

Key Housing Issues for People with Learning Disabilities in Gateshead

A report for the Housing Subgroup of the Learning Disability Partnership Board

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i. Introduction

The Government is committed to ensuring that the most vulnerable adults are offered the chance to get back on a path to a more successful life, by increasing the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation.

(PSA16: 1.3)

Public Service Agreement 16 (PSA16) and the other 29 Public Service Agreements were announced in October 2007 as the Government's highest priority outcomes for 2008-2011. Public Service Agreements have played a vital role in galvanising public service delivery and driving major improvements in outcomes. They are a clear commitment to the public on what they can expect for their money.

The purpose of PSA16 is:

To increase the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation, employment, education or training.

This report concentrates on the need for settled accommodation.

Groups included in PSA16 are people with moderate to severe learning disabilities and young adult care leavers.

The Government has recognised the need to build services around the needs of these citizens, especially in relation to housing.

PSA16 is highlighted several times within the white paper "Valuing People Now" published in January 2009 – the Government's three-year strategy for people with learning disabilities. Valuing People Now states that by 2011 councils should know about the housing needs of people with learning disabilities and be including this in their housing plans. Learning Disability Partnership Boards have a vital role to play in this.

One key issue affecting people with learning disabilities is highlighted in "The Housing Timebomb" published by Mencap:

Local authorities' failure to plan for the future housing needs of people with a learning disability living with older parents.

The Housing Timebomb shows that in most cases social services do not try to find an alternative housing placement until there is a crisis in the household brought on by the death or ill health of the parent. This sudden upheaval and unexpected separation causes stress, confusion and trauma.

The following information highlights the key housing issues that affect people with learning disabilities in Gateshead.

Recommendations are made according to the results of mentioned reports, following statistics and liaisons with Care Managers, family carers and people with learning disabilities living in Gateshead.

ii. Statistics

The following figures were calculated by using The Learning Disability Partnership Board Database of Service Users and The Learning Disability Partnership Board Housing Register (both last updated on 19 January 2009).

The Database of Service Users

This database is a list of all people with a learning disability in Gateshead who use a service.

There are currently **631** people with Learning Disabilities using services in Gateshead.

This includes young people in transition from children's services to adult's services and older people with a learning disability.

The database contains the following information (if known):

- Name of person who uses a service
- Address of person
- Date of birth
- Services used
- Name of family carer (if applicable)
- Family carer's date of birth (if applicable)

The Housing Register

The Housing Register is a list of people with learning disabilities who we know want to make plans to move home. It does not yet include people who need to move or need to start making plans.

Some of the information on this register comes from completed My Home forms. Everyone who completes a My Home form should be on this register – though not everyone on the register has completed a My Home Form. It is constantly updated as circumstances alter.

On 19 January 2009 there were **81** people on the Housing Register.

The register contains the following information (if known):

- Name of person who uses a service
- Date of birth
- When the person would like to move / needs to move
- Where they would like to move to
- What type of property they would prefer / require
- Whether they have applied for the Homechoice Scheme
- Whether they have completed a My Home Form
- The date they were added to the register
- Any other useful information

My Home Forms

There are currently **21** people on the Housing Register who have completed a My Home Form.

A person with a Learning Disability can complete a My Home Form to help them to make decisions to plan how and where they would like to live. By completing a My Home Form the person is added to the above-mentioned Housing Register and is added to The Gateshead Housing Company's Homechoice Scheme so that they can apply for council-owned properties.

a. Where people with a Learning Disability are currently living in Gateshead...

CENTRAL

Includes Town Centre, Bensham, Deckham, Carr Hill, Shipcote, Sheriff Hill, Sunderland Road

SOUTH

Includes Beacon Lough, Wrekenton, Springwell, Low Fell, Birtley

EAST

Includes Felling, Old Fold, Heworth, Pelaw, Leam Lane, Wardley, Bill Quay

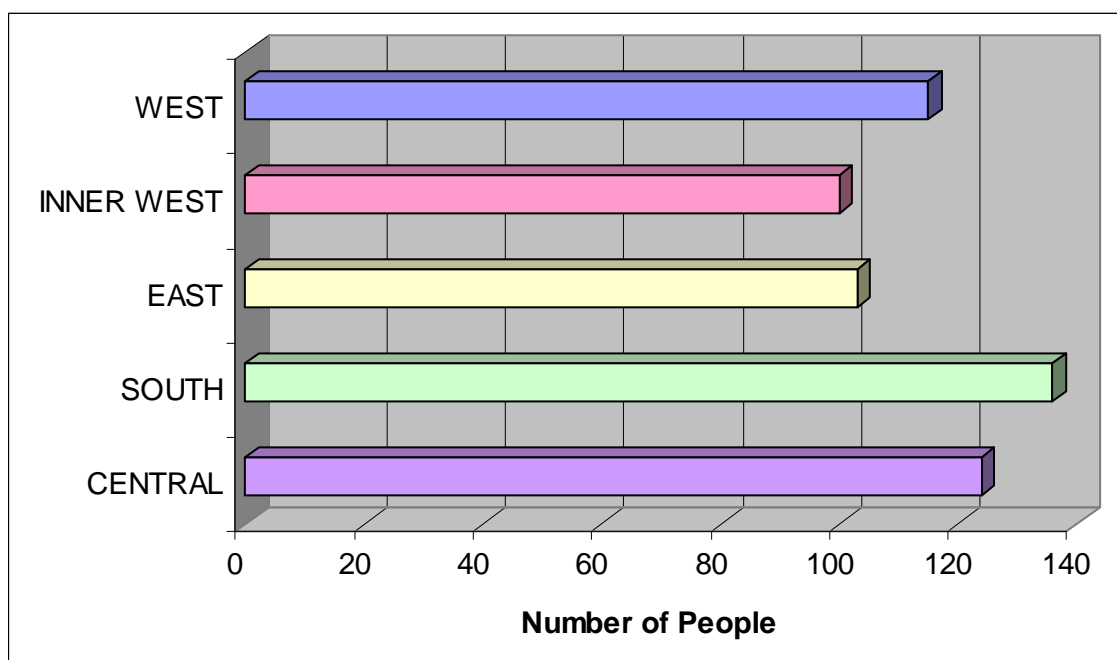
INNER WEST

Includes Whickham, Dunston, Teams, Swalwell, Sunnyside, Lobley Hill

WEST

Includes Blaydon, Ryton, Highfield, Winlaton, Rowlands Gill, Crawcrook, Chopwell

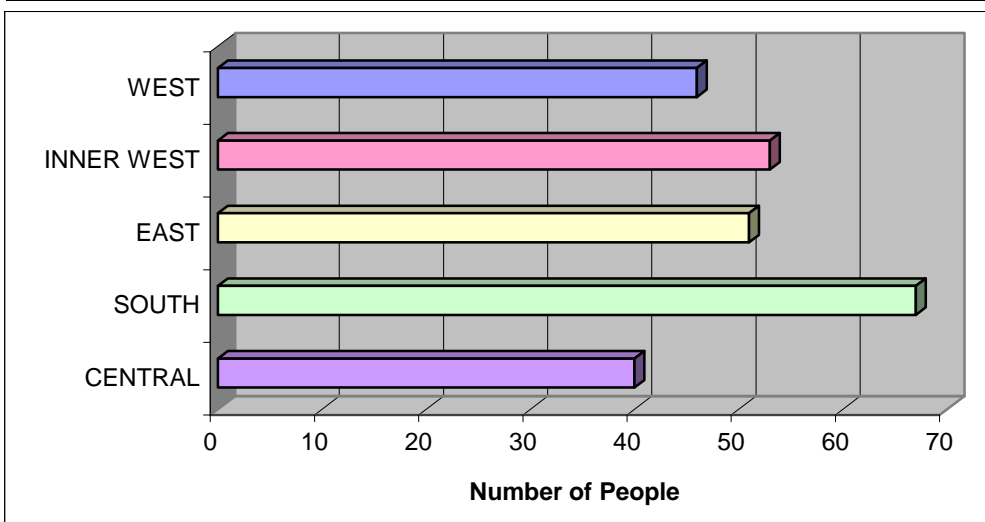
Areas	Number of People	Percentage
Central	124	21%
South	136	24%
East	103	18%
Inner West	100	17%
West	115	20%
TOTAL	578	100%



N.B People who are living out of the borough are not included in these results.

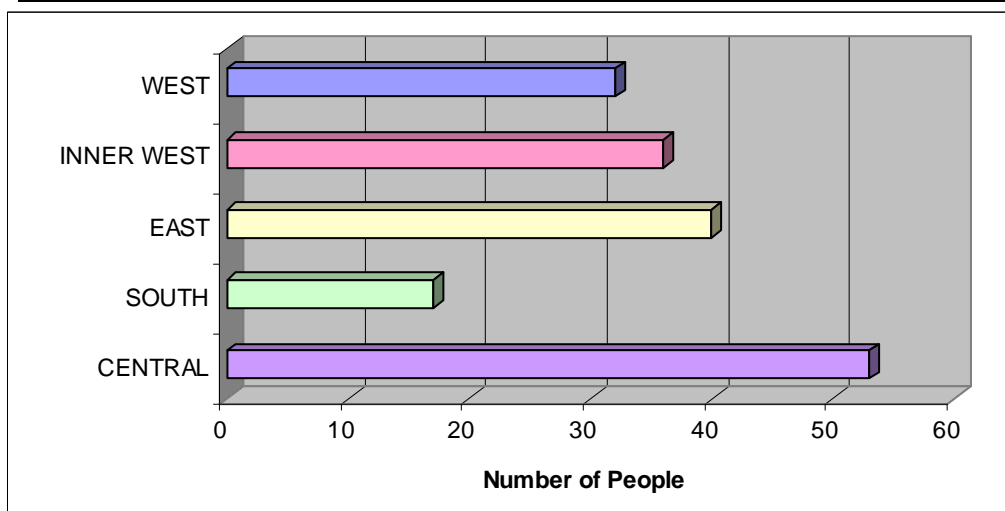
a1. Where people living with family carers are living in Gateshead

Areas	Number of People	Percentage
Central	40	15%
South	67	26%
East	51	20%
Inner West	53	21%
West	46	18%
TOTAL	257	100%



a2. Where people living independently are living in Gateshead

Areas	Number of People	Percentage
Central	53	30%
South	17	10%
East	40	22%
Inner West	36	20%
West	32	18%
TOTAL	178	100%



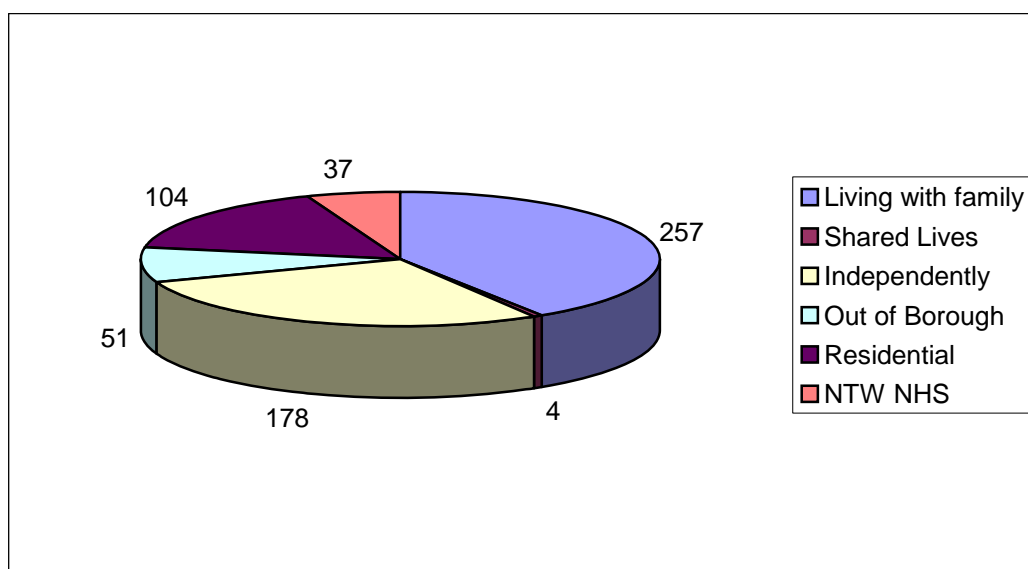
The most popular places to live in each area are:

CENTRAL: Bensham and Deckham
SOUTH: Birtley, Low Fell and Wrekenton
EAST: Felling and Heworth
INNER WEST: Whickham and Dunston
WEST: Blaydon and Winlaton

b. How people with a Learning Disability are currently living in Gateshead...

Circumstances	Number of People	Percentage
Living With Family	257	41%
Shared Lives	4	1%
Living Independently *	178	28%
Out of Borough Placement	51	8%
Residential Care	104	16%
NTW NHS	37	6%
TOTAL	631	100%

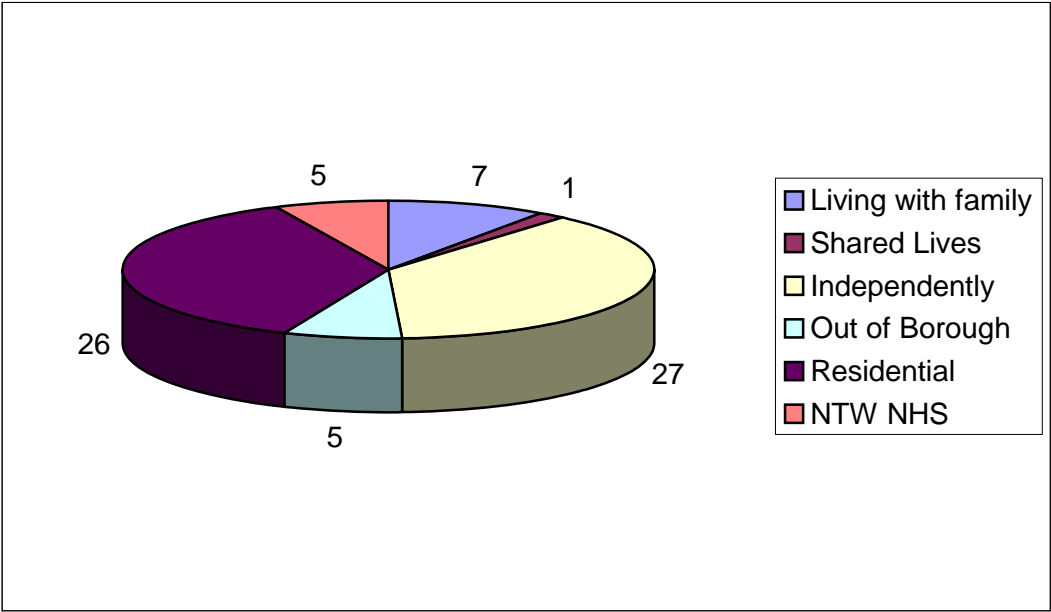
* This includes supported living schemes, as well as renting from The Gateshead Housing Company, a Housing Association or a Private Landlord



b1. How people with a learning disability over the age of 65 are living...

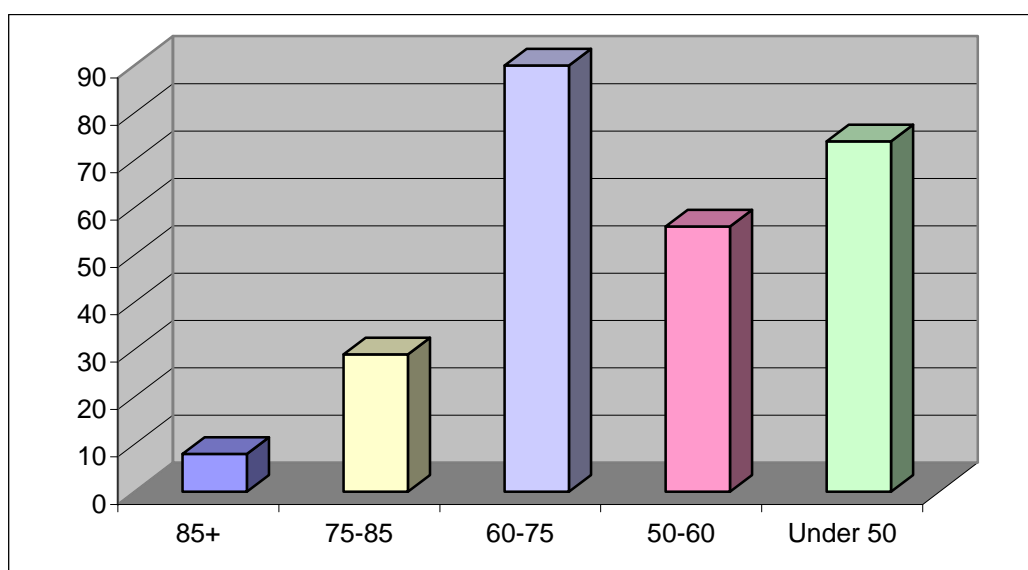
There are **71** people with learning disabilities over the age of 65 known to services.

Circumstances	Number of People	Percentage
Living With Family	7	10%
Shared Lives	1	1%
Living Independently	27	38%
Out of Borough Placement	5	7%
Residential Care	26	37%
NTW NHS	5	7%
TOTAL	71	100%



c. Ages of family carers for people who are living with family members...

Age of family carer	Number of people	Percentage
85+	8	3%
75-85	29	11%
60-75	90	35%
50-60	56	22%
-50	74	29%
TOTAL	257	100%



Of the 8 people who live with a family carer over the age of 85 –

6 people are on the Housing Register

Of those 6 people on the Housing Register –

4 are making their own arrangements

2 are currently being reviewed by the Review Team

Of the 29 people who live with a family carer aged between 75-85 –

7 people are on the Housing Register

Of those 7 people on the Housing Register –

1 is actively looking to move

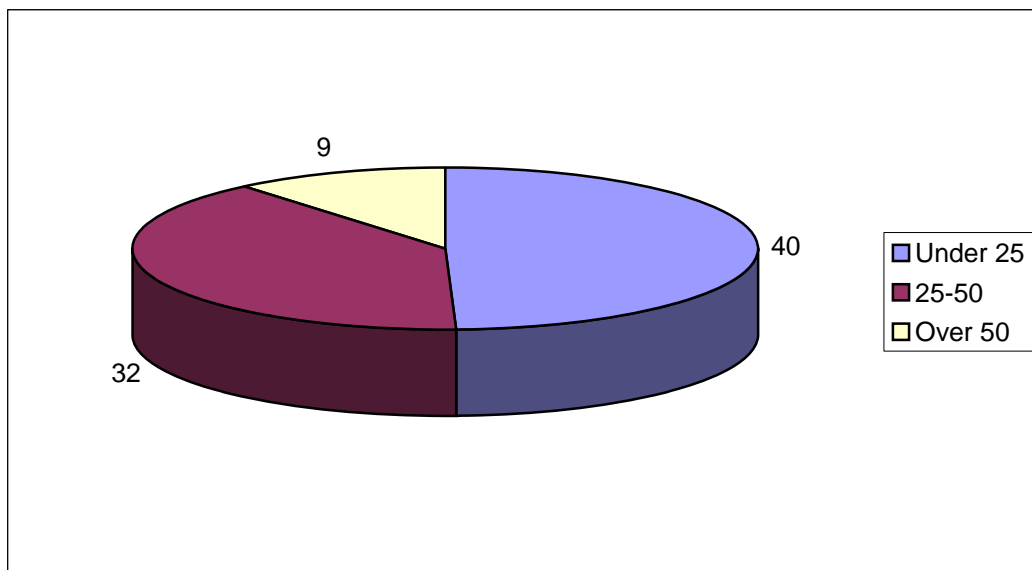
4 are currently being reviewed by the Review Team

1 has no desire to make plans

1 person's family carer does not want to make plans

d. Age groups of people with a Learning Disability on the Housing Register

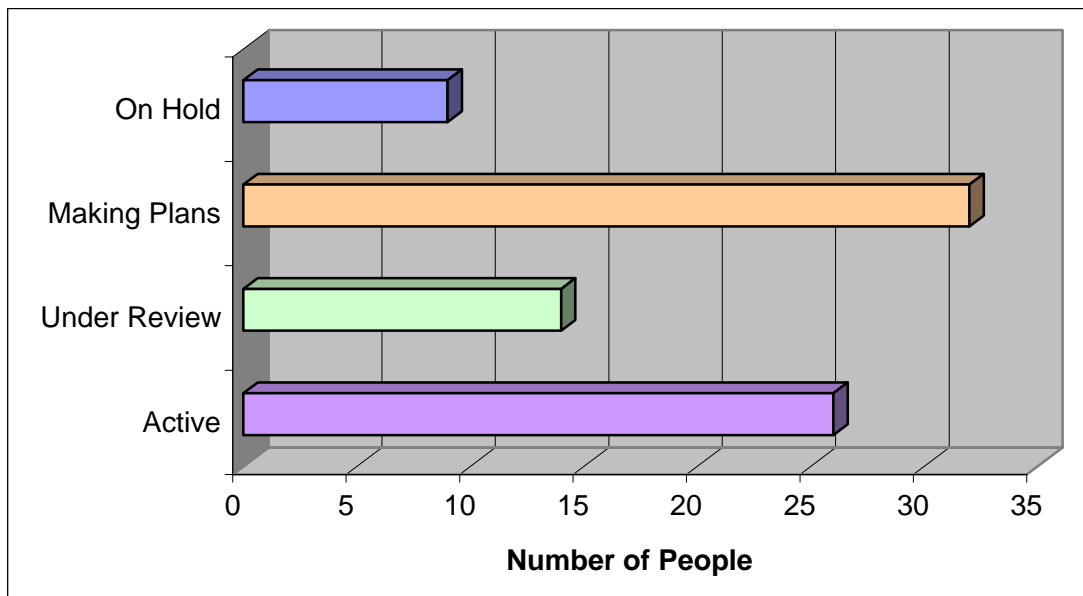
Age Groups	Number of People	Percentage
Young People in Transition (under 25)	40	49%
Age 25-50	32	40%
Age 50+	9	11%
TOTAL	81	100%



e. Status of people on the Housing Register

Status	Number of People	Percentage
Active	26	32%
Under Review	14	17%
Making Plans	32	40%
On Hold	9	11%
TOTAL	81	100%

Active = people who are actively looking to move
 Under Review = currently being reviewed by the Review Team
 Making Plans = people making plans for the future (currently all from the transitions team)
 On Hold = on hold for varying reasons or making own arrangements

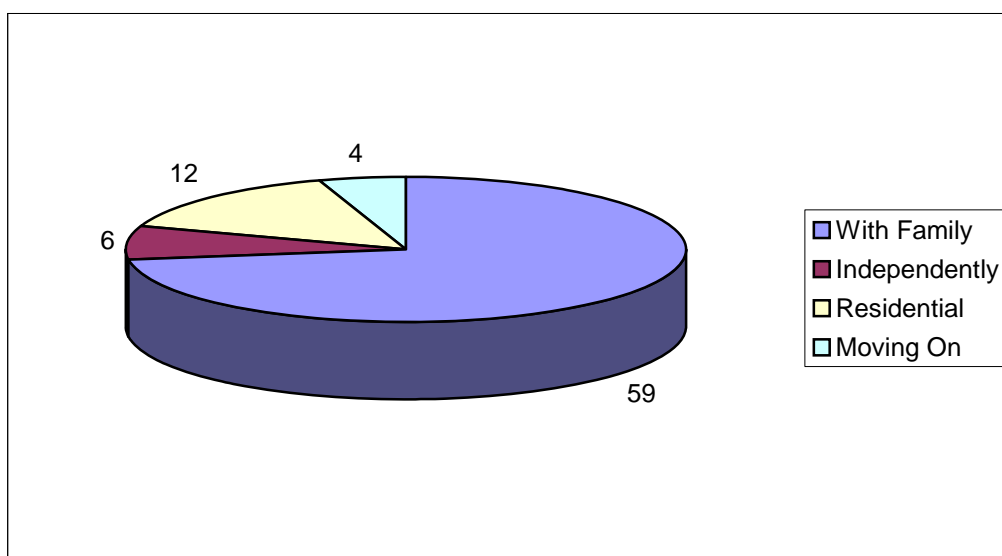


f. How people on the Housing Register are currently living

Circumstances	Number of People	Percentage
Living with Family	59	73%
Living Independently	6	7%
Residential Care *	12	15%
Moving on Service ^	4	5%
TOTAL	81	100%

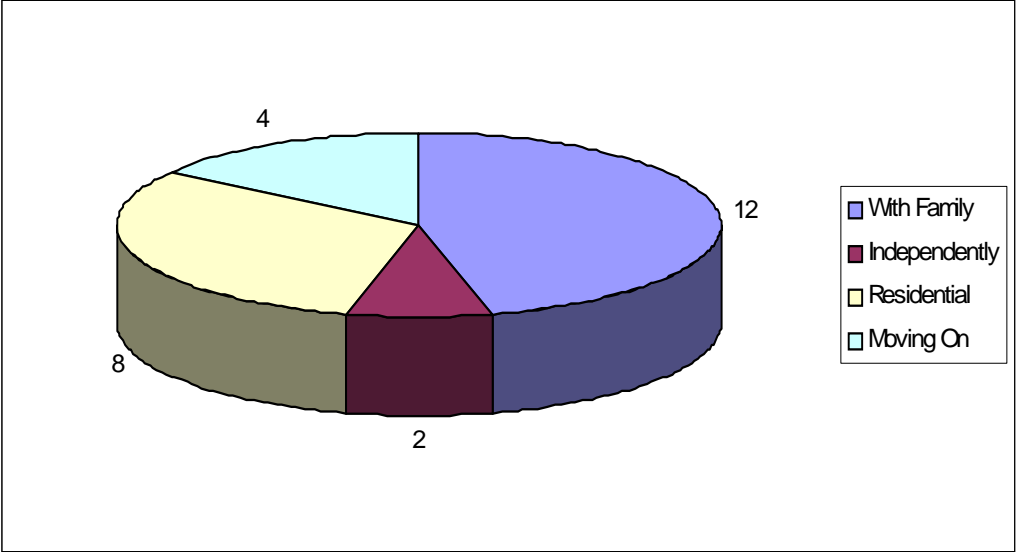
* Includes Out of Borough Placements and NTW NHS

^ Supported Living Service that teaches people independent living skills



f1. How the 26 “Active” people on the Housing Register are currently living

Circumstances	Number of People	Percentage
Living with Family	12	46%
Living Independently	2	8%
Residential Care *	8	31%
Moving on Service ^	4	15%
TOTAL	26	100%



g. The number of people who may want to move within the next 5 years and where they currently live

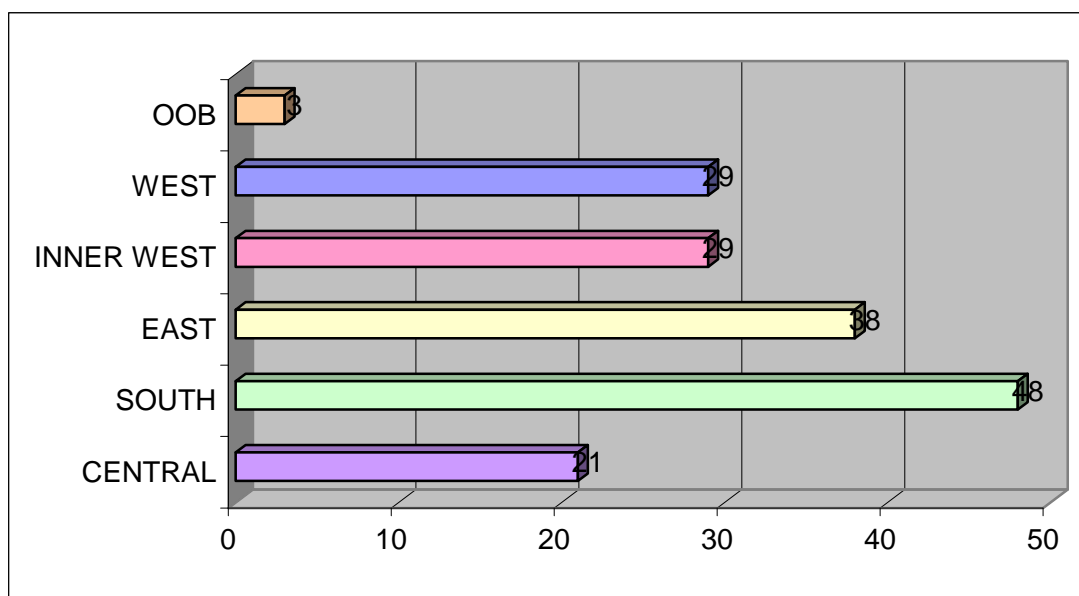
Approximately **168** people may want to move within the next 5 years.

This group includes:

- People who live with family carers over the age of 60 (127 people).
- The other “Active” people on the Housing Register who are living with a family carer under the age of 60 (19 people).
- Young people in transition that are currently making plans (22 people).

g1. Where these people are currently living

Areas	Number of People	Percentage
Central	21	12.5%
South	48	29%
East	38	23%
Inner West	29	17%
West	29	17%
Out of Borough	3	1.5%
TOTAL	168	100%

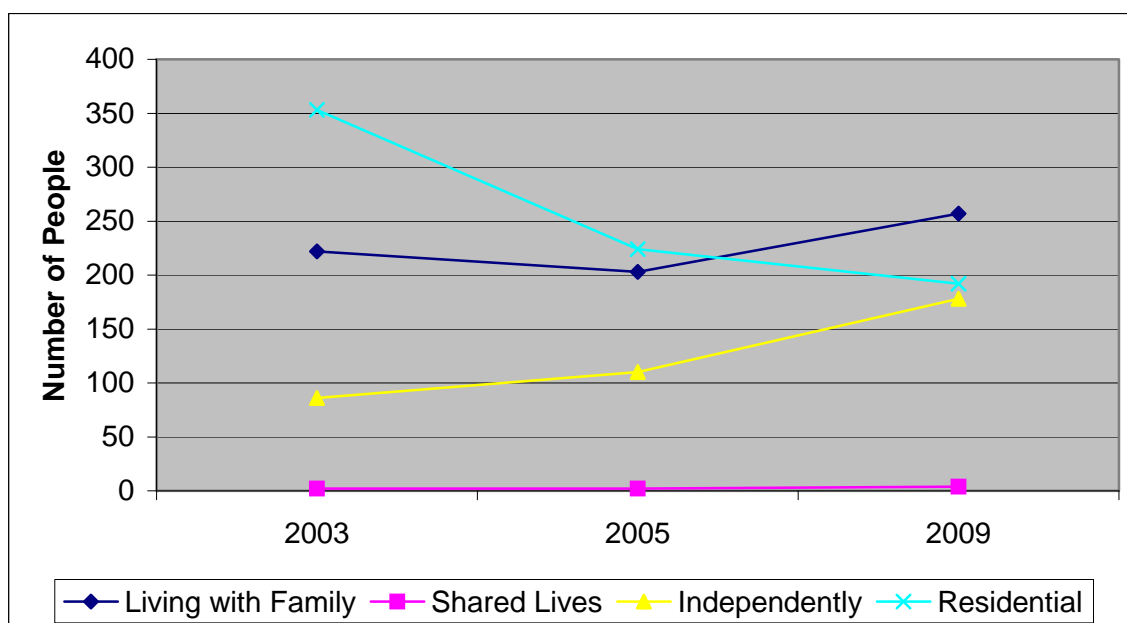


iii. Recommendations

The situations of people with learning disabilities have changed over the last 6 years:

	2003		2005		2009	
	No. People	%	No. People	%	No. People	%
Living with Family	222	33%	203	38%	257	41%
Shared Lives	2	>1%	2	>1%	4	1%
Independently	86	13%	110	20%	178	28%
Residential *	353	53%	224	42%	192	30%
TOTAL	663	100%	539	100%	631	100%

* Residential includes local residential care homes, NTW NHS and Out of Borough Placements



The results show that the number of people with learning disabilities living with family carers has increased since 2003. People entering and leaving services, and the fact that all young people in transition have been taken into account in the 2009 results, but perhaps not in the others, could have affected this result.

The number of people living permanently with a Shared Lives carer has increased slightly but numbers are still very low.

The number of people living in residential care has decreased and the number of people living independently has increased.

Valuing People Now statistics estimate that out of everyone with a learning disability:

- 50-55% live with family
- 30% live in residential care
- 15% rent their own home

In 2009 in Gateshead:

- 41% live with family
- 30% live in residential care
- 28% rent their own home

There have been improvements in Gateshead in the last 6 years that should be celebrated, however there are still many areas that need to be addressed and improvements that could be made:

1. Policies and Procedures.

“The transformation of public services will be critical”
(Valuing People Now)

1.1

Incorporate key housing issues affecting people with learning disabilities into Vision 2030: Gateshead’s Local Area Agreement.

PSA16 states: “improvement targets should be negotiated between Local Strategic Partnerships and Government Offices, as part of Local Area Agreements” and “Local Strategic Partnerships should strongly consider using the PSA indicators as improvement targets within their Local Area Agreements”. There is currently nothing in Vision 2030 that aims to improve the housing situation for people with learning disabilities.

1.2

Ensure that key housing issues affecting people with learning disabilities are monitored in the Adult Care Services Service Plan.

There is a priority in the above plan for 2008-11 to enable people with disabilities to live in their own communities with support. It comments

that targets have been reached or exceeded for the number of people with a physical disability who have received housing-related rehabilitations, but does not mention outcomes for people with a learning disability.

1.3

Ensure that improvements in services for people with learning disabilities are prioritised in Gateshead Council's Housing Strategies.

Valuing People now states that all local authorities are required to produce a housing strategy reflecting local population housing needs, including those of people with learning disabilities. Gateshead Council's Housing Strategy 2007-12 mentions improvements to services for older people, people with mental health problems and a brief mention of people with physical disabilities, but no mention of improvements to services for people with learning disabilities.

1.4

Give reasonable preference to people with learning disabilities who have non-medical urgent needs in the allocation of housing via The Gateshead Housing Company.

PSA16 says that when local authorities determine priorities for the allocation of social housing, they must give "reasonable preference" to certain groups of housing applicants as set out in legislation. At the moment people can be given priority if they have a medical need or if they are at risk of becoming homeless. There are issues that affect people with learning disabilities outside of these situations that should be taken into consideration when determining priority. As they are more likely to understand when the needs of a person with a learning disability are urgent than someone in Housing Services, decision-making could be agreed with a Housing Development Worker for Disabilities Services and/or an individual's Care Manager.

1.5

Give family carers a written decision as to whether or not their son/daughter with a learning disability can succeed their tenancy or continue the tenancy after their death.

Valuing People Now identifies that people with a learning disability form a particularly strong attachment to the home. They also worry about having to leave a familiar area as several people attend local day centres where they meet up with friends. And it is a concern for family carers that the future is uncertain. If family carers could have a decision made before their death as to whether or not their son/daughter can succeed their tenancy, they can make plans accordingly. If the tenancy can be succeeded, the family carer will have reassurance and social

services can begin to plan the support that the person will need in order to live independently in their home. If the succession of tenancy is not permitted, the family carer and social services can make other plans.

2. Responsibilities

“Providing assistance at the right time can prevent a full-scale long-term crisis” (PSA16 3.6)

2.1

Ensure that people are assisted to make plans for the future in good time.

Priority 43 of Vision 2030 is to “Improve performance of social care assessment to ensure people access appropriate, timely care to help retain their independence and support carers”. This should be inclusive of housing support. Mencap’s “Housing Timebomb” recognises that people with a learning disability and their families need to be able to plan for the future in good time. They believe that the planning process for older family carers should begin when the parent reaches the age of 50.

2.2

Inform people about The Homechoice Scheme.

In order to get long-term assured tenancies it is usually a more reliable option to apply for a council-owned home. In order to do this people have to apply to the Homechoice Scheme. If they do not have an urgent reason for needing to move, they could be on the waiting list for a long time before they are offered a property. Because of this, it is important for people to apply to The Homechoice Scheme as soon as they are thinking about moving. This way they are more likely to get a suitable property at the right time. There are currently 26 people on the Learning Disability Housing Register who want to move within the next 12 months. Without intervention, it is unlikely that this will be possible for the majority of them – hence the need to forward plan.

2.3

Encourage people to complete My Home Forms.

If a person completes a My Home Form they will be automatically added to the Homechoice Scheme. Their details will also be added to Care First so that anyone who works with that person can view their wishes. As completing a My Home Form adds an individual to the Learning Disability Housing Register we can assess how many people want to move and when. It also helps the individual to think about the particulars of the home of their choice.

2.4

Create links with the SADA group and investigate the housing issues that affect people from the BME community.

The Key to My Home Housing Strategy highlights the need to find out issues that affect the BME community. Due to time constraints this has not been a priority for the Housing Development Worker, but communication with the BME community should be established and maintained.

3. Older Family Carers

“Local authorities view alternative housing provision for people living with older family carers as a low priority...It is critical to plan strategically for their housing and support needs.”

(Housing Timebomb, p3)

3.1

The contact that social services make with older family carers and people with learning disabilities should be needs led rather than crisis led.

There should be a significant reduction in crisis placements where people are moved to the wrong place at the wrong time due to the death or health problems of their family carers. Some people are moved out of the borough away from the rest of their family and away from friends. Plans should be made in advance (Mencap advises when a family carer reaches the age of 50) to avoid crisis situations. “The Housing Timebomb” estimates that it will take 30 years to deal with the backlog of potential crises unless plans are made to avoid this.

In Gateshead, according to our statistics, 49% of family carers are over the age of 60.

51% of people with learning disabilities over the age of 65 are living in residential care, NTW NHS homes or are living in out of borough placements.

With 37 people living with family carers over the age of 75, and 90 people living with carers between the age of 60-75, more needs to be done rapidly to support people to make housing plans.

4. Young People in Transition

The largest group on the Housing Register is currently young people in transition at 49%.

Of young people in transition most want accommodation that they can share with another person – most likely someone that they already know. Their needs are demonstrated below:

Would like to move by:	Number of People
2010	7
2012	7
2013	5
2014	3
Unsure	10
TOTAL	32

4.1

Allow young people in transition to make plans and access housing as far as 18 months in advance.

Recent feedback has highlighted that there should be a strategy where social services can approach housing and identify suitable properties in good time. Many of these young people can not be housed in temporary, homeless or tower block accommodation so looking for appropriate housing can not be left to the last minute. Often a property may need to be identified as much as 18 months in advance due to the time it takes to employ support teams and arrange adaptations. For young people who have learned independent living skills at a residential college, it would be a backward step in their progress for them to move back with family.

5. Developments

“Local authorities...need to engage in strategic commissioning that matches services to existing need.” (PSA16 3.56)

“Those who commission services should consider how they could develop creative solutions to meeting...aspirations”

(Valuing People Now, p78)

“Increase levels of affordable homes to meet existing and future need and reduce numbers on council waiting lists.”

(Vision 2030, Priority 51)

5.1

Commission new developments for people with learning disabilities in appropriate areas.

The statistics show that people with learning disabilities living in Gateshead are quite evenly spread. However there are many people living with family carers in the South of the borough and not many people living independently. It should be investigated whether properties are being made available readily enough in the South – as usually people with learning disabilities prefer to move within a familiar area. Results (g) also show that people who may want to move within the next 5 years are primarily living in the **South** and **East**. These are areas that housing development plans for people with learning disabilities should consider.

5.2

Develop more Supported Living Schemes in appropriate areas.

There are several Supported Living schemes and Extra Care schemes currently in operation in Gateshead, but these are in high demand. More supported housing for people with high and low level needs is essential.

5.3

Planning, assistance and priority should be given to people in “moving on” services such as Kirkham Court.

Kirkham Court (owned by NomadE5 and supported by Interactive Development) is a “moving on” service which houses and supports people for a period of two years and teaches them independent living skills so that they can successfully move on to manage their own tenancies. Other than the support that they receive from staff at Kirkham Court, no provisions have been made and no priority is given to tenants who need to move once their two years come to an end. Because they have nowhere to move onto, they are preventing other people from accessing the service.

5.4

Develop a type of Sheltered Accommodation Scheme for people with learning disabilities of all ages.

Sheltered Accommodation is only available to people over the age of 55. The security and facilities that this type of scheme can offer would be ideal for people with learning disabilities. It is very strongly felt by many family carers that this type of service should be made accessible to

people with learning disabilities. Calendar Court (owned by Housing 21) is an Extra Care Scheme and is a very good example of the type of support that family carers are asking for. It is a renovated, spacious block of flats. Every person has their own private flat and a front door key to come and go as they please. On the ground floor are social areas such as a restaurant and television lounge, and facilities such as a launderette and a small shop. Support staff are on hand 24 hours per day if required and floating support can visit to provide further care if needed. People can retain their independence and have as much or as little support as they need.

5.5

Help people to use Private Landlords.

As building new properties and commissioning new services is costly and unlikely to help every person with a learning disability, helping people to access private landlords could be a very useful resource. There are several people who currently use private landlords, however there have been many problems encountered, which may make private landlords less willing in future to rent to someone with a learning disability...

Due to the changes in Local Housing Allowance people who claim Housing Benefit can now afford to use private landlords. After discussions with the Private Landlords Association and a representative from the National Landlords Association, it has been made clear that a landlord's main priority is (not surprisingly) receiving rent! One major problem that has been encountered is where a person cannot move into a property until adaptations have been completed. Due to the time it can take for adaptations to take place, it can be several months until the person can move in and housing benefit is not paid until the date that the tenant occupies the property. Benefit can be backdated by one month but this is not a guarantee and is usually not long enough. Provisions should be made for payments to be from the date that the tenancy agreement is signed in these circumstances else private landlords will not accept the waiting time.

Another concern regards shared tenancies. If two or more people are living together and one decides to move – how will the rent be calculated? If the rent is left to the remaining tenant(s) they may struggle to afford it. If the share of the rent is unpaid, it will make private landlords unwilling to agree to shared tenancies for people with learning disabilities. The Local Authority pays for voids to Registered Social Landlords in certain properties. Arrangements could be made for this to be the case for Private Landlords in certain long-term contracted properties.

A concern of tenants and Care Managers is in relation to the security and length of tenancies from Private Landlords. Tenants want to know that their tenancies can be long-term or permanent. This is something that would have to be agreed between tenant and landlord unless Gateshead Council could arrange long-term contracts with several landlords for particular properties to be adapted and rented solely to people with learning disabilities.

Report by Gemma Alexander
Housing Development Worker
0191 433 2384
gemmaalexander@gateshead.gov.uk

iv. References

Learning Disability Partnership Board Statistics (2003)

Learning Disability Partnership Board Statistics (Aug 2005)

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