

get moving!



Making a choice about where to live

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Bristol.

While Ruth was working on the booklet, she talked to members of the Speedwell Centre in Bristol and to Julian Goodwin at the Norah Fry Research Centre. She asked them what they thought about the words and the pictures.

She listened to what they said. Then she and Simon made some changes.

Thank you to Julian and members of the Speedwell Centre for their help and advice.

About this booklet

This booklet is about leaving home and moving on somewhere new. If you need to move there are lots of different choices you can make about where to live next. This booklet tells you about these choices so that you can think about which one might be best for you.

It is a good idea to ask someone you trust to help you think and talk about the things in the booklet. Different housing choices can be very complicated. It can often take a lot of time and work to find the right place to live. At the end of the booklet there is a section with ideas of things to do and think about. We hope that it will help you to decide what choices are best for you.



It's your choice!

Your parents or other people may have talked to you about leaving home or moving on somewhere new. Perhaps they have talked about where you might live next.

Don't forget that it's your choice too! It's important that you have your say about where you want to live next.

There are lots of reasons you may want to live somewhere new. You might want to leave your family and become more independent. You might want your own place. You might want to share a house with a friend, or someone new.

Most people are very happy with where they live and will want to stay there. But some people will want to move.

This leaflet will help you to work out what is important for you and what choices you want to make about your future.



Get help to make your choice

If you are thinking about moving, talk to your social worker as soon as you can. If you don't have a social worker, ask social services to find someone you can talk to.

Your social worker or social services will arrange a time for someone to visit you. They will try to help you find a new home that is right for you. It will probably take several meetings, and lots of work, to get your new choice about where to live.

Your benefits and any paid work might affect your choice. It is important to find out more about these things, but they can be very complicated. Tell people if something is hard to understand. It is your right to get the information you need in a form that suits you.

The rest of this booklet tells you more about the different choices you can make. This booklet is only a start. You will need more information about what choices will be best for you.

Living alone or with other people



Some people like to live **alone** in a house or flat. This means that you don't have to share your home with anyone else. You have all the rooms to yourself. You make your own choices about things like what to eat, or when to go out. But you can still have the help you need. Sometimes it can feel lonely to live on your own.

Some people like to live in a house or flat **with others**. This means that you share a home with several other people. You have your own bedroom, but you share the kitchen, bathroom and sitting room.

Living with others usually means that there are people around to talk to, or go out with. But you might find you don't like the others, or get on with them. If you don't get on with the people you live with, you can feel lonely, even when there are lots of other people around. Living with others also means that it can be hard to make your own choices, as often everybody does things together.



Different types of housing

Another thing to think about is where you want to live.

There are four main types of housing you can choose from:

- Living in a group
- Living with a family
- Living in sheltered housing
- Living in your own home

Living in a group

This means living in a house or flat with a group of other people.

There are different kinds of group living.

Some people live in residential care. This is for people who need quite a lot of support at home. Staff are there to help you during the day and at night. They usually do the shopping, cooking and housework. Sometimes you can help with this if you want to. Staff can also help you to get dressed, have a bath and go to the toilet.

Residential care homes can be large. You might be sharing a house with up to 30 other people. The bigger places tend to be older. They are sometimes called hostels.



Living in a group home is another type of group living. This is when you live in a house or flat with a few other people. Staff visit the home to help you with shopping, cooking and housework. Sometimes they stay overnight too. In a group home you can do most things on your own if you want to.

Michael's story

Michael has just left school. He and a friend moved into a group home with another man who they did not know. A support worker visits them for five hours each day to help them do their own housework and shopping.

Living with a family

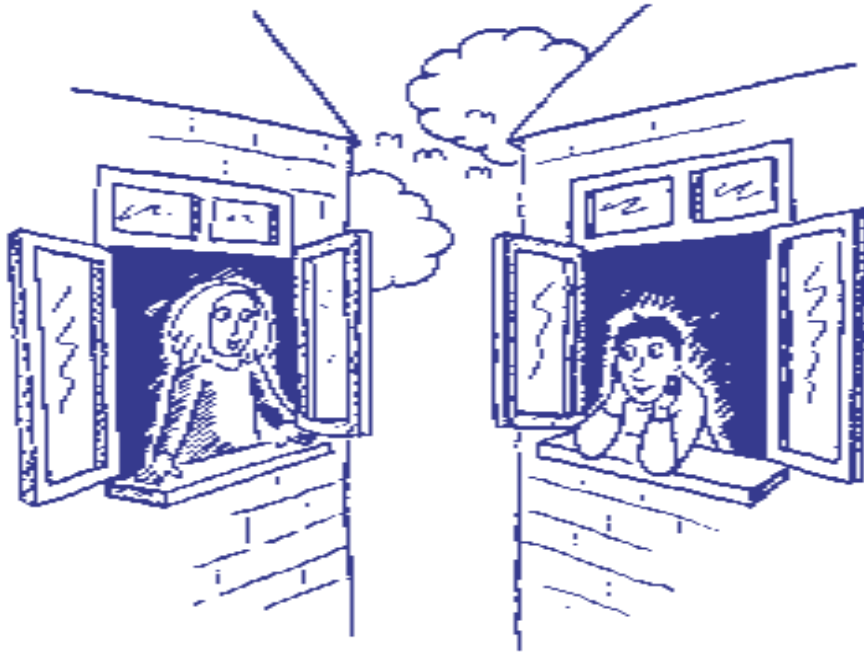


This is when you live with your own family, or another family. You might have your own room, but you share the rest of the house with the other family members. The family provide as much, or as little, support as you need. Living with another family is also called an adult placement, or supported lodging.

Carol's story

Carol lives in a house with another family. She shares her bedroom with another woman with learning disabilities called Julie. Carol likes the family she lives with. She eats her meals with them. Sometimes they all go out together.

Living in cluster housing



Cluster housing is when a group of people live near each other, in the same neighbourhood, street or block of flats. You all know each other, and get together regularly. But you each have your own separate flat or small house.

Sometimes cluster housing is also called sheltered housing, or living support networks. You will usually have to look after yourself, and do your own housework and cooking. But there is also a warden, or support worker, who can help you with things like getting benefits and paying bills.

Sally's story

Sally's flat is part of a building where 15 other people also have flats. Everyone knows each other. Sometimes they all have a meal together, or go out.

Living in your own home

Living in your own home means having your own place. Sometimes this is called independent living, or supported living. This does not mean doing everything on your own. You get the support you need to do things for yourself, or to make important decisions. You do not have to do things all on your own, without any help.

Some people rent a house or flat. This is when you pay money to the council, a housing association, or a landlord. They rent you a place, but they don't usually give you any extra support. If you choose to rent a home you can still get the support you need from social services. They will help you to look after your home and yourself.

A few people with learning disabilities have bought their own homes. Some people have used their benefits to buy a house. Other people have used money given to them by their relatives. Buying your own home means that you or your family own the house or flat where you live. No-one can make you move out. You can say if you want anyone else to live with you. It is your place and it is up to you to look after it. It is also up to you to sort out your own support, if you need it. You can get help with this.

If you live in your own home, you can use Direct Payments to employ your own staff and supporters. This is when social services give you money to buy the support and services you want. See page 17 for more information about Direct Payments.



Although it is quite complicated to buy your own home it might be worth thinking about. You and your family will need to get some special help and advice. See pages 16, 17 and 18 for more information about where to go for help.

Rebecca's story

Rebecca lived in a group home with other people. She was very unhappy there. Her parents helped her to buy her own home. Rebecca now lives in her own bungalow which was designed to meet her needs. She lives on her own, but gets all the help she needs during the day and at night.

Getting support



If you are living with your parents you probably get most of the support you need from them. When you leave home, other people will give you support instead. These people might be paid staff who live with you, or visit you. They might be friends or relatives. They might be volunteers like befrienders or advocates. Sometimes other people with learning disabilities might give you support, especially if you live in cluster housing.

If you live on your own, you can also use community services like meals on wheels, or home helps. There are lots of different ways to get support. You can say what sort of support you would like best.

It is your right to get the help you need to live where you choose. This should mean that you can live where you want to, even if you need a lot of support.

Things to do and think about

This section has some ideas of things to do and think about. We hope that it will help you to decide what housing choices are best for you. You might want to keep a note of your thoughts by drawing, writing or making a tape.

Do I want to live alone or with other people?

- Talk to your friends, family and people you know at work or at your day centre. Find out where they live.
- Do they live alone, or with other people?
- Ask them what they like, or don't like about where they live.
- Imagine what it might be like to live on your own, or with others?
- Think about how you get on with other people, at home or at your day centre.
- Do you like being with lots of other people?
- Do you like to be on your own?
- Do you like noise?
- Or do you prefer it to be quiet?

- What are some good and bad things about living alone?
- What are some good and bad things about living with other people?
- If you want to live with others, who would you choose to share a house with?
- Ask your social worker or supporter how you can have your choice about who to live with.



What sort of place do I want to live in?

- Talk to people you know. Who do they live with? Ask them if they like where they live? What makes it good or bad?
- Talk to your social worker, support worker, or key worker. Find out what sort of housing there is for people with learning disabilities in your local area.
- How many different choices are there?
- Can you visit any of the different places to see what they are like?
- Ask your social worker or supporter about going on the housing list. This is a list of people who are waiting for somewhere to live. The housing department at your local council looks after the housing list.
- Find out what information the housing department has for people with learning disabilities.

What support do I need?

- Make a list of the things that people need to do if they live in their own home, such as cooking, shopping and cleaning.
- What can you do by yourself?
- What do you need help with?
- Is there anything that you might be able to learn to do on your own?
- Talk to people you know. Who gives them support at home?
- Make a list of the different people who give help and support. Who would you like to get support from?
- Find out if your council has a list of people who give support. You can ask your social worker or supporter to help you with this. Who is on the list?

More information about housing and support



Make your move - this is a video that shows some of the choices you can make about where to live. You can get a copy from: Values Into Action, Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London, E2 6HG. Tel. 020 7729 5436.

Housing Options - a housing advice service for people with learning disabilities, families and supporters. Housing Options give free advice by telephone, or by letter. Sometimes they visit you if you need a lot of help. You can write to them at 78a High Street, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX8 6HL. Or you can phone them on 01993 705012. The website is www.housingoptions.org.uk

Plain Facts - a magazine and tape that is free to day services and self advocacy groups. Several issues are about housing and support. Two issues have information about Direct Payments. Find out more from: Plain Facts Team, Norah Fry Research Centre, 3 Priory Road, Bristol, BS8 1TX. Tel: 0117 923 8137. The Plain Facts website is at: www.plain_facts.org

More information for families and supporters

This is a list of information about housing support that is aimed at families and supporters of people with learning disabilities.

Living alone or with others: housing and support for people with learning disabilities - a book by Nigel King and Maurice Harker.

Leaving home, moving on - a booklet for families.

Both from the Publications Department,
the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities,
7th Floor, 83 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0HW
Tel: 020 7802 0304.

My home, my life - a book by Ken Simons. You can get a copy from Values into Action, Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London, E2 6HG. Tel: 020 7729 5436
Website: www.viauk.org

Organisations that give out helpful information:

- **ARC**, ARC House, Marsden Street, Chesterfield, S40 1JY.
Tel: 01246 555043. Website: www.arcuk.org.uk
- **National Housing Federation**, 175 Gray's Inn Road,
London, WC1X 8UP. Tel: 020 7278 6571.
Website: www.housing.org.uk
- **Values into Action**. Oxford House, Derbyshire Street,
London, E2 6HG. Tel: 020 7729 5436
Website: www.viauk.org



The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities works with people with learning disabilities to improve their lives. It funds projects for research and to develop services. It provides information and seeks to influence policy.