

Best Value Review Promotion of Independence Young Disabled Adults

Accommodation and Support

Section 1 – Introduction

This report covers a number of areas which are relevant to making sure that young disabled people have access to housing that meets their needs and have opportunities to gain an appropriate level of independence. These areas are:

1. “Supporting People” housing related support
2. Housing adaptations/ equipment
3. Housing & independence
4. Short breaks
5. Residential provision.

These areas form Section 2 of the report and are structured using the standard questions. Section 3 lists references and sources of information.

Section 2 – Baseline Reports

1. “Supporting People” – housing related support

What is the current provision/situation?

This section looks at the supported accommodation and housing related support services that Supporting People fund. There are other services in the county, funded mostly by social services, which provide personal and general social care rather than housing related support. These are largely provided in registered care homes although some services provide care and support together. There are also units of housing to rent in the county which have either been built or adapted for people with disabilities. These may be owned by Housing Associations or Local Authorities. There are also houses/flats/bungalows owned by these landlords which have been adapted in various ways for a particular tenant when required. These specially adapted or built houses are not provided with support. See **Appendix A** at the end of this section.

The services funded have been inherited by Supporting People; until April 2003 they were funded through Transitional Housing Benefit or District Council Housing Revenue accounts. All the inherited services will be reviewed before April 2006 to assess their quality, performance, and strategic relevance, eligibility for SP grant, demand and value for money.

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The services funded are categorised according to the major support needs or the primary service user group:

- Older people
- Learning Disability
- Domestic violence
- Mental Health
- Homeless families
- Single homeless
- Drug problems
- Alcohol problems
- Young person at risk
- Teenage parents
- Care leaver
- Physical disabilities, including sensory impairment
- HIV/Aids
- Offender/ at risk of offending
- Generic.

Some services also give a secondary service user group. However this categorisation does not necessarily preclude people between the ages of 16 and 25 with any form of disability from using these services. In some cases services may exclude specific people, for example, men are excluded from women's domestic violence services, some people with mental ill health may be excluded by a particular service if their needs are higher than can be met in the service.

Services are either:

- Accommodation based; accommodation is provided along with support such as a hostel with staff on site or a flat/house with visiting support.
- Floating support services where the support is delivered into the service user's own home. Many of these floating support services were set up as services linked to Local Authority housing but others can be accessed by people in any type of accommodation.

Services are further divided into:

- Short term services, usually less than two years and often much shorter, for example, women's refuges and hostels for the homeless.
- Longer term services, for example, sheltered housing for older people and long term supported housing for people with learning disabilities and enduring mental ill health. Those which are long term will charge the service user for the service, however means testing means that most service users will not need to pay.

Services which are likely to include people with disabilities are those specifically set up for:

- **People with learning disabilities** – there are 472 units of support services in the county fairly evenly spread throughout the 7 districts. Most of them are accommodation based. They range from services provided for about 4 hours a week to very high levels of support up to about 42 hours a week. Many of these services also include care funded by social services. About 30 of the places are individual placements in carer's homes.
- **People with mental ill health** – there are 484 units of support for this client group in the county. There are about 300 units of floating support all around the county for people in their own homes and the rest are places in shared houses or flats.
- **People with physical disabilities.** There are very few of these services. Only 25 units of support in the county. These are:
 - Mansfield – a service for 4 deaf people who also have a learning disability, and one floating support unit.
 - Bassetlaw - a service for 10 people with severe physical disabilities and associated behavioural problems. New Roots in Worksop also have two purpose built units which are accessible to young people with physical disabilities.
 - Ashfield – a service for older people with physical disabilities.
 - Newark & Sherwood – 5 people with physical disabilities are placed with Eden Housing.

Other supporting people services are primarily intended for other groups of people but may have people with mental health problems, learning disabilities or physical disabilities. These include:

- Family or single homeless services – 413 units
- Young people's services – mostly in hostels in the north of the county - 326 units
- Generic services - 381 units mostly of floating support around the county for all types of tenants mainly in local authority housing.
- Offenders or those at risk of offending - 51 units all in the north of the county
- Drug users or those recovering from drug use – 19 specialised units although a number of other people in this category will access other services.

People aged 16 – 25 with disabilities can access any of the above services but they are not specifically designed for this client group. Some services will exclude them because they do not have accessible buildings, for example, most hostels have either very little access or in some cases may not have a ground floor bedroom. At the moment all of the refuges for women escaping domestic violence in the county are inaccessible for women with physical/mobility disabilities, those with more severe mental health problems or learning disabilities. This is due to inaccessible older

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buildings and the shared nature of the service involving children. In Bassetlaw there are changes being made to a service so that women with disabilities can access two houses.

What are the problems nationally and locally?

The local problems are similar to those found nationally:

- There has traditionally been little physical access to supported housing for disabled people, possibly due to old inaccessible buildings used for refuges and hostels. However, new projects will be more accessible at least for those with mobility problems.
- Most of the provision for people with physical disabilities has been in registered care homes. In Nottinghamshire the housing related support needs of people with disabilities has not been mapped before as the funding has not been available to provide anything other than care services.
- There was a fairly short term opportunity to set up new support services using Transitional Housing Benefit between 2000 and April 2003. The funding taken up in this way transferred to Supporting People and was capped so that no further development could take place. Unfortunately the physical disability sector was not sufficiently engaged with the supported housing sector to take full advantage of this opportunity and in Nottinghamshire at least there was very little developed for this service user group.
- The government has now conducted a spending review to look at the costs of supported housing and decided that there is too much money going into this area so cuts in funding are expected.
- Services have usually been set up with one type of service user in mind. There has not been sufficient thought given to the increasing number of people with more than one issue, for example, a homeless person with mental health problems or a young offender with learning disabilities.

What ideas, solutions and options have been suggested locally?

- **The review of Supporting People.** The review of Supporting People will lead to a rationalisation of services; if necessary services can be moved to other parts of the county or adapted to meet more pressing needs. If services are found to be inappropriate or poor quality they will either have to change what they are doing or lose their funding. In some cases some of the funding may need to come from other Government departments. This will release some funding which can be used to commission new services so that unmet needs can be met. This may benefit people with physical disabilities or sensory impairments who have a shortage of support services. Further work is needed to look at what the needs of this group are and what the priorities are in order to commission services as funding is freed up through

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the review process. The issue of accessibility will be raised with each review and plans will be put in place to increase this as far as possible, for example, in the domestic violence sector the older, shared and overcrowded buildings will be replaced with more modern, self contained and more accessible buildings. This will however take time and capital funds to carry out.

- **Floating Support.** There is a movement towards putting floating support services into the homes already occupied by people, rather than moving people into supported housing accommodation to allow them to get this support when they need it.

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Purpose built local authority housing in the County for physically disabled people includes:

- **Gedling** 4 houses
- **Newark** Information not available
- **Broxtowe** 20 houses/bungalows/flats
- **Ashfield** 17 houses/bungalows/flats
- **Bassetlaw** Information not yet available
- **Rushcliffe** Information not yet available
- **Mansfield** 15 houses/bungalows/flats plus 969 properties with various adaptations internally or externally some of which is classified as sheltered housing for older people.
- There are also housing associations with general needs housing stock which has been purpose built or fully modified for total wheelchair accessibility or has been adapted in various ways for individual tenants. No Information is available yet.

2. Housing adaptations and equipment

This area is included in the Commissioning Strategy for people with physical disabilities which is being developed in the north of the County. This will make recommendations for change to existing services. One area needing change is that waiting times for Disabled Facilities Grants in Newark and Bassetlaw are lengthy and can result in people spending lengthy periods in residential or nursing home care.

3. Housing & independence

What is the current situation/provision?

The Support Plan (learning disability) and the Commissioning Strategy (physical disability) both identify current provision for young people with disabilities in the County. One general issue is that young disabled people do not get the same choice to leave school as non-disabled young people; there is an expectation that they will stay on to 19 years. There are few options for them if they leave early.

What are the known problems in Nottinghamshire?

- **Young people with complex needs.** Around 15 young people with complex needs leave school each year needing support at home, supported independent living or residential accommodation. This is in addition to other disabled people who wish to change their current living arrangements.
- **Relationship with District Councils.** The relationship with housing providers and the availability of housing varies across the County. For example, in Bassetlaw excellent homes are regularly allocated within 3 to 6 months; in Newark specialist physical disability services began in March 2003 and to date the team has experienced difficulties in creating links with the housing authority, as a consequence getting accommodation for clients with severe physical disabilities has been problematic. The engagement with District Councils is also identified as an area needing further work in learning disability services.
- **Choice.** There is a need for a wider variety of housing options, for example, core and cluster housing to allow people more choice about the level of independence they can manage.
- **Transitions.** There are Transitions Co-ordinators across the County. Transitions between children's and adults services are not smooth enough. Stronger links are needed between the two services.

What ideas/solutions/options have been suggested locally?

- **Plans and Strategies.** Implementation of the Plan and Strategy mentioned above.
- **Policies.** The transitions policy needs to be reviewed to establish stronger links between children's and adults services. This should include Health services.
- **Disabled Facilities Grants** – the Department of Health is due to publish a paper on DFGs later this year.

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- **Support Service.** Reinstatement of the Independent Living Support Service for people with physical disabilities. This offered support to people to prepare for independence and was a much valued service.
- **Relationship with District Councils.** A Housing Officers Research Group has been established to start to look at housing for disabled people and other community care issues.

4. Short breaks

What is the current provision/situation?

Short breaks are an important way of helping families to maintain very dependent people at home. A Quality Protects Research Briefing says,

“The majority of parents with disabled children provide care well in excess of that of other parents. For example, a recent survey of families with children with profound and multiple disabilities found that 60% of parents spent more than ten hours a day on basic physical care; one third of those providing 24 hour care”.

In addition an appropriate model of short breaks also allows children and young people time away from their families practising the skills they need for independence.

The Housing and Support Plan for people with learning disabilities and the Commissioning Strategy for people with physical disabilities both contain information about current levels of short break services and proposals for their development.

What are the known problems in Nottinghamshire?

- Places for short breaks in the County are still scarce for people with disabilities in most areas, and the model used is not always suitable or acceptable to service users.
- The service can be relatively expensive because of the need to manage “voids”.

What ideas/solutions/options have been suggested or tried locally?

- Implementation of recommendations of the Support Plan and Commissioning Strategy mentioned above.
- Work has been done with providers to develop mutually acceptable contracts for the provision of short breaks. This had led to a significant improvement in capacity, quality and choice in some areas.
- Review funding/user charging arrangements to promote take up and streamline bookings and referrals. The Department has established a small co-ordination

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service based at Dallas Street to oversee bookings, minimise “voids” and administer payment and monitoring arrangements.

- Publication of a “Short Breaks Guide” for social care staff, service users and carers.
- Reinstatement of the “Short Breaks Consultative Group” with service user/carer input to monitor and develop services. This might be of particular importance for services to young disabled people.
- Development of a specific service for people with profound and multiple disabilities. This could be based on provision in Bradford (hydro) and Chesterfield (Snoezelen).

5. Residential provision

What is the current provision/situation?

- There are currently around 200 specialist beds in the County for people with physical disabilities of all ages.
- There are 4 people with physical disabilities aged between 16 and 18 years in long term care in the County.
- There are 566 placements for people with learning disabilities in independent sector residential care (all ages). Of these 48 are aged between 16 and 25 years. All these people are now to be reviewed regularly by CLDTs. In the main people are not placed far away if placed out of County. In 2002/2003 19 residential placements were made for people of all ages with learning disabilities.
- Care for young people up to age 19 provided by Caudwell House and Minster View.
- Placement manager recently appointed in Children's services.

What are the known problems nationally?

- **Price of land and building costs.** Residential care is premises based and therefore has to compete with need for new houses etc. Development time is considerable.
- **Compatibility.** Care standards categories are very general and do not specify the need to make sure people are happy to live together and are compatible. The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) can not withdraw registration on the basis of an inappropriate mix of people in the same care group.
- **Standards.** Some homes are mediocre but it is difficult to push up standards if providers do not co-operate. There is insufficient capacity particularly in specialist

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provision, and some providers exploit this. Cost of individual packages of care can be high in some instances.

- **Fee Levels.** Levels of payment for placements are based on standard rates which are related to services and fees paid for the care of older people. These rates apply to some placements in Nottinghamshire but many cost considerably more. Some “Special Contracts” have been negotiated recently, incorporating quality indicators, monitoring process and mutually agreed enhanced fee levels. This began with homes for adults with physical disabilities and is being extended to specialist learning disability homes.
- **Ideology.** The ideological position of supporting people in the community or keeping young people at home can create tensions in meeting the needs of some individuals. In some circumstances it can lead to reluctance to look at the issues about independence and quality of life in residential care.

What are the known problems in Nottinghamshire?

The problems in Nottinghamshire echo national problems:

- **Expensive premises** - Rushcliffe Day services took 5 years to find suitable accommodation. The price of land leads to some providers building premises that are too large for the plot and resulting in cramped conditions for users, for example, Rufford Care Centre in Worksop has a 100 bedded home on a small site.
- **Compatibility.** The Local Authority tries to enforce some standards in making sure people have reasonably similar needs and are happy to live together. Nottinghamshire increasingly requires providers to have an admissions policy. Some homes have dual registration and have say 3 beds for people with physical disabilities in a home for older people. The placement of a young person in a home for older people is rare. Staff try not to place people in these beds but placements are made on occasion by Nottinghamshire staff and by other Authorities.
- **Managing the market.** The quality of provision in Nottinghamshire is variable. There is a need to look at ways of developing alternative provision with a clear strategy for raising and maintaining standards. Some profoundly disabled people need some aspects of residential care without the enforced communal living. Some people with challenging behaviour pose problems in the community and in groups.
- **Shared funding.** There are some problems about getting shared funding with Health for some people. The local continuing care policy can create problems and decisions about funding can take ages.

What ideas/solutions/options have been suggested locally?

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- **Improving quality.** Opportunities have been taken to work with some providers to raise standards and improve the quality of residential services. This needs some budget flexibility to enable a small premium to be paid to reward quality providers. Further work is needed in this area.
- **Plans.** The Learning Disability Partnership Board has developed a Housing and Support Plan (including short breaks) for implementation from 2003 to 2006. This plan addresses housing and residential care.
- **Strategies.** A Commissioning Strategy for services to people with physical disabilities is being developed by the Joint Commissioning Group (JCG) in the north of the County. This is for implementation from 2004 to 2007. It covers a wide range of areas pertinent to this review, including residential care, housing and short breaks. The JCG in the south of the County has a housing strategy in place.

Section 3 – References and sources of information

- Keith Vollbracht
- Hilary Owen
- Paul Johnson
- Paul McKay
- Draft Housing and Support Plan – Partnership Board
- Draft Commissioning Strategy for Services for People with Physical Disability 2004 – 2007
- Draft Transitions Policy
- Meeting the needs of disabled children – Quality Protects Research Briefings (6)
- Information/ideas – Val Leyland
- Ian Baker
- Joy Cooper

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