

Private Sector Leasing Scheme for People with Learning Difficulties in Norfolk

Prepared for the Housing Learning and Improvement Network by **Yvonne Maxwell**

Key partners:

- Norfolk Learning Difficulties Service (joint Health and Social Services)
- Norfolk Learning Difficulties Partnership Board
- Norfolk Housing Officers Association
- Norfolk Supporting People Commissioning Body
- Saffron Housing Trust

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Brief description:

This case study describes the development of a private sector leasing scheme for people with learning difficulties in Norfolk. It details the key features, and shares the lessons learned from this in the hope that they will be useful to other commissioners and providers of housing & support services.

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Private Sector Leasing Scheme for People with Learning Difficulties in Norfolk

1. Introduction

This case study describes the development of a private sector leasing scheme for people with learning difficulties in Norfolk. It details the key features, and shares the lessons learned from this in the hope that they will be useful to other commissioners and providers of housing & support services.

Key features of this scheme include:

- Working with local landlords and letting agents, through the use of a registered social landlord, to increase housing options for people.
- Creative use of assistive technology to support independence.
- Work with family carers.

Notes:

Names of tenants and family carers have been changed to protect people's identity.

In this case study the terms learning difficulties and learning disabilities will both be used. The policy documents use the term learning disability. Some people prefer the term learning difficulties and that is the one used by Norfolk, so when referring to their service it will be used.

2. Background information

In 2004 the Department of Health allocated £2.3 million to ten projects for people with a learning disability as part of its extra care housing grant funding. The ten schemes funded included all ages and a wide range of housing options such as shared ownership, the private rented sector, new build housing association/Registered Social Landlord (RSL) for rent and remodelling.

The programme is supported by the Housing Learning and Improvement Network (LIN) in the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) at the Department of Health.

Norfolk County Council was one of the ten successful projects who received grant funding.

Further information about the ten projects can be found in the report:

A Measure of Success: An Evaluation of the Department of Health's Learning Disability Extra Care Housing Programme, available at:

<http://www.icn.csip.org.uk/housing/index.cfm?pid=520&catalogueContentID=2495>

3. Policy context

The wider, learning disability policy context includes the Valuing People White Paper *A new strategy for learning disability in the 21st Century*, (DH, 2001). This said:

- Housing was important – the aim is for a choice of where and how you live
- The Government wants people living with their families to be able to plan for a home of their own
- People with learning disabilities can live successfully in many types of housing from individual self-contained properties, housing networks, group homes, and shared accommodation schemes, through to village and other forms of intentional community. They can cope with the full range of tenures, including ownership
- Local authorities should expand the range and choice of housing, care and support services
- And draw up a housing strategy by 2003 addressing the aims of Valuing People

These messages have been repeated in the consultative Green Paper *Independence, well-being and choice*, (DH, 2005) and then developed further in the White Paper *Our health, our care, our say* (DH, 2006). The latter confirms the Governments vision of “high quality support meeting peoples’ aspirations for independence and greater control over their lives, making services flexible and responsive to individual needs” and “we will move towards fitting services around people not people round services”.

Valuing People Now: From Progress to Transformation, a consultation launched in December 2007, sets out the next steps for the Valuing People policy and its delivery. The priorities include:

- Personalisation – so that people have real choice and control over their lives and services.
- Access to Housing – housing that people want and need with a particular emphasis on home ownership and tenancies. This includes an increased focus on access to home ownership and housing with assured tenancies.

To further support the importance of housing there is a Public Service Agreement, PSA 16, to ‘Increase the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and employment, education or training’; this includes *Adults with moderate to severe learning disabilities*.

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/3/9/pbr_csr07_psa16.pdf

4. The Private Sector Leasing Scheme

The scheme was proposed as a pilot 'private sector leasing scheme' across Norfolk for 15 people with learning difficulties who were currently living with older carers.

The properties are leased for five years to Saffron Housing Association, a local Registered Social Landlord (RSL). They manage the properties on behalf of the landlords and sub lease the properties to Norfolk County Council who, in turn, provide a guaranteed rental stream. The RSL acts as the landlord to the person with a learning disability.

Tenants are offered low level tenancy support as outlined above.

If a person moves out within the five years then the RSL, Saffron Housing, will work with Norfolk Learning Difficulties Services (NLDS) to find someone else to take on the lease. Initially this will be someone who fits the initial criteria and if that is not possible then looking wider at people with a learning disability. If that does not identify someone then they will, to avoid a long-term void, look at other groups of people. Every effort will be made though to find someone with a learning disability.

Capital

The project required £150,000 of capital funding to provide at least 15 units of suitably adapted and equipped privately rented accommodation. This funding would cover:

- Up to £5,000 per unit for adaptations and 'portable' assistive technology (AT). This covered a wide definition of AT including:
 - covered Easy to use white goods,
 - Additional safety and security equipment,
 - Video entry phone,
 - Sensors,
 - More substantial work to property to increase accessibility e.g. replacing bath with level access shower.
- Legal costs of setting up leases.
- Dedicated housing management services.
- Small amount to cover additional rental voids e.g. if a person needs longer to move into a property they have paid for an extra week and did once have to pay six weeks.
- Managing fees to an RSL.

Revenue

The Norfolk Supporting People Commissioning Body agreed to fund revenue costs of £70,392 per annum. This equated to a support service of six hours per person per week, costing £89.95.

The figure was based upon an analysis of the needs of people in the target group. They estimated that housing related support would be required for each individual to cover the following areas:

Assistance in setting up and maintaining a home

- Intensive support at beginning of tenancy e.g. to sort out utilities
- Ongoing support re: maintaining tenancy e.g. reporting repairs

Developing independent living skills

- Assistance with managing money and bills and claiming benefits
- Support to develop social skills
- Support to develop daily living skills e.g. cooking, shopping, budgeting
- Support to enable social contacts e.g. keeping in touch with family

Well being and general support

- Emotional support to deal with worries especially at the beginning of the tenancy
- Support to enable the person to be responsible for their own health and wellbeing.

Additional needs for support are assessed by the Community Learning Difficulty Team (CLD), in line with the eligibility criteria of Norfolk Learning Difficulties Service. This project is, however, not intended for people with high support needs. The emphasis of this project is to use assistive technologies to create a safe and empowering environment so as to reduce, as far as possible, the need for additional support staff.

General principles underpinning the project:

- The provision of support and assistive technology aims to create a living environment that is enabling, non-institutional and that will help people to develop the daily living skills to become more independent.
- To increase housing options for people with a learning disability that would be flexible and give real choice over where they live. A flexible approach to the provision of accommodation based upon the principles in Valuing People (see introduction) that people with a learning disability should have the same choices as other citizens. The aim was to broaden the definition of 'supported living' so that it does not just mean shared homes.

- Good value for money in terms of looking at ways to provide support other than just staff based solutions e.g. informal ways to support people; use of technology to manage risk (as part of agreed care and support packages).
- An approach that focuses on finding accommodation for people in their local communities where they can feel safe and can access local facilities.

The private sector is not always seen as an option for people with a learning disability. Concerns of people with learning disabilities, families and workers include:

- That tenancies are insecure
- The standard of the accommodation and its suitability.
- Whether the person with a learning disability will have difficulties dealing with landlords who may not understand their needs.
- Landlords not seeing people with a learning disability as a potential tenant due to misconceptions.

However, the aim of this project is to overcome these issues with a five year lease and the RSL acting as landlord to assure the quality of the homes and service. The RSL also works locally with landlords and letting agents to raise the awareness of people with learning disabilities and encourage them to see them as good tenants.

The tenancies are only for five years. It is though only one housing option and may not be suitable for all. It does allow people the chance to be independent and have a choice over where they live through the flexibility of the private sector. Some people may only want to stay a short time before moving on; some landlords may extend the lease. Others may then feel the next step is home ownership. Planning will start a year before the lease runs out and all are made clear that it is only guaranteed for five years.

5. Partners

The bid was put together and agreed by a multi-agency project group, which included voluntary sector provider organisations, people with learning disabilities and a family carer. It was agreed by the following partner agencies:

- Norfolk Learning Difficulties Service (joint Health and Social Services)
- Norfolk Learning Difficulties Partnership Board
- Norfolk Housing Officers Association
- Norfolk Supporting People Commissioning Body

6. Criteria for the Private Sector Leasing Scheme

In order to be eligible for the scheme a person must currently be living with a family carer aged over 60. The scheme was aimed at people who want to live on their own or with a partner or friend and are fairly independent i.e. do not require 24 hour support/ care.

The scheme is for people who are eligible for services from Norfolk Learning Difficulties Service(NLDS) or who have been identified as suitable as part of a preventative service or as part of an Exit Strategy from NLDS services.

7. Identification of potential tenants

An information leaflet was distributed via the Community Learning Difficulties (CLD) Teams. Potential tenants tended to be people who were known to the services although a few came via publicity such as press articles.

There is an issue of finding 'hidden' people who may be living with older carers and not known to the services. One lesson they feel they have learned is that if they were to do this again they would make more effort to get directly to people (i.e. self-refer) - and they are taking this approach with their new home ownership project.

Initially there were concerns about finding people. The criteria is for people living with older carers. There are issues with engaging with this group. Care managers were more focused on 'emergencies' rather than people living with older carers. The emphasis of the scheme was on people living with older carers as they tend to be left until the older carer can no longer care or dies and then it becomes an emergency. It also may identify that the older carer themselves needs support.

Two people were not previously known to Norfolk Learning Difficulties Service and that created a challenge. There was discussion about whether they should support them through the project and they decided they would. They are both clearly eligible for Supporting People services but Norfolk Learning Difficulties Services criteria are higher. They both receive the SP-funded service (which is sufficient currently).

8. Working with people to find their new home

There is a dedicated post holder at Saffron Housing working on this scheme.

The focus is very much on finding people for the scheme and then working with them to find a property they are happy with, not find properties and slot in people. The private sector lends itself to this. The reality of course is if people move out before end of five years, then there is a property needing a tenant. This has happened with one property and a new person has moved in.

The role of the worker at saffron was to work with people to identify what they wanted and to work with landlords and letting agents to identify suitable property in Norfolk.

Saffron is the RSL that will hold the five-year contract for each property. This means that the rent is guaranteed to the owner of the property and this may make them more willing to take on a tenant who may be on benefits.

Saffron built up relationships with local landlords and letting agents, as well as scanning the ads in the papers and friends and family keeping a look out for property. They then started to send details to Saffron when they had properties that they thought might be suitable. The worker at Saffron was able to explain to them the requirements of each new person. It is of course a balance between what someone would like needs and what are the priorities and compromises.

Some established landlords were happy with a five year lease, some of the smaller ones (with only one property) were reluctant to commit for that amount of time, tying their money up .Some of the smaller ones liked the idea of doing something to support people live more independently.

In some cases they have been able to achieve rents a little higher than Local Reference Rent as the landlord is an RSL but they have tried to do this carefully and keep affordability central (not just how much they can get from HB) as they want rents that people can still afford if they get a job. They also do not want there to be a big affordability gap when the lease ends and the person might wish to rent the property directly from the landlord.

9. Assistive Technology

Each person will have a basic package and then add-ons dependent on their needs. This includes:

- key safes
- video/phone entry system
- easy and safe to use appliances
- community alarm system
- Detectors – smoke, carbon monoxide, flood, heat.
- Prompts – reminders, electronic calendars, messages to remind re medication, memo minders e.g. 'don't forget to take your keys'

Adaptations include walk in showers, central heating, grab rails, PACT assessments (see below) – door chains, spy holes, window locks.

Each person is referred to the assistive technology support worker employed by Norfolk County Council.

- The nature of using the private rented sector means that there will be limits to what can be added and adapted to a property.

Partners Against Crime Taskforce (PACT) is a project run by Norfolk police. This scheme is the first time the Learning Difficulties team have worked with them. Each tenant in the scheme receives an assessment. This involves looking at upgrading the security of properties.

PACT has offered assessments of people's security needs of their new homes, such as new locks, window locks, doors etc. This has been funded by the DH grant. Norfolk County Council are looking into using them more widely for when people move. It has been a new partnership which has developed from the scheme.

10. Support packages

There is flexibility in terms of who supports a person. So far, one person has changed their support provider and another is planning to. In addition, one person is planning to change their support worker. All were offered direct payments and so far one person has taken this up. Norfolk Learning Difficulties Services are very keen that Direct Payments and Individual Budgets be considered and feel that the project does lend itself to both because the support is set up flexibly and very much on individual basis. It is likely that as people gain greater independence as a result of their housing that they will feel able to access both.

11. Assessments of abilities and support needs

A Specialist Occupational Therapist (SOT) was part of the project team. She felt that there were some difficulties of assessing someone's skills and needs whilst they are still living at home and to identify how much and what support is needed. She did not feel that assessment centres were not the answer and that it needs to be undertaken in the person's new home.

In terms of the role of the Occupational Therapist (OT), she felt that it was essential that they were involved at the very start of the process, to look at the detail and to discuss what is important in a property and what is negotiable and how the OT can support this. The OT is able to look ahead and discuss the different environments.

People tended to need higher levels at the beginning to support someone develop skills for independent living. Much of the initial work with someone when they move in will be about assessing, with them, what they can do and what their potential is. This can only really happen once they are in their new home.

She felt that it was important to build in a review as people's needs will change as they gain skills and become more independent.

12. The views of tenants and family

Roy

Roy has asperger's syndrome and a learning disability. He is 30 years old. Before he moved to his own flat he lived with his father and step mum in a property in the grounds of the family home.

His father felt that Roy's new flat is great and that the team have done a 'fantastic job'.

Roy needs support with money, budgeting and cooking.

Adam, Roy's father: 'It's fantastic', 'I'm glad that he is doing this while we are around to help'.

Dave

Dave is in his early 20s. As child Mary, Dave's mother, brought him up to be independent and taught him daily living skills. Time spent in residential colleges deskilled him, and he had to relearn them on returning home.

Dave said that the flat allowed him to be independent. He had been told that he would never live alone and be independent by staff at the college. Both he and his mother wanted him to be independent and Dave was determined to prove people wrong, that he could live alone. He was able to get a two bedroom flat, which means his nephews can stay over.

Mary is happy he has moved out whilst she is still around to offer support.

Dave is keen to build on his independence. He currently helps at a riding school for the disabled. He wants to increase his time there.

John

Prior to moving to his own flat John had lived with his parents. His mother was also a carer for his father. John wanted greater independence. He wanted a flat of his own and near his parents. John was very clear that he wanted to live alone and he had wanted to for quite a while. He said his mother kept saying 'wait a few years'. He said she was worried about how he would cope alone.

He is very happy with his flat; it is close to town and easy to walk from. John walks with a stick, and has some physical health problems, so he needed a flat that was easy to get around and accessible. He said that he likes to 'do what I want when I want, go out when I want and cook what I want when I want'.

Having his own flat has had an impact on his overall confidence and independence. He is very clear he no longer wants to go to the day centre, instead he would like to do voluntary work with rescued animals. He felt his mother was now happy about his move and could see he was coping.

John has spoken at *Learning Disability Today* at a workshop on his experiences and why he is happy with his move.

Matthew

Matthew lived with his parents. His family were not convinced this was the best situation for him as he had not been very independent at home.

They did not want him to live with others and he also wanted to live alone. Once they realised this was possible they were enthusiastic.

The family helped find a house for Matthew that turned out to be ideal and what he wanted. Matthew now lives alone and is building up his daily living skills. He goes out alone and his family are happy at the change in him.

The family went from initially unhappy to very happy and positive about the scheme. The team spent time with the family, talking through anxieties and explaining the whole process.

Ben, Matthew's brother said: "he is over the moon" and the family were pleased at how independent and happy he is in his new home.

Matthew's confidence and independence has increased to the level that he recently spoke at the Learning Disability Today event at a workshop. His brother attended in support.

13. Challenges and opportunities as identified by the project team

- Project Worker (Housing and Learning Difficulties) Norfolk County council, Norfolk Learning Difficulties Service
- Supported Housing Officer, Saffron Housing
- Specialist Occupational Therapist, Norfolk Primary Care Trust, Norfolk Learning Difficulties Service

Carers

Most families were keen for their sons and daughters to access this scheme and start to become independent whilst they were around to support them. They really appreciated being able to access staff to discuss any worries and concerns. They found the staff very supportive and accessible, and that they

got back to them. It was important that time was allowed to reassure family and involve them in the process from start to finish. All carers have been offered an assessment as it is acknowledged that they usually retain a caring role in some form when the person moves to their own home.

One outcome is that Norfolk Learning Difficulties Service (NLDS) feel they need to do some work as a project on working with carers more generally. There are a number who are now very positive and supportive and willing to offer their support to the project. Many have been happy to attend workshops in the county and were also keen to be part of this case study. One has offered practical help to other tenants. They were keen to have future workshops and a number of families, and tenants, were happy to be involved with taking part in conferences to share their experience.

Support issues

Up until now, the needs of the people moving have been on the lower, less complex, end of the scale. This is mainly because the properties are in the private rented sector and many landlords would not be keen to have major adaptations to their properties. The scheme is now looking at people with more complex needs, such as two women who want to share who have some physical disabilities, and as to whether assistive technology can be utilised. Each person has 6 hours allocated for supporting people. This is topped up by the learning disability community care budget and it does not have a limit. So people with higher support needs could be supported.

Issues with landlord and finding property

It was initially a concern as to whether landlords would be happy with a five-year lease and tying up their assets. So far this has not proved to be a problem. There was though an issue about finding suitable properties within the Housing Benefit (HB) range. The Saffron Supported Housing Officer found many properties within the local £350 pcm limit tended to be 'grotty student bedsits'. She negotiated, and built up a relationship with the different HB offices and started to explain the scheme to them and they did agree to higher rents. HB departments do not have to 'refer' RSL rents to the local Rent Office so they are not strictly bound by the Local Reference Rent as they are for private rent. However, they are bound to ensure that rents are not 'unreasonably' high or the property 'excessive' for claimant's needs so they will be scrutinised in their decision making. Rents for this project were largely not much higher than Local Reference Rent. Part of the role of the Saffron Officer was to explain why a tenant needed, for example, a two bedroom property.

The post holder got to know local, smaller landlords. At the beginning of the scheme it looked like it would be small and one off landlords that would be the main source. Some were one person with a property, others had a small portfolio. Letting agents were often the managing agents and involving an RSL was not a benefit to them. Some of the bigger ones saw them as taking

business away. After talking to them about the scheme two are now happy to work with the scheme.

Issue of choice and compromise

It was felt there will always be some compromises and prioritising. Given the limited resources it is difficult to give someone a second go at finding a property as the one they vacate will need to be re let and the person who gets it will not be able to have the same level of choice of a property being found for them. Some of the landlords have other properties and this can allow for some flexibility of swapping if they are amenable and a more suitable property is available. This has been a solution in one case.

The project was never intended to give people absolute guarantees and a home for life and this has been made clear to prospective tenants through the process of identifying their needs and wants. It is hoped that people will gain skills, confidence and resources to find their own housing solution, with support, if they want to move on.

14. Impact of this scheme for Norfolk Learning Difficulties Service

- Assistive technology is being looked at more widely across the service.
- Other assistive technology options are now being considered such as:
 - Easy to use microwaves
 - The use of digital photo frames, you can put PowerPoint pages onto them and change the info. They can be used as reminders. The time can also be set
 - The use of Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs)
 - The use of video phones.
- The use of the private rented sector is being considered more as an option, helped by the work with landlords and letting agents..
- The scheme has built on existing work with family carers which will be further developed .
- Family carers are willing to talk to other parents who are thinking of the future. This is shown to have the most influence on allaying concerns about independent living.
- Information packs developed for the scheme, covering issues such as home security, money etc will be rolled out to others in Norfolk when people move to their own homes.

- Initially the project team underestimated the time and support needed at the preparation stage with people, and the practical input when someone is moving. The process has adapted to take this into account and will be put into practice in Norfolk Learning Difficulties Services development of home ownership scheme.
- New relationships have been developed which will be part of other projects e.g. getting police to talk to group of tenants moving into new properties about home security.
- Norfolk Learning Difficulties Services have started to talk to partner RSLs about leasing as a viable option when they need to find other properties for people wanting to move.
- There has been a good 'ripple' effect from people's stories about moving – the scheme received more referrals in Great Yarmouth once one of the tenants had moved successfully.
- Things learnt on this project are feeding into a new project Norfolk Learning Difficulties Services have begun, called 'Healthy Happy Homes'. This involves giving people information about how to stay safe and healthy at home
- For individual tenants there has been an increase in confidence and daily living skills. This has shown the importance of housing supporting independence across all aspects of a persons' life.

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ANNEX 1

Information given by Saffron Housing Trust to prospective tenants and families

Information for tenants

Saffron Housing Trust is working in partnership with Norfolk Learning Difficulties to provide good quality, affordable housing for people with learning difficulties who want to live independently in the community.

The scheme will give you:

- A short hold assured tenancy with Saffron Housing Trust. Please look at the tenancy guide for more information.
- A guarantee that you can live in the property for up to five years as long as you do not break the rules in your tenancy agreement e.g. you must pay your rent. We **do not** guarantee that you can live in the property for longer than five years.
- A rent that you can afford –either from housing Benefit or other income. We will talk to you before we take on a property to make sure that you can afford the rent.
- A property that suits you- the right area, the right size and type of property. We will talk to you about what you want and you can be involved in looking for the property. Moreover, you decide if it is the right property for you.
- A home security check and we can provide suitable equipment to make your home safer.
- An assessment of how Assistive Technology equipment can help to make you feel safe and independent in your home.
- We can provide white goods in the property- a fridge, cooker and washing machine- if they are not already provided and you cannot afford to buy them. The white goods must be left in the property if you move out within the five years. You are responsible for the costs of repairing or replacing the items.
- Support to live in your flat. Your care manager will talk to you about the support that you need and arrange a service for you. You can ask for a Direct Payment to pay for the cost of your support service. Ask your care manager for more information about Direct Payments.
- Ongoing maintenance and repair of the property is done by Saffron Housing Trust.

What we expect from you

- You will have to sign a tenancy agreement with Saffron Housing Trust.
- You have to stick to the rules of the tenancy agreement- in particular pay your rent on time, look after the property and report any repairs to Saffron, be a good neighbour to people who live near you.
- You have to provide your own furniture (other than white goods).
- You are responsible for redecorating the flat after you move in (if you want to redecorate).
- If you want to move, you have to give written notice of one month to Saffron.

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ANNEX 2

Top tips from the workshop held for tenants, families and friends.

Tenants

Top Tips for Moving.

- always carry your keys so you do not lose them or carry a key safe or a memo minder.
- set up direct debits or use pay point to pay your TV licence.
- you could ask someone to stay for the first night.
- don't get stressed.
- get friends and family to help.
- always use good quality trades people and shop around for quotes.
- don't worry about the first night - it gets better.
- don't try and do it in a day!
- don't try and pack in a day!
- be safe.
- get help to settle down.
- have a phone.
- sort out things you don't need and get rid of them.
- get someone to make you a meal the first night you move in.
- start on one room at a time.
- have a diary or calendar.

Good Things about Living in your Own Flat

- I had a choice - I chose and I could have said 'No'.
- there are nice surprises like getting good neighbours.
- being your own boss.
- lots of space - more than before.
- I got a perfect flat first time.
- I can do things I like when I want to.
- get up when you like.
- BEER!
- own rules.

- cook what you want.
- go out when you want.
- you are in charge of your own money.
- you can clean your own flat when you want.
- neighbours have offered to put the bins out.
- having people to stay over.
- having help from a good O.T. to help you to find a flat.
- it's good to be close to town.
- watching football on TV and DVD.
- cooking.
- music.
- shopping.
- you can get up when you like.
- go to bed when you like.
- have your friends round late at night.
- eat at a time that is best for you.
- put things in the places you like them.
- clean up the flat when it's looking a mess.
- do your own shopping.
- independence.
- it's closer to work - less travelling and less expensive.
- closer to services and facilities in town.
- part of education for life - to cope when parents are no longer here.
- access to meals at work to save cooking at home.
- my parents feel happy that I'm independent although they do still worry about how I am coping.
- parents have more independence and can do more things without having to ? for their children (or just be there).
- I can do things in the evening when my carers go home.
- I can do my housework at the weekend.
- I am more than happy with my flat.
- I like my carers coming to the flat.

Not so good things about living in your own flat.

- bills.
- finding furniture etc. and getting things together.
- discovering how much things cost.
- miss Mum and Dad, home cooking and a good Sunday lunch.
- going out in the winter (when it's slippery).
- would like a bigger garden so I could get outside - mine's a bit too small.
- miss having a washing line.
- I'm a bit overlooked.
- I'd have liked a bit more help with moving.
- I miss having someone to talk to - I'd like more people to come round.
- you have to pay your bills on time.
- the flat was very cold when I moved in - it's not so bad now but the heating is not very good.
- support needs to be more reliable and directed to needs.
- needs to be some support of a managing nature - for cooking, money, allowances, council tax etc.
- get lonely as not very good at making friends.

Tenants views about the move

When asked if they were kept informed throughout the process of their move, and if they got what they wanted, the tenants replied that they were kept informed and that they mostly got what they wanted

Parents

Top Tips for Living in your own flat

- move your stuff in one go.
- allow a whole week for the move - but do it in bits.
- do lots of preparation.
- if you have any questions, talk to the staff.

Good things about children living in their own flat

- independence - they don't rely on the family.
- their future doesn't depend on their parents.

- they have lots of support.
- he loves being on his own.
- he is doing what any other son would do.
- he has flourished.
- he has increased confidence.
- the staff are accessible and helpful to families.
- felt he was listened to by carers.
- had some worries before moving but the support workers were very reassuring.
- staff are very supportive and provide brilliant communication.
- they are not worried about things in general.

Not so good things about children living in their own flat

- support has almost disappeared.
- needs information about direct payments.
- miss people being around in evenings and at weekends.
- some estate agents wouldn't deal with people on benefits.
- some did not like a 5 year lease - other liked it.

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Other Housing LIN resources on housing for people with learning difficulties:

Housing LIN reports:

- Report: **A Measure of Success: An Evaluation of the Department of Health's Learning Disability Extra Care Housing Programme** (January 2008)
- Report: **Enhancing Housing Choices for People with a Learning Disability** (November 2006)
- Report: **New Initiatives for People with Learning Disabilities** (June 2006)

Housing LIN factsheet:

- Factsheet no.3 **New Provision for Older People with Learning Disabilities** (updated August 2004)

Housing LIN policy briefings:

- Policy Briefing no.6 **Learning Disability and Housing** (November 2006)
- Policy Briefing no.5 **Disabled Person (Independent Living) Bill** (June 2006)

Housing LIN case studies:

- Case Study no.32 **Park View: an 'Independent Living' scheme with support for individuals with a learning disability - South Tyneside** (January 2008)
- Case Study no.29 **Pennine Court: Remodelling sheltered housing to include Extra Care for people with learning difficulties** (August 2007)
- Case Study no.12: **Shared ownership for People with Disabilities** (April 2005)

Housing LIN DVD and CD resource pack:

Housing Now - choice, control and independence for People with Learning Disabilities (January 2008)

The Housing LIN welcomes contributions on a range of issues pertinent to Extra Care housing. If there is a subject that you feel should be addressed, please contact us.

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