

NHS England Learning Disability and Autism Programme

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Building the Right Support – background

A brief history:

- BBC Panorama – Winterbourne View (2011) – shocking evidence of a pattern of abuse at a private hospital near Bristol, leading to a series of arrests and an enquiry
- This led to Improving Lives by NHS Improvement – wider focus across England
- National priority to support autistic people and people with a learning disability to live in ‘homes not hospitals’ – need for more oversight of inpatient care and develop community alternatives
- Transforming Care and Building the Right Support (NHS England, the Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services in 2015) aims to reduce the number of people from these groups in hospital, and to develop community-based alternatives to inpatient care
- Building the Right Home – guidance published to align with Building the Right Support, in 2016.
- The Learning Disability and Autism Programme continues, including a wider focus on health improvement and improving outcomes for autistic people - [NHS England » Homes not hospitals](#)

Aims of NHS England learning disability and autism housing programme

- Support for national, regional and local activity to help more autistic people and people with a learning disability to get a home.
- Engagement of NHS in housing is essential if we are to reduce the number of people in hospital. This includes supporting systems to recognise people's housing needs.
- A true home (rather than a 'placement') can help people:
 - Feel safer and more secure
 - Live how they want to live
 - Have better health and wellbeing.



Our goal is to support people to be discharged from mental health hospitals, help prevent people from going into hospital, and help people to find a home which is right for them.

Housing continues to be identified as a barrier to discharge

[March 2024 – NHS England Assuring Transformation data*](#)

Where people's hospital discharge is recorded as delayed, 56% of people had 'lack of suitable housing' given as a reason

Quality housing and accommodation is key for people to be discharged from mental health hospitals (and avoid admission).

Rather than an after-thought, it is usually essential to a good outcome.



NHS England: regional and national focus on improving outcomes

- Regional senior housing managers work closely with:
 - local health and care systems
 - social housing providers
 - housing and social care commissioners... to support the development of housing for people, and to invest NHS capital money on housing
- National housing colleagues oversee the national capital programme, and make sure that housing is understood and is a priority across the national programme and with external partners.
- **The NHS does not lead housing, locally, regionally or nationally. However, it does need to play an active role within an integrated approach to support people to live in homes, not hospitals.**

NHS England housing capital programme:

- £13m capital funding in 2023/4.
- Pipeline of 130+ projects (260+ units of housing) across 3 years – subject to funding availability.

What NHS England is doing to promote better housing options

- Work with national partners who share responsibility for this
- Advocate for needs of autistic people and people with a learning disability
- Collaborate with Homes England for access to public capital funding
- Work with housing providers to identify opportunities for joint action
- Co-chair the National Housing Community of Practice with LGA / ADASS



Key housing issues for the people we support

- Design - considering the sensory needs of people at home

[Considering and meeting the sensory needs of autistic people in housing](#)

- Homes often need to be designed in a bespoke way – people should be involved in the design of their home as much as possible
- Plan for people's future housing needs from as early as possible





Why is it so hard to increase supply of homes?

We know that we need to join up local planning for people's housing needs, across health, housing and social care. Why is this so difficult in practice?

- Local housing authorities have lead role for strategic housing planning, local plans, housing market engagement and helping to broker housing capital funding.
- Housing budgets are facing severe challenges - rising homelessness, rents, and building costs; commercial competition for land, too few social homes being built, pressures on housing benefit bill.
- Not enough capital funding available or accessible to meet demand.
- Tough financial pressures on health and social care, with rising demand for both – joining up across sectors can be challenging.
- As a result, to quote a joint strategic commissioner in Torbay: *'Too often, we [in health / social care] find ourselves trying to solve housing issues, without inviting housing partners round the table.'*



‘Brick by Brick’ – NHS England hospital to home discharge resources:

- Housing needs haven’t always been identified early enough in the hospital discharge process.
- Process can be reactive, and not always person-centred, causing problems e.g. with the identification of properties – or ‘placements’ - that are unsuitable - running the risk of longer hospital stays and tenancy breakdown.

What we wanted to see:

- People’s housing needs identified **much** earlier – ideally when someone first goes into hospital or even before.
- Consistent approach to identification of housing needs, and therefore housing design specification.
- A person-centred approach to planning ahead and designing the home with the person & their family.
- Commissioners and others involved in people’s discharge planning to work with partner organisations such as housing providers to help identify housing needs and source properties.

Overview of content of 'Brick by Brick' resources:

- Three sections:
 1. Introduction / guide to implementation;
 2. Discharge protocol template, underpinning principles, governance and processes to be agreed.
 3. Individual housing needs assessment form template.
- Strategic steps:
 1. Understand housing needs of people across the area.
 2. Develop funded delivery plan to meet future needs.
 3. Secure commitment to discharge protocol approach.
 4. Align with existing discharge planning processes.
- Four discharge steps, in partnership with the person and their loved ones (from as early as possible):
 1. Individual housing needs assessment, alongside care and support planning.
 2. Personalised support to look for and acquire a new home.
 3. Plan for future once a new home has been identified, purchased and refurbished (if required), including any adaptations as needed.
 4. Personalised support for the move itself.

Long term benefits for people of having the right home

A person's experience in the East of England:

A young adult who had been in a secure hospital unit for a long time (5 years+) wanted to move back to their home area, to be near their family.



The aim of the move was to enable independent living and for the person to be able to live an ordinary life.

Following the purchase and adaptation of a 3-bed detached bungalow, the person was able to move into their new home.

The person's distress has reduced, with regular contact with their family. They are healthier and their diet has improved.

In addition, the person's move led to a reduction in their care and support costs of over £750,000 per annum.

Long term benefits for people of having the right home

A person's experience in the Midlands region:

A young person was supported to move from their parents' home, to their own property – complete with a swing and near to their family.



Since moving they have had great holidays, a wonderful birthday party, activities and have adjusted well to their home.

The home was set up to help the person to stay happy and calm. For the person, this means being able to have quiet time on the sofa, shower routines, enjoying their swing, their toys, their PC, their leaflets. They can play with mud when they are upset, as the house adaptations allow this.

This has also meant that the person has been able to reduce the amount of medication they take.

More information and contact details

Stay in touch!

Join the National Housing Community of Practice

Sign up for the 'Housing Summit' on housing design with ND Connection (May to July) - <https://ndconnection.co.uk/designing-homes-for-sensory-differences>

Check out

<https://www.learningdisabilityengland.org.uk/welcome/projects-and-partnerships/housing-guide/>

For more information:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/learning-disabilities/care/housing/>

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