Procedure for the provision of accommodation for People with Learning Disabilities 2012-2015
Assessing and providing for the housing needs of People with Learning Disabilities

25th September 2012
Planning and Regeneration
## Current Document Status

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## Version History

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Introduction

The former Cornwall County Council prepared and published a Learning Disability Housing Strategy 2007-2012 to address a lack of access to mainstream and specialist housing opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

An Action Plan was added in 2010 and was signed off by the former Homes and Communities and Adult Care Thematic Partnerships under the former Local Strategic Partnership arrangements.

The Strategy has now expired and a new procedure is needed to support our approach to meeting the housing needs of people with learning disabilities within the strategic priorities set out in the Cornwall Housing Strategy and the Adult Care and Support Commissioning Strategies.

Purpose and aims of the procedure

There is a need for a new approach for the provision of accommodation for people with learning disabilities, not only to replace the expired strategy but also improve the strategic relevance, content and delivery timescales.

This revised procedure will form part of the overall Cornwall Housing Strategy and have its own delivery plan, which will be jointly delivered by the Strategic Housing team and the Adult Care & Support Commissioning team. Significant contributions will also be made by the following partners and stakeholders:

- Cornwall Council Affordable Housing Team
- Cornwall Housing Limited
- Adult Care & Support Locality Teams
- Learning Disability Transition Team
- Partner housing providers
- Voluntary sector organisations
- Families, friends and carers of people with learning disabilities

The aims of the procedure are as follows:

- To assess the housing needs of people with learning disabilities
- To address the lack of mainstream and specialist housing opportunities available to people with learning disabilities by developing a range of housing options, including housing with support
- To introduce choice through the provision of different accommodation types and tenures
- To improve the quality of life for people with learning disabilities
- To help the Council to achieve better value for money through the provision of more cost effective housing and accommodation
Scope of the procedure

The procedure specifically addresses the housing needs of people with learning disabilities over the age of 18 who are eligible for care and support funding from Adult Care & Support. It applies to a range of housing options and tenures including:

- Social rent;
- Private rent;
- Shared ownership;
- Outright ownership;
- Family led solutions;
- Shared Housing;
- Supported Housing;
- Other housing options.

The procedure also can be applied to people between 16 and 18 who are eligible for care and support funding and are in transition from Children, Schools and Families to Adult Care & Support.

The following are outside of the scope of the procedure:

- Residential and nursing care accommodation.
- People under 16.

Details of the procedure

The detail of the procedure sets out the mix of housing options that will be available to people with learning disabilities and some funding options.

The former Learning Disability Housing Strategy included a target to deliver 25% of the new housing provision through the Council’s Affordable Housing Programme but in the current financial climate this has proved to be difficult to deliver. However, the Council remains committed to provide new housing for people with learning disabilities and will continue to seek opportunities to meet identified need in key locations in partnership with housing associations and other housing providers through its Housing Investment Plan.

Nonetheless, the majority of the provision will need to be from a range of external sources including, specialist housing associations, charitable providers and private sector housing providers, including individual private landlords.

The procedure has an associated delivery plan which sets out objectives, targets, responsibilities and timescales.

The procedure covers the following areas:

- The contribution to long term objectives in Cornwall Council’s Community Strategy and Business Plan
• The links to Adult Care & Support Commissioning Strategies and the Council’s Housing Investment Plan
• The estimated need for housing amongst people with learning disabilities in Cornwall
• Good practice in relation to housing options and people with learning disabilities
• How people with learning disabilities will have access to different housing options

**Contribution to the Council’s Long Term Objectives**

The housing needs of people with learning disabilities were recognised formally in 2007 through the Learning Disability Housing Strategy 2007-2012 and the client group was identified as one of the five strategic investment priorities in the five year Supporting People programme.

The revised procedure will form part of the overall Cornwall Housing Strategy as and when it is updated.

The procedure contributes to the following three 5 year priorities in the Future Cornwall Community Strategy 2010-2030:

• Achieve a balanced housing market that meets local needs
• Improve health through the radical redesign of health and care services
• Improve the resilience and self sufficiency of communities

The procedure links to the Council’s Housing Investment Plan as set out above, the Adult Care & Support Wellbeing, Early Intervention and Prevention Commissioning Strategy in relation to ensuring that people have access to appropriate housing and the support services that allow them to maintain their accommodation arrangements, and in particular to the Adult Care & Support Care at Home commissioning strategy, as set out below.

Adult Care and Support (ACS) in the Directorate Plan for 2011/12, Putting People First, Changing Lives, identifies the following Vision for 2011-2014:

"*People are supported to live independently, they have real choice in the help they receive and maximum control over the way they live their lives. Everyone is treated fairly and with dignity and respect*"

This procedure is intended to specifically support the following aims and objectives within the ACS Care at Home Commissioning Strategy:

• Develop effective housing solutions
• Investment into sustainable solutions that enable independence, such as Extra Care Housing
• Work with the Housing Service and providers to develop a framework for the development of Extra Care in Cornwall
• Improved public health and wellbeing through radical redesign of health and social care services
• A balanced budget and services which are good value for money
The estimated need for housing amongst people with learning disabilities in Cornwall

Based on these secondary sources of data estimated need for housing over the period 2012/13 – 2014/15 amongst people with learning disabilities who are eligible for funding from ACS is shown in the table below. It is estimated that up to 60 people with learning disabilities are in housing need per annum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clients</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Homechoice applicants</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitions clients</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported living service clients</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People needing to live alone/very complex needs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>180</td>
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The caveats to the data shown in the table above are:

- These figures are estimates using secondary data
- There is potential for ‘double counting’ between these categories
- The Homechoice housing register data is reasonably believed to represent an underestimate of likely future housing need as not all professionals/practitioners will ensure that their clients’ housing need is registered with Homechoice

This data will be verified on a regular basis with local ACS Learning Disability operational teams.

Further detailed data on the housing needs of people with learning disabilities can be found in Annex 1.

Good practice in relation to housing options and people with learning disabilities

National guidance in relation to housing and people with learning disabilities\(^1\) indicates that when local authorities and their partners are considering the range of housing and support options that may need to be available locally, it is useful to think of housing and support options in terms of a ‘framework’. In practice in Cornwall, this will mean a mix of housing and support options where the intention is to achieve the closest match between an individual’s housing need and what can be provided. This will include:

- Housing adapted for wheelchair accessibility

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• Self contained housing, in the social and private rented sectors
• Small ‘clusters’ of self contained flats, possibly within larger developments
• Shared supported housing, i.e. housing where 2 or more people share
• Tenancy support networks
• Home ownership options
• Shared Lives (adult placement services)
• Use of family’s own homes and resources

**How people with learning disabilities will have access to different housing options.**

Evidence of housing need amongst people with learning disabilities indicates a requirement to develop/provide up to approximately 180 units of additional housing over the period 2012 – 2015.

This procedure sets out an approach for matching the identified housing need to different housing options and solutions for people with learning disabilities that have care and support funded by ACS, including funding in the form of a personal budget. The proposed options for increasing access to a wider supply of housing are:

• Access to social rented housing;
• Access to private rented housing, including the Council’s Stepping Stones to Homes scheme where the Council owes a housing duty under the Housing Act 1996 to a person with a learning disability
• New developments of supported housing and mainstream housing with any necessary adaptations;
• ‘Remodelling’ (i.e. changing to better meet identified need) some existing supported housing, sheltered housing and residential care services.
• Making best use of existing forms of supported accommodation
• Helping families to develop their own housing solutions

**Access to existing housing**

In terms of a process for access to existing forms of housing, the following will be put in place with operational staff from Housing and Adult Care & Support:

• All people with learning disabilities are supported to complete a housing register application
• The application is assessed by Cornwall Council Housing staff with the banding identified
• ‘Cases’ are taken to ‘welfare panels’ where this is appropriate to the identified needs/vulnerability of the individual
• Individuals are supported to use the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system to get access to social rented housing
• Where this won’t or is unlikely to provide a viable housing solution, social workers, in conjunction with Housing Options staff from Cornwall Housing Ltd will identify the ‘best fit’ housing solution. This may include:
  • A direct private sector let
  • A private sector let through another organisation, such as a housing charity entering into a leasing arrangement with a private sector landlord
- Housing sourced through a specialist learning disability housing organisation, e.g. Golden Lane Housing and Advance Housing
- A direct let from a registered social landlord outside of the CBL system
- Access to existing forms of supported accommodation with any necessary modifications/adaptations
- An adult placement (‘SWAPS’ placement)

This approach will be effective and appropriate for people with learning disabilities who don’t need ‘specialised’ or significantly adapted types of housing.

Developing additional housing

This procedure envisages that to meet some of the identified need, development of new types of housing supply is needed. There has been limited progress in terms of delivering additional housing capacity since 2007/08 to meet the identified housing need of people with learning disabilities. The principal success has been delivering a model of shared home ownership for some people with learning disabilities, with approximately 50 homes procured in Cornwall using the Home Ownership for People with Long Term Disabilities (HOLD) model through Advance Housing. There has been less success in delivering additional housing capacity for people with learning disabilities in either general needs or specialist accommodation.

The approach to developing additional housing options will include:

- Small scale ‘clusters’ of self contained flats typically with some on-site support potentially available (e.g. to provide night time sleep over cover). This housing model is often attractive to both tenants and family carers and also provides the potential for some support cost savings for Adult Care & Support.
- Extra care forms of housing, either as part of ‘mainstream’ extra care developments or as much smaller scale development specifically for older people with learning disabilities. There is an opportunity through the general planned development of ‘mainstream’ extra care housing in Cornwall to ensure that the allocations and lettings policies for these schemes enable older people with learning disabilities (possibly over 50 years) and people with learning disabilities who have an older carer to gain access to these units. However it is likely that additional capacity to cater for a growing older population of adults with learning disabilities will be required
- Remodelling of some forms of supported accommodation could be achieved through:
  - Properties that are no longer needed as part of the ‘Supported Living Service’.
  - Remodelling outdated sheltered housing in the local authority and housing association sectors.
  - Changes to current residential care services to be ‘remodelled’ as housing based services.
- This process will be based on direct negotiations with the landlords/owners of these services to identify suitable future uses for current properties and services in relation to identified housing needs
• The development of self contained units adapted to full wheelchair accessibility standards will be achieved through negotiations with housing developers through the Council’s affordable housing team, based on identified housing need in specific locations

Consultation and engagement

This procedure has been developed in consultation with and with guidance from:

• Independent Living For All Project Board
• ACS Commissioning Team
• ACS Learning Disability teams including people with learning disabilities and carers
• Cornwall Council Affordable Housing
• Cornwall Housing Limited
• Housing & Support Delivery Group including family carers

It is intended that the procedure will be launched with a wide mix of housing providers from the public, social, voluntary and private sectors.

Performance and risk management

This procedure will be reviewed as part of the annual reviews of the planned Cornwall Council Housing Strategy and the ACS Care at Home Commissioning Strategy.

The key risks are:

• Willingness of housing partners to contribute
• Constrained funding for development/redevelopment
• Constraints on delivery against targets
• Financially unsustainable ‘bespoke’ housing solutions
• ACS revenue savings/efficiencies not being achieved

The Action Plan attached to the procedure identifies potential risks that will be subject to regular monitoring and evaluation on a six monthly basis to ensure quality improvement and that the risks are managed effectively.

Communicating the procedure

The procedure will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders as follows:

• Through a group that is intended to support the delivery of the policy made up of housing providers from the public, social, voluntary and private sectors
• Through briefings for front line Housing and ACS staff about the policy and how they will be involved in its implementation
• Through one-to-one meetings with housing providers to identify and test the feasibility of proposals and options for housing for people with learning disabilities
• Through the Housing & Support Delivery Group, including family carers
• Via the Council’s website with information provided through the Housing and ACS pages

**Breaches and non-compliance**

No issues arise

**Information and training**

The following information and training is planned to support the delivery of the procedure:

• A ‘factsheet’ about housing options for people with learning disabilities will be produced as part of the action plan. This will be available for carers, families and others with a stake in the policy. A version will be produced for people with learning disabilities

• Other information will be available via the Council’s website with information provided through the Housing and ACS pages;

• Working arrangements to implement the policy will be formalised between Housing and ACS operational staff;

• Through the housing provider delivery group, operational arrangements to identify and secure housing options for people with learning disabilities will be established;

• ACS and the Council’s Housing Benefit team will jointly consider as appropriate all housing options where the rent and service charges exceed Local Housing Allowance rates.

**Evaluation and review**

This procedure will be subject to review 18th October 2013

Prepared by:
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15 January 2013

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Annexe 1 – Housing Needs Assessment

Housing need amongst people with learning disabilities needs to be viewed in the context of the estimated population of people with learning disabilities aged over 18 years in Cornwall. The ACS Care at Home Commissioning Strategy identifies the following population baseline data.

- It was estimated that in 2011 there were 10,144 people aged 18 and over living in Cornwall with a learning disability
- By 2015 these figures are projected to increase to 10,515 (+3.6%)
- There are currently estimated to be 2,054 people aged 18 and over in Cornwall with moderate or severe learning disabilities
- By 2015 these figures are projected to increase to 2,117 (+3%)

The Housing Strategy for People with learning Disabilities identified the level of housing need amongst people with learning disabilities over 18 years from both secondary data sources and primary data through a local housing needs survey.

This policy uses data from a range of secondary sources including:

- Data from the Homechoice housing register. Specifically applicants with learning disabilities with a confirmed housing need and who are eligible for funding from ACS. This is estimated to be approximately 30 people per annum
- Young people in ‘transition’. These are people aged 16-18 years with learning disabilities who are likely to be eligible for ACS funded care/support on reaching 18 years. It is estimated that up to 10-15% of these, approximately 12 people per annum, will require housing
- People living in the ‘supported living services’. These are people currently living in the ‘supported living services’ where a need for alternative housing has been identified by either ACS, Advance Housing or a support provider (or by a mix of all three organisations). It is estimated that approximately 40 people require alternative housing over the next three years
- People with very complex needs and/or assessed as needing to live alone. Based on the experience of local Learning Disability teams it is estimated that up to 5 people per annum require this type of ‘bespoke’ housing

Cornwall Homechoice Housing Register

In January 2012 there were 1,853 applicants on the Homechoice register who stated, on a self-assessment basis, that they or a member of their household had learning difficulties (Cornwall Council, 2012).

Further research has been conducted into how many of the people with a self-declared learning disability were known to Adult Care & Support and were assessed as having a substantial or critical care need and eligibility for access to care services. The housing needs of these people were then assessed, to give a more accurate picture of housing demand from this group, with the following results:
Data has been collected by Service Delivery area to reflect the organisation of services in Cornwall and the management of the Learning Disability locality teams within Adult Care and Support. The data collected suggests the following trends:

- There are around 130-140 applicants on the register at any one time who are eligible for access to care services
- Approximately 30 of these applicants have been subject to a welfare assessment and have had their housing needs confirmed
- Around 20% of applicants who are eligible for care services and appear to be in settled accommodation have not had their welfare needs assessed, which means that their housing need may not be correctly assessed
- There is evidence of a high turnover of accommodation amongst applicants, with around 25% recording a change of circumstance (principally their address). The majority of these have also not had a welfare assessment. The effect of this is that not only are the applicants’ current housing circumstances undetermined, but also their housing need may be incorrectly assessed.
- Around 35% of applicants are adequately and happily housed and have registered with Homechoice as a precaution against a future change in circumstances which will make their housing needs more acute