint?	2018	Practice Resource	https://www.cqc.org.uk/publications/equally- outstanding-equality-human-rights-good-practice- resource-november-2018
Care Quality Commission	Registering the Right Support: CQC's policy on registration/variations to registration for providers supporting people with a learning disability and/or autism	2017	Registration/ policy	https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20170612_registering_the_right_support_final.pdf
Care Quality Commission	Housing with care: Guidance on regulated activities for providers of supported living and extra care housing	2015	Practice Guidance	https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20151023_provider_guidance-housing_with_care.pdf>
Changing Our Lives	Quality of Life Standards & Toolkit	2014	Standards & Toolkit	https://www.centreforwelfarereform.org/uploads/att achment/430/quality-of-life-standards-and-toolkit.pdf
Enough is Enough! Time4Change	Hands Off It's My Home! A Path to Citizenship	2010	Action plan, checklist & Guidance	https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/type/Hands- Off-Its-My-Home-A-path-to-Citizenship/
Housing and Support Partnership	Planning and Commissioning Housing for People with Learning Disabilities	2010	Toolkit	https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/type/Planning- and-Commissioning-Housing-for-People-with- Learning-Disabilities-A-Toolkit-for-Local-Authorities/
Law Society	Deprivation of Liberty safeguards: a practical guide	2019	Guidance	https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support- services/advice/articles/deprivation-of-liberty- safeguards-practical-guide/

Author/ publisher	Name or Title	Date	Туре	URL
Mencap	Raising Our Sights: How to guide 5 - housing - For people with profound and multiple learning disabilities	2012	Practice Guidance	https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-06/2012.340%20Raising%20our%20sights Housing V 3_0.pdf
National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi)	The Real Tenancy Test	2015	Toolkit	https://www.ndti.org.uk/resources/publications/the- real-tenancy-test1
National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi)	Supporting older people with learning disabilities: a toolkit for health and social care commissioners	2014	Toolkit	https://www.ndti.org.uk/resources/useful- tools/supporting-older-people-with-learning- disabilities-toolkit
National Institute Clinical Health & Care Excellence	Learning disabilities and behaviour that challenges: service design and delivery	2018	Practice Guidance	https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng93
NHS England, the LGA and ADASS (as part of the Transforming Care Programme)	Building the right home: Guidance for commissioners of health and care services for children, young people and adults with learning disabilities and/or autism who display behaviour that challenges	2016	Practice Guidance	https://www.england.nhs.uk/learningdisabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/34/2015/11/building-right-home-guidance-housing.pdf
NHS England, the LGA and ADASS	Building the right support: A national plan to develop community services and close inpatient facilities for people with a learning disability and/or autism who display behaviour that challenges, including those with a mental health condition	2015	Service model	https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/ld-nat-imp-plan-oct15.pdf
Paradigm	The Reach Support for Living Standards	2014	Practice Standards & Toolkit	https://paradigm-uk.org/what-we-do/reach-support- for-living/
Welsh Local Government Association	Guidance: Commissioning accommodation and support for a good life for people with a learning disability	2019	Practice Guidance	http://www.1000livesplus.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/doc uments/1011/welsh%20supported%20living%20com mmissioning%20guidance%20march%202019.pdf



Appendix 2. Quality guidance, resources and tools used by Service Providers in our survey

Author/publisher	Name or Title	Date	Туре	URL
Care Quality Commission	Equally outstanding: Equality and human rights: How can a focus on equality and human rights improve the quality of care in times of financial constraint?	2018	Practice Resource	https://www.cqc.org.uk/publications/equally- outstanding-equality-human-rights-good- practice-resource-november-2018
Care Quality Commission	Housing with care: Guidance on regulated activities for providers of supported living and extra care housing	2015	Practice Guidance	https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20151 023_provider_guidance-housing_with_care.pdf>
Challenging Behaviour Foundation	Planning Your House - Information Pack	2017	Practice Resource	https://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/cbf- resources/info-packs/planning-your-house.html
Changing Our Lives	Quality of Life Standards & Toolkit	2014	Standards & Toolkit	https://www.centreforwelfarereform.org/upload s/attachment/430/quality-of-life-standards-and- toolkit.pdf
Driving Up Quality Alliance	Driving Up Quality Code: Self-Assessment Guide A guide to help organisations work out what they need to get better at	2013	Self-assessment Practice Guide	https://www.drivingupquality.org.uk/documentd ownload.axd?documentresourceid=1
Enough is Enough! Time4Change	Hands Off It's My Home! A Path to Citizenship	2010	Action plan, checklist & Guidance	https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/type/Hand s-Off-Its-My-Home-A-path-to-Citizenship/
Equality & Human Rights Commission	Human rights at home: Guidance for social housing providers (Easy-read version available)	2011	Practice Guidance	https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/def ault/files/human_rights_at_home.pdf https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/def ault/files/human-rights-act-learning- disabilities.pdf
Groundswell Partnership (Bennet, Sanderson, Stockton)	Working Together for Change: citizen-led change in public services	2012	Tool for change	https://www.imagineactandsucceed.co.uk/Downloads/Working-together-for-Change.aspx

Author/publisher	Name or Title	Date	Туре	URL
Housing Support Enabling Unit/Scottish Government	Better Futures	2010 2019	Web based IT tool	http://www.ccpscotland.org/hseu/information/better-futures/
Housing and Support Alliance	Life begins at home - a guide to housing for families and children with autism/learning disabilities who display challenging behaviour	2016	Practice Guidance	http://lde-hsa.site/life-begins-at-home.html
Mencap	Raising Our Sights: How to guide 5 - housing - For people with profound and multiple learning disabilities	2012	Practice Guidance	https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-06/2012.340%20Raising%20our%20sights_Housing_V_3_0.pdf
National Dementia Action Alliance	The Dementia Statements	2017	Practice Standards/Guide	https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/policy- and-influencing/what-we-think/dementia- statements-and-rights
National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi)	The Real Tenancy Test	2015	Toolkit	https://www.ndti.org.uk/resources/publications/ the-real-tenancy-test1
NHS England, the LGA and ADASS	Building the right home: Guidance for commissioners of health and care services for children, young people and adults with learning disabilities and/or autism who display behaviour that challenges	2016	Practice Guidance	https://www.england.nhs.uk/learningdisabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/34/2015/11/building-right-home-guidance-housing.pdf
Paradigm	The Reach Support for Living Standards	2014	Practice Standards/Guide	https://paradigm-uk.org/what-we-do/reach- support-for-living/
Stay Up Late	Does my work practice look institutionalised in this?	2019	Self-assessment reflective tool	https://stayuplate.org/how-institutionalised- does-my-work-practice-look-in-this/
Skills for Care	Good and outstanding care guide (updated – online edition)	2018	Practice Guidance – templates/self- assessments	https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Standards-legislation/CQC/Good-and-outstanding-care-guide.pdf
Think Local Act Personal	Making it real: how to do personalised care and support	Varied	Framework	https://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/makingitreal/
Royal National Institute for the Blind Cymru	Homes for people with learning disabilities and sight loss: A guide to providing safe and accessible environments	2016	Practice Guidance	https://www.rnib.org.uk/sites/default/files/ADPDF- COU061501 Homes%20for%20People%20with%20Lea rning%20Disabilities-ENG.pdf



Appendix 3. Commissioners' rankings of factors they **have to** and **would like to** consider in their commissioning of housing services for people with learning disabilities

Have to Consider Rank	Would Like to Consider Rank	Have to consider
1	1	The person is involved in decisions affecting their housing and support services
2	5	The service is person-centred, creative, innovative and responsive to people's needs
3	3	The person has the same rights and responsibilities as people in the general population
4	4	The person is treated with compassion, dignity, kindness and respect
5	8	The person is part of the community
6	6	The person has a good quality of life
7	2	The person has their own home (with a tenancy or ownership)
8	10	The cost of the service
9	9	The service is safe and effective
10	7	There is good leadership in the service



Appendix 4. Service Providers' rankings of factors they **have to** and **would like to** consider in their provision of housing services for people with learning disabilities

Have to Consider Rank	Would Like to Consider Rank	Have to consider
1	2	The person has their own home (with a tenancy or ownership)
2	6	Our service is safe and effective
3	1	The person is involved in decisions affecting their housing and support services
4	4	The person is treated with compassion, dignity, kindness
5	3	The person has the same rights and responsibilities as people in the general population
6	7	The person has a good quality of life
7	8	Our service is person centred
8	5	The cost of our service
9	9	The person is part of the community
10	10	There is good leadership in our service



Contact Information

If you would like more information about this crowdfunded project and/or NDTi's ongoing work around housing services for people with learning disabilities, please contact:

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