

August 2024



Housing Strategy: People with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism

Cheshire and Merseyside

directors of
adass
adult social services
Cheshire & Merseyside



CONTENTS

1. Introduction	5
2. Vision and ambition	9
3. Strategic objectives	9
4. Contemporary housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism	11
5. Need for housing and supported housing	12
6. Supporting and facilitating the housing market	16
7. Ensuring the quality of housing and support	19
8. Delivery of this strategy	19
Annexe 1 Delivery plan	20
Annexe 2 National and local context	29
Annexe 3 Examples of contemporary practice in housing and support for people with learning disabilities and/or autism	34
Annexe 4 Need for housing and supported housing	39

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The 9 councils in Cheshire and Merseyside with NHS Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care Board have developed a Housing Strategy for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Our vision is:

To achieve the best quality of life we can for people with learning disabilities and/or autism to live independently, with personalised care and support.

We will do this by securing the provision of good quality housing and supported housing and making Cheshire and Merseyside a place where people with learning disabilities and/or autism with care and support needs can live well and thrive.

What we mean by housing and supported housing

Through this strategy we will facilitate and commission a wide range of housing and supported housing that enables people to live independently in their communities, including:

- General needs housing for individuals with personalised care and support.
- Supported housing that is suited to people who need their own self-contained housing or shared housing within local communities, with a mix of personalised and shared care and support.
- Housing and supported housing that is adapted in a variety of ways to meet the needs of people who need an accessible home and/or a home that is adapted to meet their support needs.

Over the next 10 years, it is estimated that Cheshire and Merseyside will need approximately 1,700 additional supported housing dwellings to meet the identified housing needs of people with learning disabilities and/or autism. It is estimated that there is also a need for approximately 400 general needs homes, typically social housing for rent over the same period.

Delivery

To deliver this Housing Strategy for people with learning disabilities and/or autism, signatories share a commitment to consider the following actions (whether an action is right for a particular partner will depend on the level and local strategy etc:

- A. Commission and enable a mix of housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism by:
 - Reviewing the use of shared supported housing.
 - Commissioning new supported housing that is required to meet identified need.
 - Increasing the number of Shared Lives carers.
 - Commissioning the housing required by people currently living in inpatient settings.
 - Making Home Ownership for people with Disabilities.
- B. Secure additional mainstream, general needs housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism through:
 - Direct provision by Councils with retained housing stock.
 - Working with local Registered Providers to meet the wider housing need as identified in this strategy, including using existing stock where appropriate.
 - Leasing from private landlords.
 - Supported housing providers developing and/or procuring additional move on accommodation.
 - Reviewing the use and suitability of Choice Based Lettings for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.
- C. Put in place a quality assurance framework for supported housing commissioned by the Councils which measures the benefits and impact for people living in supported housing:
 - Identifying all supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism people that has the status of 'supported exempt accommodation' in the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act.
 - Develop regionally agreed quality assessment and assurance criteria, that demonstrate the Councils' expectations in relation to the quality of supported housing including value for money.
- D. Facilitate and encourage housing providers to deliver a wide range of housing and supported housing options that meet identified need, including:
 - Discussing/agreeing with housing providers, including the largest social housing providers in the Cheshire & Merseyside region, how they can contribute to the delivery of the housing strategy, both in relation to supported housing and access to general needs housing.
 - Identifying gaps in the supported housing provider market (in terms of capability and capacity) and approach potential providers from outside of Cheshire/Merseyside to encourage new 'entrants' into the local supported housing market.

- E. Maximise the use of a wide range of capital funding for development of adapted and supported housing, by:
- Engaging with supported housing providers and other Registered Providers to maximise capital investment that they can bring to the development of the housing and supported housing required.
 - Developing a strategic relationship with NHS England and with Homes England to maximise investment from the Affordable Homes Programme in the supported housing required.
 - Considering the potential for supported and adapted housing to form part of the affordable housing contribution on larger development sites, including in relation to section 106 agreements.
- F. Put in place governance and decision-making processes that enable the Councils in Cheshire and Merseyside and their NHS partners to collaborate effectively to implement this housing strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cheshire and Merseyside

Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) are partnerships that bring together NHS organisations, councils and others to take collective responsibility for planning services, improving health and [reducing inequalities](#) across geographical areas.

Cheshire and Merseyside ICS is one of the largest and most complex Integrated Care Systems in England. Cheshire & Merseyside has a population of 2.7 million people and comprises 9 councils, 17 NHS Providers and 375 GP practices.

The 9 councils within the Cheshire and Merseyside ICS are referred to as the Cheshire and Merseyside Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (C&M ADASS). C&M ADASS is a voluntary collaborative between the 9 councils in Cheshire and Merseyside (Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens, Warrington and Wirral) working across the Integrated Care System footprint of Cheshire and Merseyside. The Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (C&M ICB) is a statutory body who are responsible for planning and funding most NHS services in the area. Representative from C&M ICB and C&M ADASS will meet regularly to take collective responsibility for improving the services provided to people with a learning disability and/or autism across the sub-region. Representatives from partner organisations attend regular learning disability and autism work stream meetings, chaired by a nominated director, during which progress towards the delivery of this strategy will be discussed and best practice shared.

Transforming care is a national programme led by NHS England which is all about improving health and care services so that more people with learning disabilities and/or autism can live in the community, with the right support, close to home and have the same opportunities as anyone else. The Cheshire and Merseyside Transforming Care Partnership consisting of the 9 local authorities and the C&M ICB commissioned work to undertake an assessment of need for future accommodation with support needs in 2022 for people with a learning disability and/or autism across the Cheshire and Merseyside sub region. The evidence from that needs assessment was used to inform this strategy.

Representatives from C&M ADASS and ICB may identify further work, that should be commissioned collaboratively at a sub-regional level to further the delivery of this strategy. This work will be coordinated by the C&M ADASS LD and Autism project group / C&M ADASS Transformation programme.

Our intentions

C&M ADASS members and the C&M ICB work together in order to commission and deliver the right mix of housing, care and health services required by people with learning disabilities and/or autism who have care and support needs.

The purpose of this housing strategy for people with learning disabilities and/or autism is to set out the requirement for and the opportunities to develop good quality housing and supported housing to meet the needs of the population of people with learning disabilities and/or autism in Cheshire and Merseyside. This includes:

- people who are living with their families/informal carers,
- people living in supported housing,
- people living in care homes,
- people who are inpatients, and
- young people who are known to the councils and NHS, who will become adults over the next 5 years.

We want to encourage the development of housing and supported housing options that are available for people who need housing to rent and for some people who may benefit from home ownership.

We intend to consult on the delivery of this strategy with the people who will be living in this housing and supported housing.

We will work in partnership, engage and consult with lead commissioners from the 9 councils, NHS commissioners, housing providers, care and support providers within Cheshire and Merseyside and the voluntary sector who can support the principles and/or support delivery of this strategy.

Further stakeholders may be identified who could support the principles and/or delivery of this strategy.

Each council may have their own existing housing strategy. However, councils are encouraged to adopt the principles of this strategy and consider how they may contribute to the recommended actions (see annexe 1) in alignment with their local strategy. Therefore there are no predetermined roles and responsibilities for each council, decisions would be taken by individual councils on the level of participation they wish to take in delivery of this strategy.

Our NHS partners know that access to safe, secure, and affordable housing has a huge impact on the health of our population and are a key partner in funding and developing specialist supported housing. Providing the right accommodation in the community supports people with a learning disability and/or autism to access services in a more appropriate environment.

¹ Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament

² Building the Right Support for People with a Learning Disability and Autistic People Action Plan - July 2022 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

³ NHS England/LGA/ADASS: Building the right support

⁴ NHS England/LGA/ADASS: Building the right home

Having enough quality housing with care and support or specialist housing can prevent inpatient admissions and a lack of appropriate housing with care and support can cause delays in discharge pathways from inpatient settings.

Funding

It is acknowledged that some individual councils and NHS partners within Cheshire and Merseyside may already be accessing funding, lobbying for additional funding and working with their local market to access funding to develop housing for people with learning disability and/or autism.

Funding Challenges

Reductions in central government grants, increased demand for services, and inflationary pressures means councils may have limited financial resource for capital funding and may depend on accessing external capital funding to be able to deliver this strategy. Furthermore Cheshire and Merseyside ICB are experiencing similar financial pressures. As a Cheshire and Merseyside ICS system, these budgetary pressures cause significant funding challenges in delivering this strategy.

There are real challenges to accessing capital funding and investments for councils and NHS partners. These include, but not limited to:

- There is no guarantee capital funding options will be approved
- Limitations on available sources of capital funding
- Limited amounts of funding could mean there may not be enough to deliver a housing project in full.
- Requirements for accessing funding, such as matched funding, as councils and NHS partners have existing capital budgetary constraints.
- Grant funding conditions can impose rent standards that are not achievable for specialist supported housing, impacting the viability of schemes
- Further borrowing for councils and NHS partners are not always an option or there may be a reluctance to do so in the current financial climate.
- Time constraints in accessing capital funding as well as restrictions and/or requirements attached to funding streams may limit the ability to deliver this strategy
- Financial implications due to ongoing costs relating to future resource spend and maintaining and/or operating an asset for long term sustainability.
- Councils and NHS partners not having the resources to meet timescales within any funding requirements
- Risk of overrunning costs
- Funding options may have already been accessed by some of the 9 councils and/or NHS partners
- Lack of buy in and investment from housing developers

Intended benefits of this strategy

The benefit of doing this strategy at a sub regional level are to maximise opportunities where there would be added value to access funding and/or jointly commission and to promote a coordinated approach to the development of services and to share best practice across the footprint.

By working together through this strategy the councils and the NHS will ensure that:

- Housing, health and care services for people with learning disabilities and/or autism are proactively commissioned to meet peoples' needs.
- People will in most cases have a tenancy with associated tenure rights.
- Housing will be well designed to meet people's needs as appropriate.
- People will have access to personalised care and support as well as access to 'core' support services where this is appropriate.
- Capital funding for housing development will be sought though NHS England and/or Homes England as appropriate.

Context

There are a number of local and national policies that affect the supported housing sector and which will influence the delivery of this strategy in terms of the types of housing and supported housing that are commissioned and developed. Key relevant national policy includes:

- The recent Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act including new National Supported Housing Standards.
- The Building the Right Support Action Plan, published in 2022, updates the original Building the Right Support from 2015, reinforces the importance of people with learning disabilities and/or autism having a good home.
- Building the Right Home sets out guidance and principles for housing for people with a Learning disability and/or autism that need specialist and supported housing.

This is shown in detail in annexe 1.

This strategy supplies expertise specific to meeting the housing needs of people with learning disabilities and/or autism and is intended to feed into and support existing strategies and policies in place across the Cheshire and Merseyside area. The Liverpool City Region produced a statement of its housing ambitions in 2019 and the councils have strategies which set out targets and priorities for housing in their own locality.

Housing and care and support providers should ensure they are aware of and take account of these local and national policies in relation to developing housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Our intended audience

This strategy is aimed at:

- Housing organisations that provide mainstream and supported housing, including those currently operating in the Cheshire and Merseyside area and those who may consider operating here in the future.
- Support and care organisations that provide services for people with learning disabilities and/or autism with care and support needs.

- Community organisations in the Cheshire and Merseyside area with an interest in housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism with care and support needs.

2. VISION AND AMBITION

Our vision

Our vision is to achieve the best quality of life we can for people with learning disabilities and/or autism to live independently, with personalised support and care.

We will achieve our vision by:

- Securing the provision of good quality housing and supported housing where people with learning disabilities and/or autism with care and support needs can live well and thrive.
- Developing a range of housing and supported housing over the next 5 years and beyond, that are tailored to reflect the identified needs within our local communities.
- Ensuring that support and care services, delivered to people within supported housing and those living in general needs housing, are effective in promoting people's wellbeing and independence.

This strategy will make a positive difference to the lives of people with learning disabilities and/or autism by having a greater mix and range of housing options, including:

- General needs housing for individuals with personalised care and support.
- Supported housing that is suited to people who need their own self-contained accommodation or shared housing, with a mix of personalised and shared care and support, but are able to live in close proximity to other people who may have care and support needs and within local communities.
- Housing and supported housing that is adapted in a variety of ways to meet the needs of people who need an accessible home and/or a home that is adapted to meet their support needs, as well as personalised care and support.
- Housing for people who have a live alone plan for a variety of reasons and who need an individual property either with or without specialist features to enable them to live in the least restrictive way.

3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To achieve our vision, the strategic objectives of this housing strategy are:

- A. To improve the range of housing and supported housing options for people with learning disabilities and/or autism

Over the next 5-10 years we will encourage a mix of housing and supported housing that meets the needs identified in our local communities. This will involve providing a spectrum of housing options and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism, including:

- renovating existing properties and
- developing new homes.

B. To influence the design and quality of housing and supported housing

The councils with their NHS partners want to influence the design and delivery of the types of housing and supported housing that are developed in the following ways:

- We will work with housing providers to identify the most suitable locations based on local intelligence about where people want to live.
- We want to facilitate and encourage a range of housing and care and support providers to work in Cheshire and Merseyside to ensure the mix of housing and supported housing services delivered reflects local needs.
- Housing and supported housing should be of the highest quality standards and have care and support services from providers who are registered with the CQC as appropriate.

C. To plan for and manage demand for housing and supported housing

We are planning ahead to meet the changing and future needs of people with learning disabilities and/or autism. To do this we will:

- Influence the development of housing and supported housing to ensure there is the right mix of accommodation available to meet people's current and future needs.
- Include the development of and access to additional housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.
- Aim to ensure that Local Plans incorporate the need for specialist and supported housing and that these housing needs are part of local housing strategies and planning policies.

D. To encourage opportunities to invest and develop

The councils with their NHS partners want to promote investment in housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism. To make this happen we will:

- Share our market intelligence to inform and influence the decisions of housing and care and support providers.
- Where possible, seek to use local authority and NHS resources, such as land and buildings, to facilitate the development of housing and supported housing.
- Engage in a dialogue with housing and care and support providers about the types of housing and supported housing required by people with learning disabilities and/or autism.
- Seek to create a business environment where housing and care and support providers have the confidence and assurance to invest in Cheshire and Merseyside.
- Support housing providers to remain viable and deliver growth plans that include provision for adapted properties and supported housing in recognition of the higher costs of delivering and maintaining this type of accommodation for housing providers.

Due to the limited financial resources available both to councils and the NHS, it is important for all partners to work together to make best effective use of all of the levers available at a sub regional level, so that the benefits of that can be filtered out at local levels.

4. CONTEMPORARY HOUSING AND SUPPORTED HOUSING FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND/OR AUTISM

To promote contemporary practice in the development and delivery of a range of housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism, we have set out design guidance to influence future housing development.

Design guidance to housing and support providers

To assist housing and support providers we have provided guidance in relation to some of the characteristics of the housing and supported housing that we are seeking:

- Some individuals may find it difficult to live with others in a shared setting and therefore there is the need for self-contained accommodation, including separate front doors, ideally built in a cluster model to enable efficiencies around the care delivery.
- We encourage housing providers to deliver homes to space standards that are consistent with suggested space standards (54m² for a 1-bed dwelling) within extra care housing/supported housing . It is important to note that some people with learning disabilities and/or autism may need homes that exceed these space standards.
- New accommodation may need to include a staff sleep in space, to allow night-time staff to be accommodated.
- Some people need more bespoke accommodation; whatever housing is developed will need to be adaptable to meet diverse needs. Accommodation needs to be future proofed so that it can be used for a range of people and is able to accommodate innovative technology. The use of assistive technology (AT) should be promoted to ensure that people are able to be as independent as possible; it could in turn help to reduce care costs. Assessments for the use of AT should form part of people's care and support assessments and plans.
- Locations for developments are important in order that people can be supported to access the community. Therefore, we suggest that most new developments should be based in proximity to semi-urban / urban areas, which would provide ease of access to transport and activities. However, a small number of people may not be able to cope with suburban / urban environments and may need the peace and tranquillity of a more rural setting.
- Some of the people we are seeking to commission housing and support for have experienced trauma in their lives. Good design can mitigate the negative effects of trauma.

⁵ https://www.housinglin.org.uk/_assets/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Factsheets/Design-Principles-For-Extra-Care-Housing-3rdEdition.pdf

Examples of contemporary practice in housing and support for people with learning disabilities and/or autism

We have identified a range of contemporary practice examples in relation to the design of housing and support that reflects the needs of people with learning disabilities and/or autism with care and support needs, including the need for a range of housing adaptations and the creation of trauma informed environments for some people.

These are shown in annexe 3.

5. NEED FOR HOUSING AND SUPPORTED HOUSING

The estimated need for housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism is based on evidence from:

- Analysis of work undertaken by Campbell Tickell for Cheshire & Merseyside in 2022.
- Qualitative evidence from commissioners from the councils in Cheshire & Merseyside.

Detail in relation to evidence of need for housing and supported housing is shown in annexe 4.

Quantitative evidence of need

Cheshire and Merseyside Transforming Care Partnership commissioned Campbell Tickell in 2022 to undertake an assessment of the need for 'future accommodation with support needs' over a 10 year period from 2022/23 to 2032/33.

This assessment identifies need for 'accommodation with support needs' to 2032 for each of the nine councils at Cheshire & Merseyside level. Based on the report from Campbell Tickell, 'Accommodation with support needs' is taken to mean 'supported housing'.

Table 1 shows the estimated level of need for supported housing for each local authority and for Cheshire & Merseyside to 2032/33. The table below shows that a total of 1,679 supported housing units will be required across Cheshire & Merseyside over the period to 2032/33 to meet the needs that have been identified (including some adjustments to take account of the projected Learning Disability population). This is an indicative number of units and the actual number required could vary upwards or downwards, depending on the number of relets and other factors (Campbell Tickell, 2022).

In addition there are 54 'patients' in hospital settings who are NHS 'Specialised as Commissioned Patients'.

⁴ <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Events/HAPPI-Hour-Trauma-Informed-Design-within-Learning-Disabilities-Environments/>

Table 1. Estimated need for supported housing to 2032/33

Local authority	Need for Supported housing by 2032/33
Cheshire East	160
Cheshire West & Chester	261
Halton	189
Knowsley	152
Liverpool	104
St Helens	160
Sefton	246
Warrington	148
Wirral	259
Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	1,679

Source: Campbell Tickell, 2022

It is possible that some of this estimated need for supported housing could be met through the use of Shared Lives accommodation. This is shown in table 2. This suggests a need for c.165 additional Shared Lives places over the period to 2032/33.

It is estimated that there is a need for c.380 additional general needs housing units over the period to 2032/33. This is shown in table 2.

It should be noted that the estimated need for additional Shared Lives accommodation would reduce the estimated need for supported housing over the period to 2032/33.

Table 2. Estimated need for Shared Lives and general needs housing to 2032/33

Local authority	Needs for Shared Lives and general housing 2032/33
Cheshire East	58
Cheshire West & Chester	58
Halton	12
Knowsley	30
Liverpool	108
St Helens	28
Sefton	16
Warrington	26
Wirral	46
Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	382

Qualitative evidence of need

Qualitative evidence of need has been derived from insights and evidence from commissioners about local trends and the nature of future need for supported housing and housing in their area for people with learning disabilities and/or autism. This is shown in annexe 4.

Gap analysis: Summary

The quantitative and qualitative evidence of need for housing is summarised below.

The total estimated need is for an additional 1,679 units of 'supported housing' by 2032 across Cheshire & Merseyside, the equivalent of 120 additional units per annum (since 2022). This is taken to mean increased need predominantly for self-contained supported housing.

It is estimated that there is a need for an additional c.165 Shared Lives places by 2032.

It is estimated that there is a need for c.380 units of general needs housing by 2032.

All councils in Cheshire & Merseyside have a need for additional supported housing over the period to 2032.

Qualitative local evidence indicates the following trends in relation to current and future need for housing:

- There is evidence of increasing need for general needs housing, generally 1 bed units to rent from social landlords.
- There is a need for additional self-contained supported housing.
- There is limited evidence of additional need for shared supported housing. Any shared supported housing commissioned in future needs should be well designed and future-proofed, for example to accommodate people with reduced mobility. Some existing shared supported housing is likely to be decommissioned.
- There is some evidence of need for additional Shared Lives places.
- There is a need for additional respite accommodation for people with learning disabilities and/or autism. Some of this need could be met through the development of 'clusters' of self-contained flats where a dwelling is used as respite accommodation.
- There is very limited evidence of need for either residential care or nursing care as people live in suitable housing in the community. However, some people with very complex support needs, for whom a housing based option is not appropriate, are likely to live in residential/nursing care settings. Councils will determine locally with their partners and stakeholders any transition required from the use of residential care to supported housing or other housing options.
- The number of people currently living in acute hospital settings is low but will continue to decline as people move to housing based alternatives in the community.

Developing a housing pathway

To meet this range of housing needs, we have identified the need for a housing pathway which includes a mix of housing and supported housing options, which offer people different housing choices, from general needs housing with packages of care and support tailored to individuals' needs through to supported housing options with 24/7 support.

This pathway of housing and supported housing options is required, in part, to reduce the use of inpatient settings and residential care, as well to maximise the range of housing options for people with learning disabilities and/or autism. The councils and their NHS partners want to make it easier for people with learning disabilities and/or autism to access these housing options.

It should be emphasised that a move to one housing option may not be permanent and there is an assumption that some people will move between different housing options in response to changing needs and circumstances.

A wider range of housing and supported housing options will include:

- A. General needs housing where a person receives personalised care and support.
- B. Accessible housing, for example bungalows, for people who need an adapted home along with personalised care and support.
- C. Small 'clusters' of flats where a person has their own self contained home with some communal spaces, such as a shared lounge, with personalised care and support alongside shared care (for example in relation to overnight support).
- D. 'Step down' supported housing, particularly for younger people.
- E. In the majority of cases we would expect people to rent their homes and be tenants; in some cases access to home ownership, such as through the Home Ownership for people with Long Term Disabilities (HOLD) scheme^z, may be appropriate. The councils and their NHS partners will seek to identify people with learning disabilities and/or autism who may benefit from the HOLD option and housing providers that are willing and able to deliver this option.
- F. Other housing that may be relevant to some people with learning disabilities and/or autism, such as extra care housing and co-housing.
- G. In a minority of cases, shared supported housing where a person has a room (which may have an ensuite shower/bathroom) and shares the other facilities with other residents.
- H. Short term 'crisis' supported housing, for example to facilitate inpatient admission avoidance.

^z <https://www.ownyourhome.gov.uk/scheme/hold/>

^a <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/brick-by-brick/>

Housing option D and H are important as they may be used to facilitate short term housing needs and/or 'transitions' between different accommodation/housing options.

To access any form of housing and supported housing people should be:

- Registered with the local authority responsible for housing so their housing need is formally recorded and recognised. This may require a degree of flexibility in relation to local connection policies as some people with learning disabilities and/or autism may need to live in an area that is different to where they currently live or originally came from.
- Assessed by the relevant local authority and the NHS in order that appropriate care and support can be commissioned and provided.

To facilitate this housing pathway, particularly for people who are in inpatient settings, it is recognised by the councils and their NHS partners that through this strategy:

- There is a need to develop a smoother pathway and encourage a multi-agency approach for people who are inpatients and identified as being clinically ready for discharge. This will be guided by the NHS England Brick by Brick report.
- There is a need to meet the accommodation needs of the most challenging groups to house, for example people with forensic needs. This may require consideration of the needs of individuals to live in areas where, for example, they may not have a local connection.
- In relation to people who are on the discharge pathway and do not have a home to return, the councils will seek to prioritise people in these circumstances within each authority's homelessness policy in a consistent way.
- The councils and their NHS partners will seek to develop specialist housing advice and advocacy for people to assist in understanding and navigating the housing options available to them.

6. SUPPORTING AND FACILITATING THE HOUSING MARKET

The local authority commissioners want to strengthen their relationships with housing providers, particularly Registered Providers in the North West, who wish to collaborate with us to help fulfil our strategic ambitions:

- Widening the housing choices for people with a Learning Disability and/or autistic people and improving the quality of housing available, especially by improving the supply of supported housing and general needs housing.
- Promoting a coherent approach between local provision of housing, care and health as an integrated system.
- Commissioning and facilitating support for people with learning disabilities and/or autism to rent or buy their own home.
- Considering and meeting the sensory needs of autistic people in relation to housing; actively drawing attention to sensory considerations that can be made to an environment to improve the sensory experiences and wellbeing of autistic people.

Our approach to working closely with a range of providers of housing and supported housing are set out below.

Access to general needs housing

Commissioners across Cheshire and Merseyside are seeking to work with housing providers to secure increased access to general needs housing, both in the social housing sector and private rented sector (recognising that there are different housing benefit implications of these approaches), for people with learning disabilities and/or autism. This involves working directly with Registered Providers and through councils' Housing Options Strategies.

This may be an option for people who no longer need to live in a supported housing setting and/or for people who don't need supported housing in the first instance. We are keen to avoid an assumption that supported housing is the 'default' housing option.

We are aware that there is considerable demand in many areas for social rent and affordable rent general needs social housing and that in some areas the private rented sector is not affordable.

We are also aware that access routes into general needs social housing, such as choice based lettings systems, too often don't enable people with learning disabilities and/or autism to have fair access or quick access, where this may be necessary. The councils will seek to ensure that choice based lettings systems recognise that people may require reasonable adjustments linked to their sensory or physical needs and support needs to be recognised in the application process.

We know from discussion with housing providers that there is an opportunity to work together and collaborate with them and with councils' housing options teams, to identify and secure additional opportunities for people with learning disabilities and/or autism to have improved access to general needs social housing and housing in the private rented sector .

Developing supported housing

The councils recognise the need for housing providers to have long term funding confidence, particularly when investing in supported housing.

Local authority commissioners will collaborate with ICB commissioners on joint opportunities to deliver new schemes and review existing provision reflecting a cohort of people who have jointly funded care and health services.

We are seeking innovative approaches from our housing partners, for example, delivering a range of housing sizes, types and tenures, including potentially remodelling existing supported housing, that will be appropriate to the needs of various groups in the community, in line with our strategic aims.

When working with housing providers and care and support providers the local authority partners would like:

- To be involved at an early stage in considerations and discussions regarding the reconfiguration or disposal of existing supported housing provision.

- To agree priority notification/nomination rights on existing and new supported housing. This may include developing local lettings and allocations policies for specialist and supported housing schemes to manage allocations and make best use of the resources.
- To understand whether you own and/or lease housing for the purposes of providing supported housing and to understand your funding model. Where housing is leased we want to be satisfied that this model is sustainable and in the interests of the intended residents.
- In response to our commissioning intentions/plans, we are seeking providers to develop proposals for housing and supported housing which are effectively tailored to meet local need and to consult with us and relevant professionals prior to and during the implementation of these proposals.
- In response to our commissioning intentions/plans, supported housing providers who are not currently operating in the Cheshire and Merseyside area to get in touch with us and talk through their plans for development of supported or specialist housing so we can advise on what our needs are and how you might be able to meet them.

The councils with their NHS partners will seek to work with a range of capital funding partners to deliver this strategy, including Homes England and NHS England. Where possible, we will also seek to use local authority and NHS resources, such as land and buildings, to facilitate the development of housing and supported housing.

The councils with their NHS partners will undertake ongoing market engagement to:

- Build strong relationships with housing and supported housing providers.
- Stimulate and encourage the local supported housing market.
- Work with housing and supported housing providers in a collaborative way.
- Understand how we can work with supported housing providers to jointly manage market risks and challenges.

The councils will work closely with providers of residential care services to understand the long term need for residential services and where appropriate, work with providers to:

- Maximise the opportunities for people living currently in residential care to move to housing based alternatives with personalised care and support.
- Work with organisations that provide residential care services who are interested in opportunities to transition to the provision of housing based alternatives with personalised care and support.

7. ENSURING THE QUALITY OF HOUSING AND SUPPORT

The councils and their NHS partners want to ensure that all supported housing services are of good quality. This means both the accommodation and the care and support services (as applicable) being of good quality.

This will include supported housing providers and care providers meeting legislative and regulatory requirements as appropriate (Charity Commission, Regulator of Social Housing, the Care Quality Commission and Community Interest Companies regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority).

The councils will draw on the Government's guidance National Statement of Expectations for Supported Housing⁹ as a basis for expectations of supported housing providers in terms of contemporary practice in the delivery and management of accommodation with support services.

The councils' approach to ensuring that supported housing is of a good quality anticipates the intent of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act. The councils anticipate that their approach to ensuring the quality of accommodation with support services will likely include:

- A licensing scheme for all supported housing providers. The licensing scheme will be developed by all the councils. All providers of supported housing in Cheshire and Merseyside will be required to be licensed by the relevant local authority in order to provide supported housing.
- Only providers of supported housing that are licensed by the councils will be able to access specified and exempt accommodation housing benefit status.
- The councils will also review the quality of the provision of support/care in supported housing services to ensure customers are getting the support they need and require.
- Assessment of the value for money provided by supported housing services, ensuring they are affordable for the councils and for the people who live in them.

In the meantime, before the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act is implemented, the councils will draw on the evidence and learning from the Government's Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)¹⁰ to working with providers of supported housing services to ensure that both the quality of accommodation used for supported housing and the support services provided are of a good quality.

8. DELIVERY OF THIS STRATEGY

Delivery of this strategy includes recommendations that different actors at different levels may consider doing at a local level either as an individual council or in collaboration with other councils and/or NHS partners. These recommendations are optional for each individual council and the decision to take each recommendation forward is to be made at a local level.

⁹ Supported housing: national statement of expectations - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

¹⁰ Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 publications - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament

¹¹ Supported Housing Improvement Programme prospectus - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

This strategy is designed to be flexible around the needs, context and existing strategies and policies of each locality.

The councils will work jointly to focus on enabling the development of and access to housing and support options across Cheshire and Merseyside to meet identified need.

The councils will work in partnership with Registered Providers and other housing developers/providers to develop specialist and supported housing to meet the needs of local people identified in this strategy.

Our summary recommended action plan to deliver this strategy is in Annexe 1.

The councils with their NHS partners are committed to working alongside people who need housing and supported housing identified in this strategy. We aim to:

- Co-produce with a range of people with lived experience the commissioning of housing/ supported housing services, and
- Work with people with lived experience in relation to managing the quality of supported housing and measuring the impact it has on people's lives.

This strategy is part of a dialogue with the organisations and individuals that are interested in delivering housing and supported housing options for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

ANNEXE 1 DELIVERY PLAN

Introduction

This implementation plan sets out recommended actions and approaches that the Cheshire and Merseyside councils, NHS Partners and other partners may choose to take to enable delivery of this strategy for people with learning disabilities and/or autism 2024-2033.

Responsibilities for each recommended action have been identified to be undertaken at the most appropriate level.

Responsibilities within the recommended actions are defined in the table below:

Place	Individual council and its partners at a local level
Cheshire & Merseyside	Cheshire and Merseyside councils
Cheshire & Merseyside/ NHS	Cheshire and Merseyside councils and NHS at Cheshire and Merseyside ICB level
Place/NHS	Individual council and local NHS partners at local level

Timescales have been left to be completed by the Cheshire & Merseyside councils and their NHS partners. Partners may wish to adopt this template or embed their agreed actions into existing local plans / delivery programmes.

Addressing the need for additional mainstream, general needs housing

Increasing the provision of, predominantly, 1-bedroom self contained housing to rent in the social housing sector and private rented sector can help to both mitigate the need for supported housing (with floating support as necessary) as well as enabling the most effective use of supported housing in terms of facilitating appropriate move on to general needs housing, including for people with learning disabilities and/or autism who don't need/no longer need supported housing.

Summary of recommended actions

Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1 Given the overall level of demand for affordable general needs housing, this is likely to require a level of strategic intervention by Councils to generate more affordable housing to rent for people with learning disabilities and/or autism through, for example: • Direct provision by Councils with retained housing stock • Leasing from private landlords. • Working with local Registered Providers to meet the wider housing need as identified in this strategy, including using existing stock where appropriate. • Supported housing providers developing and/or procuring additional move on accommodation.	Place	
2 Review the use and suitability of Choice Based Lettings for people with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism including: • Whether there is a role for 'sensitive' lettings and use of local letting plans to enable some people with learning disabilities and/or autism to access general needs social housing. • To recognise and take account of the adaptations for people who may have sensory environmental needs.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
3 Determine the level of floating support services and similar community support services (e.g. KeyRing type models) required to support people living in general needs housing.	Place	
4 Councils to consider planning policy and delivery mechanisms to support the delivery of more 1 bed dwellings as part of the housing development mix	Place	

Commissioning and delivering housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism

Summary of recommended actions

Recommended Action		Responsibility	Timescale
1 Review the use of shared supported housing. Identify shared supported housing that is no longer fit for purpose and requires replacement with other housing options for residents.		Place	
2 Identify and commission new supported housing that is required to meet identified need drawing on good practice from the region and from elsewhere. Targets over the period to 2032/33		Place	
Local authority	Need for Supported Housing by 2032/33		
Cheshire East	160		
Cheshire West & Chester	261		
Halton	189		
Knowsley	152		
Liverpool	104		
St Helens	160		
Sefton	246		
Warrington	148		
Wirral	259		
Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	1,679		
3 Increase the number of Shared Lives carers who can support people with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism. Targets over the period to 2032/33		Place	
Local authority	Need for Shared Lives 2032/33		
Cheshire East	16		
Cheshire West & Chester	26		
Halton	19		
Knowsley	15		

Recommended Action		Responsibility	Timescale
Liverpool	10		
St Helens	16		
Sefton	24		
Warrington	15		
Wirral	26		
Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	167		
4 Housing/supported housing for current inpatients and people who maybe at risk of inpatient admission: Identify and commission the housing required by people currently living in inpatient settings. As part of commissioning this housing, develop accommodation with design features and services that will support people outside of hospital and reduce admissions to acute services. Where appropriate, for some people leaving inpatient settings, it will be necessary to ensure that their housing/supported housing is consistent with any restrictions linked to Court of Protection, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and/or Ministry of Justice requirements. Where people are at risk of losing their current accommodation on being admitted to an acute hospital setting, the councils will work with housing and accommodation providers, as part of their homelessness prevention activities, to try to ensure that people do not lose their housing at point of admission. Where people are already in an acute setting and they are on a pathway to clinical discharge, the councils and their NHS partners will collaborate in relation to the Duty to Refer arrangements where a person may be at risk of homelessness if the housing/supported housing they need is unavailable.		Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS Place/NHS Place/NHS Place/NHS Place/NHS	

Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timescale
The councils and their NHS partners, if necessary to meet need, will jointly commission specialist short term 'step down/step through' accommodation to support people out of hospital settings whilst their long term housing is being arranged/developed. This facility may also support people living in the community but who may be at risk of inpatient admission in their current accommodation setting. Where housing and support/care provision is required to meet very specialist need/s, develop agreements in relation to joint funding and commissioning for these specialist services.	Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS	
5 Identify people for whom home ownership through the HOLD programme is a potential option and identify a Registered Provider partner/s to work with to deliver this housing option (Home Ownership for people with Long term Disabilities).	Place	
6 Make best use of existing and future development of extra care housing for people with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism.	Place	
7 Consider utilising Councils' and NHS surplus land and property to support the delivery of supported and specialist housing for people with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism.	Place	
8 Councils to have oversight of all sites and planning applications for specialist/supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.	Place	
9 Put in place arrangements to deliver these housing and supported housing requirements with a range of partners including Health and Social Care Commissioners, Housing Providers, Homes England, and NHS England.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
10 The councils will aim to ensure that Local Plans incorporate the need for specialist and supported housing and that these housing needs are part of local housing strategies and planning policies.	Place	

Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timescale
11 The councils and their NHS partners will update the assessment of need for housing and supported housing on a regular basis. The assessment will include evidence of young people (from school year 9) who may transition to eligibility for adult social care at 18 years and who may need housing/supported housing.	Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS	
12 Put in place arrangements to: - Co-produce with a range of people with lived experience the commissioning of housing/supported housing services, and - Work with people with lived experience in relation to managing the quality of supported housing and measuring the impact it has on people's lives.	Place	

Quality assurance framework for supported housing commissioned by the Councils which measures the benefits and impact for people using supported housing as well as value for money

To deliver the proposed approach to supported housing quality assurance as set out in the housing strategy, the following actions are proposed.

Summary of recommended actions

Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1 Identify all supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism that has the housing benefit status of 'specified accommodation' including the categories of: - Exempt accommodation - Managed properties	Place	
2 Develop a shared set of quality assessment and assurance criteria, that demonstrates the Councils' expectations for specialist and supported housing including value for money. This should cover both support services and accommodation standards drawing on the learning from the Supported Housing Improvement Project to date (for example in St Helens), the National Statement of Expectations for Supported Housing, Building the Right Home and Building the Right	Cheshire & Merseyside	

Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Support, as well as any locally specific factors. Draw on in-house contractual and performance management standards and procedures that apply to existing supported housing.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
3 In anticipation of the implementation of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act, bring together a group of Council colleagues from revenues and benefits, adult social care (including safeguarding expertise), housing standards (environmental health/private sector housing standards), children's services (in relation to vulnerable young people) and planning and housing to consider a shared approach to licensing supported housing (including for people with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism) and the implementation of supported housing quality standards.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
4 Through this group (above) risk assess existing supported housing for people with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism in terms of either known or likely risk/s in relation to poor quality support and/or accommodation.	Place	
5 The Councils to engage with supported housing providers in planning for the implementation of the Supported Housing Act and assess the risk of providers potentially withdrawing from the market and Councils' responses to this.	Place	

Facilitate the supported housing market to encourage the delivery of a wide range of supported housing options that meet identified needs.

To deliver the proposed approach to facilitating the supported housing market as set out in the housing strategy, the following actions are proposed.

Summary of recommended actions

Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1 Hold a 'launch' event for the housing strategy with housing providers and care and support providers.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS	

Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timescale
2 Hold meetings with a range of housing providers, including the largest social housing providers, in the Cheshire & Merseyside region to discuss/agree how they can contribute to and support the delivery of the housing strategy, both in relation to supported housing and access to general needs housing.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
3 Meet with representatives of the private rented sector in Cheshire/Merseyside to discuss/agree how they can contribute to and support the delivery of the housing strategy	Place	
4 Establish a learning disability supported housing provider forum/fora that will meet regularly with Council Officers to discuss supported housing development and operational practice issues.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
5 Identify gaps in the supported housing provider market (in terms of capability and capacity) and approach potential providers from outside of Cheshire/Merseyside to encourage new 'entrants' into the local supported housing market.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	

Funding of supported housing development

To deliver the proposed approach as set out in the housing strategy, the following actions are proposed.

Summary of recommended actions

Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1 Maximise the use of a wide range of potential capital funding sources for supported housing development including:	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
1a Use the proposed engagement with supported housing providers and other Registered Providers to maximise capital investment that they can bring to the development of the supported housing required.	Place	

Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1b • Seek to develop a strategic relationship with NHS England, Homes England and Cheshire and Merseyside to maximise investment from, respectively, the NHS capital programme and the Affordable Homes Programme in supported housing, including consideration/discussion of grant rates for supported/specialist housing.	Place/Cheshire and Merseyside	
1c • Consider the potential for supported and adapted housing to form part of the affordable housing contribution on larger development sites, including in relation to s.106 agreements.	Place	
1d • Encourage Place/Cheshire to engage with NHS England about using the NHS capital grant & Merseyside/NHS funding to develop the most specialist forms of housing		
1e • Agree with ICS partners the most effective use of the Better Care Fund to support delivery of the housing strategy.	Place	
1f • Capital funding from Councils (subject to appropriate business cases).	Place	

Governance and decision-making

To deliver the proposed approach as set out in the housing strategy, ensuring that the Councils have the necessary governance and decision-making structures in place to facilitate a coordinated approach to commissioning, funding and reviewing supported housing, the following actions are proposed.

Summary of recommended actions

Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1 Develop a Cheshire and Merseyside Learning Disability Strategic Housing Delivery Group, with appropriate representation from the Councils, as the regional steering/decision making group for housing and supported housing for people with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism. Ensure the membership also includes representatives from relevant external partners, e.g. the NHS/ICS and housing providers.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
2 Establish reporting arrangements into this Group to oversee the delivery of the housing strategy.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	

ANNEXE 2 NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

There are a number of local and national policies that affect the supported housing sector which will influence the delivery of this strategy in terms of the types of housing and supported housing that are commissioned and developed.

Housing and care and support providers should ensure they are aware of and take account of these local and national policies in relation to developing housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Local context

Cheshire East

The Learning Disability Strategy 2019-2022 (My life My Choice) identifies the Council's intentions are to:

- Work with local housing and social care providers to provide a range of housing and care options for people to choose from. This includes adapting their current home, living alone with support, living with a small number of people in shared housing, or moving outside their local area only if they want to or if it's necessary to meet their needs.

- Collect resources to help councils transform the local housing offer for people with a Learning Disability or autistic people.
- Reduce the number of people in permanent residential settings and supporting them to live in the community
- Develop a plan for children and young people in residential settings to return to their family home or move to greater independence
- Work with partners to ensure appropriate housing options and support are available

Cheshire West and Chester

The aims of the Cheshire West Place Joint Health and Social Care Commissioning Strategy for Adults with learning disabilities and/or autism 2021-2025 are that:

- More people with learning disabilities and/or autism will be supported to live a good quality and meaningful life
- People with a Learning Disability and/or Autism will be supported to live, work, socialise and be as independent as possible throughout their life, within the local community, close to family, and friends.
- Support for people with a Learning Disability and/or Autism will be person-centered and effective to help ensure that they can achieve their goals, aspirations, and person-centered outcomes.
- People with a Learning Disability and/or Autism and their carers can access the appropriate level of information and advice when they need it.
- People with a Learning Disability and/or Autism feel safe in their Community.

Halton

Halton's Market Position Statement 2023-2026 identifies that:

"It is anticipated the number of 'own front door' schemes will increase, as demand for this housing option is high as it provides individuals with their own self-contained accommodation but within a wider, safe and supported environment. Discussions are currently taking place for another 'own front door' scheme in Runcorn to provide a further 10 individual tenancies.

We will also look at opportunities for core and cluster developments as demand shifts for individuals with more complex needs from shared supported tenancies to individual tenancies."

¹² [Cheshire East Council My Life, My Choice: A Strategy for People with Learning Disabilities in Cheshire East 2019-2022.](#)

¹³ [Cheshire West Place Joint Health and Social Care Commissioning Strategy for Adults with a Learning Disability and/or Autism 2021 - 2025](#)

¹⁴ [Cheshire East Council My Life, My Choice: A Strategy for People with Learning Disabilities in Cheshire East 2019-2022.](#)

¹⁵ [Cheshire West Place Joint Health and Social Care Commissioning Strategy for Adults with a Learning Disability and/or Autism 2021 - 2025](#)

Knowsley

Through the 2022-2026 ASC Market Position Statement , the Council is seeking to work with and encourage a range of providers to support people with Learning Disabilities – it is encouraging a mixed market of providers who can deliver personalised support and accommodation. The Council will be particularly focusing on encouraging small and local providers to enter the market.

Liverpool

The Liverpool 2020-25 Market Position Statement sets out the intention to develop a minimum of 400 independent homes with support for adults with Learning Disabilities and other people, by 2025. It states “All adults with Learning Disabilities should have the opportunity to live as independently as they are able to, within their own tenancies or accommodation where possible with packages of care that they have full control over and that meet their individual needs, supporting them at different ages and stages of life to live full lives”.

Sefton

The Sefton 2019/20 Market Position Statement states “All existing and new accommodation needs to reflect the increasing incidence of physical disability and mobility difficulties amongst those with Learning Disabilities and appropriate sensory adaptations undertaken for individuals with Autism. It states “Adults with Learning Disabilities will be supported to be as independent as possible. Primary consideration is for people to be offered excellent care at home supported within their own communities. If a higher level of care is required, then alternatives such as extra care schemes should be available and lower-level supported housing services such as KeyRing type schemes.”

St Helens

The People’s Plan 2021-2026 has an objective to expand and improve mental health services and services for people with a Learning Disability and/or Autism. The Adult Social Care Integrated Commissioning Strategy 2022-2024 , identifies that:

“By September 2023, we will have a costed housing and support plan that delivers a suitable range of housing options for the next five years, in partnership with a preferred housing provider.”

Warrington

The 2021 Learning Disability Strategy seeks to provide a range of appropriate and quality housing options that allow individuals to choose a home that meets their changing needs. The strategy also aims to promote independence, choice and control for people with learning disabilities and/or autism. The council will annually review the Warrington Housing Strategy (2018-28) to ensure appropriate housing is delivered locally, and it will ensure the commission of appropriate, supported housing provision to meet local need.

¹⁶ [Liverpool City Council: Market Position Statement: Adult Social Care and Homelessness 2020 - 2025](#)

¹⁷ [Sefton Council: Adult Social Care Market Position Statement](#)

¹⁸ [St Helens Council: St Helens People's Plan 2021-2026](#)

¹⁹ https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/media/5892/P2-ASC-Integrated-Commissioning-Strategy/pdf/P2_Adult_social_care_IC_strategy.pdf?m=638170897815870000

²⁰ [Warrington Borough Council: Learning Disability Strategy](#)

Wirral

The Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Autism strategy 2022-2027 reflects the NHS Long Term Plan and the Transforming Care programme, which aim to improve and widen access to mental health support, reduce health inequalities, and provide community-based care for autistic people and those with intellectual disabilities. It also aims to:

- Support more autistic people to live in the community, with the right support, and close to home
- Working with partners to ensure appropriate housing options and support are available
- Building the right support in the community and supporting people in inpatient care
- Reducing reliance on specialist hospitals and inpatient care.

National context

There are a range of national policies that will influence how the Cheshire and Merseyside councils commission and regulate supported housing, including for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

In October 2020 the Government published the Supported housing: national statement of expectations. This set out the expectations of councils and of providers of supported housing in relation to, for example, understanding the need for supported housing and ensuring that supported housing is of a good quality, both in terms of the accommodation and the service. This was for guidance only, however since this was published, the Government has set out its intention to deliver improvements in supported housing the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act (below).

More recently the Government has established the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) and made available funding to a number of Councils to deliver this programme locally, including in Cheshire and Merseyside (St Helen's Borough Council). The programme is intended to support Councils to improve the quality of supported housing, both the accommodation and support services, through greater local scrutiny.

The recent Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act makes provision for the regulation of supported exempt accommodation, and makes provision for local authority oversight of, and enforcement powers relating to, the provision of supported exempt accommodation. It is expected that Councils will have new statutory powers and duties to regulate supported housing locally. The Act provides new powers to councils in relation to:

- A licensing scheme for providers of supported housing.
- Producing local assessments of need for supported housing and developing strategic plans based on that evidence.

²¹ [NHS Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Autism Strategy 2022 – 2027](#)

²² [Supported housing: national statement of expectations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

²³ [Supported Housing Improvement Programme prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁴ [Supported Housing \(Regulatory Oversight\) Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)

The Act also sets that there will be new National Supported Housing Standards that will apply to providers of supported housing and councils' role in checking these standards are being met.

This will mean that all supported housing that is developed for people with learning disabilities and/or autism where it falls within the definition of 'supported exempt accommodation' (which is likely to be the majority of housing developed through this strategy) will be subject in the future to regulation by the Cheshire and Merseyside councils, including licensing housing providers to permit them to develop and operate supported housing.

Over recent years long lease-based models of supported housing have come under scrutiny by the Regulator of Social Housing, particularly the governance and financial arrangements of some Registered Providers that lease all or most of their supported housing stock from other organisations. The Cheshire and Merseyside councils will take account of the regulatory status of providers of supported housing in its approach to managing the quality of supported housing services, including in relation to housing providers' access to higher rates of housing benefit.

In addition there is a range of national policy and practice that housing and support providers should be aware of in relation to developing housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism:

The Building the Right Support Action Plan , published in 2022, updates the original Building the Right Support from 2015, reinforces the importance of people with learning disabilities and/or autism having a good home.

Building the Right Home sets out guidance and principles for housing for people with a Learning Disability and/or autistic people that need specialist and supported housing.

The Care Quality Commission's Right Support, Right Care, Right Culture (RSRCRC)²⁸ published in 2018 sets out more clearly than in any previous CQC guidance what the specific expectations are of care providers both in terms of registration of supported housing services and inspection. As well as meeting the standard CQC regulations that apply to care providers there is an explicit focus on the service model, i.e. the model of care. This is influenced by the Service model for commissioners of health and social care services. This sets out 9 principles that commissioners should apply in commissioning and contracting for services for people with Learning disabilities, and by implication, that care providers will need to deliver. CQC emphasises that it expects providers to comply with the guidance in Building the Right Support. In addition, in RSRCRC, CQC is clear about its other requirements and expectations of care providers, specifically:

- Providers need to be able to evidence that there is a need for a service, in this case supported housing, and that local commissioners have agreed to the service being developed.
- Providers need to be able to show that the size, setting and design of the service (this means the setting as well as the design of the care service) meets peoples' expectations and is aligned with current best practice.
- The service needs to enable people to have access to their local community. The care model and the location of the service mean that people are supported to access ordinary community life in response to their needs and wishes.

²⁸ Supporting people with a learning disability and/or Autism who display behaviour that challenges, including those with a mental health condition. (2015). LGA/ADASS/NHSE

- Providers need to be able to evidence that the model of care and the associated policies and procedures are in line with best practice. This is reinforcing that CQC expects providers to avoid care practices that are reliant on restrictive practices or seclusion and instead are focussed on promoting people's strengths.

All housing and supported housing services which provide CQC regulated care, developed through this strategy, will need to be consistent with Building the Right Support and RSRCRC.

ANNEXE 3 EXAMPLES OF CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE IN HOUSING AND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND/OR AUTISM

We have identified a range of contemporary practice examples in relation to the design of housing and support that reflects the needs of people with learning disabilities and/or autism with care and support needs, including the need for a range of housing adaptations and the creation of trauma informed environments for some people.

Review of existing shared supported housing services

Commissioners across Cheshire and Merseyside are seeking to work with housing and support providers to review existing supported housing services, particularly 'shared' supported housing services (i.e. where a person has a room in a house and shares the communal areas with other tenants).

We have identified an over supply of shared housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism across Cheshire and Merseyside, particularly small scale shared housing with 24/7 support. Problems with this type of supported housing include:

- Properties that are no longer fit for purpose, e.g. they may not be accessible.
- Relatively high void rates and prevalence of long term voids.
- A reducing preference for shared types of housing amongst people with learning disabilities and/or autism, for example in relation to compatibility issues including issues regarding young people sharing with older people. However, Some recent consultation outcomes with young persons indicate that they are more inclined to be comfortable with the principle of a shared property with fellow young people as a step-up to independence and preparing for them moving on to independent homes.
- Poor value for money.

However, we are also aware that through some recent consultation with young persons, some people are more inclined to be comfortable with the principle of living in a shared property with fellow young people as a step-up to independence and preparing for them moving on to independent homes.

We know from discussions with housing providers that there is an opportunity to review their existing portfolios of shared supported housing.

As a guide, we have provided some examples of councils that have worked with supported housing providers to review and in some cases reconfigure or decommission existing supported housing to address these types of issues.

These reviews have typically involved:

- A review of the long term suitability of the properties as supported housing.
- Consideration of costs to adapt and modify properties and whether this is feasible and realistic.
- Undertaking up to date care assessments of tenants, including by trusted assessors from care providers.
- Discussions with tenants, advocates and families about alternative housing options.
- Identification of housing options that reflect tenants' needs and that will better suit people's needs in the longer term.
- Commissioning and development of alternative housing options.

Oxfordshire County Council. Shared supported housing services were developed as an alternative to residential care in the 1990s and 2000s. This had become the default housing option for many people with Learning Disabilities. The County Council with its NHS and housing partners, undertook a strategic review of the portfolio of shared supported housing and at the same time has been developing a wide range of new build supported housing and extra care housing services, alongside supported housing options for people with the most complex support needs. This has resulted in a wider range of housing options being available for people with learning disabilities and/or autism with shared supported housing no longer being the predominant housing model.

Worcestershire County Council. Since 2015, the County Council has had a programme of developing new build supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism which has resulted in over 400 new homes being developed. These have been developed in partnership with a range of housing providers including large Registered Providers and smaller, specialised housing providers. This has included supported housing options for people with moderate support needs (not requiring 24/7 support) as well as people with complex support needs who need bespoke supports including 24/7 support. This housing development programme has meant that fewer people have moved to shared supported housing, as most new development has been of self-contained dwellings, and some people have been able to move from shared supported housing and residential care, into new self-contained supported housing.

New supported housing development

Commissioners across Cheshire and Merseyside have commissioned a range of high quality housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism, including people with complex support needs.

There is identified need for additional types of self-contained supported housing that meet the housing and support needs of a range of people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

As a guide to the types of future housing development, we have provided examples locally and from elsewhere of housing and supported housing that is effective in meeting the needs of people with learning disabilities and/or autism, including people with complex support needs.

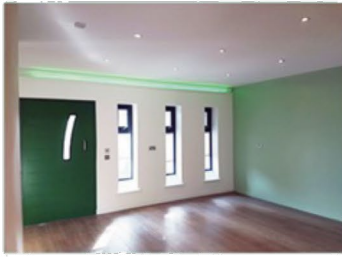
An example of new build accommodation for people with Learning Disabilities is Anvil Court a scheme in Hampshire directly developed, financed and owned by Hampshire County Council. It is a block of 10 1-bed flats with an additional 3 wheelchair adapted bungalows. This supported housing scheme has 24/7 care on site and is aimed at people with Learning Disabilities with a range of care and support needs.



In relation to people with very complex support needs an example of a bespoke supported housing scheme has been developed by Choice Support in Kirklees with capital funding from NHS England. This is an example of a supported housing scheme, including 6 self-contained units with staff facilities, designed for people with complex needs which includes features such as curved (and removable) internal walls, and soft impact finishes to floors and walls.

³⁰ <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/adultservices/Extra-Care-Younger-adults-Brochure-2020.pdf>

³¹ <https://www.choicesupport.org.uk/stories/transforming-care-mayman-lane>



Oxfordshire County Council has commissioned two purpose-built supported housing schemes for people with complex needs. These have been directly developed and are managed by Cherwell District Council. Each scheme has 6 self-contained units and is designed for people with an Autism diagnosis who require specialist accommodation and support and they are intended for people with complex support needs who find it difficult to share support or accommodation.



Karbon Homes' development of five supported two-bed bungalows in Walker, Newcastle are designed specifically for people with learning disabilities and/or autism. The kitchen of each bungalow leads on to a private patio area with bedrooms on the most private and quietest side of the buildings. Externally, the layout includes secure external gardens and allotment areas with the bungalows positioned as far as possible from any noise in the parking area and access road.



Access to general needs housing

As a guide, we have provided examples of councils and housing providers that have worked with housing providers and other organisations to improve access to general needs housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

ForHousing has designated a block of general needs social housing in Salford for use by people with Learning Disabilities. This is creating both 'low level' supported housing and 'move on' housing for people who no longer need to live in supported housing where higher levels of care and support are provided. This is making general needs social housing available to people with learning disabilities and/or autism who need a self-contained home that is managed in a sensitive way by a social landlord.

Golden Lane Housing (GLH) is a Registered Provider (of social housing) and a charity that specialises in providing housing for people with Learning Disabilities. GLH operates a scheme that it refers to as 'Great Tenants'. This is a scheme where GLH takes out a lease on a privately owned property that will meet the housing needs of a person with Learning Disabilities/autistic person (or a group of people). GLH 'vets' private landlords and their properties to ensure that they are compliant with relevant standards (such as having gas and electrical safety certificates and appropriate smoke and carbon monoxide alarms) and then acts as the landlord to the tenant/s (which also helps to resolve any housing benefit related issues). GLH typically takes out leases of up to seven years with private landlords; whilst it does not provide permanent housing, it is often a medium to long term housing option which, in effect, turns a private sector let into a social housing let (typically as a form of supported housing).

https://www.glh.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/GLH_GT-for-professionals.pdf

ANNEXE 4 NEED FOR HOUSING AND SUPPORTED HOUSING

The estimated need for housing and supported housing is based on evidence from:

- Work undertaken by Campbell Tickell for Cheshire & Merseyside ADASS in 2022.
- Qualitative evidence from commissioners from the councils in Cheshire & Merseyside.

Quantitative evidence of need

Cheshire and Merseyside Transforming Care Partnership commissioned Campbell Tickell in 2022 to undertake an assessment of the need for 'future accommodation with support needs' over the 10 year period from 2023 to 2033.

This assessment identifies need for 'accommodation with support needs' to 2033 for each of the nine councils and at Cheshire & Merseyside level. Based on the report from Campbell Tickell, 'Accommodation with support needs' is taken to mean 'supported housing'.

The Campbell Tickell needs assessment for supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autism is focused on those individuals who are inpatients or at high risk of inpatient admission and/or those who are eligible for adult social care services. The cohorts are:

- Inpatients in hospital or specialist units.
- Those on the Dynamic Support Databases who are high risk.
- Residents in care homes.
- Young people who are transitioning to adult services.
- People living with a family carer.

The method used estimates future need for 'accommodation with support needs' net of 'relets' within existing supported housing services.

Table 1 shows the estimated level of need for supported housing for each local authority and for Cheshire & Merseyside to 2033.

The table below shows that a total of 1,679 supported housing units will be required across Cheshire & Merseyside over the next 10 years to meet the needs that have been identified (including some adjustments to take account of the projected Learning Disability population). This is an indicative number of units and the actual number required could vary upwards or downwards, depending on the number of relets and other factors (Campbell Tickell, 2022).

In addition there are 54 'patients' in hospital settings who are NHS 'Specialised Commissioning Patients'.

Table 1. Estimated need for supported housing to 2032/33

Local authority	Need for Supported housing 2032/33
Cheshire East	160
Cheshire West & Chester	261
Halton	189
Knowsley	152
Liverpool	104
St Helens	160
Sefton	246
Warrington	148
Wirral	259
Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	1,679

Source: Campbell Tickell, 2022

It is possible that some of this estimated need for supported housing could be met through the use of Shared Lives accommodation. Based on work undertaken by the Housing LIN with other councils to estimate need for different types of housing and accommodation for people with learning disabilities and/or autism, it is assumed that approximately 10% of the identified need for supported housing could be met through the provision of Shared Lives accommodation. This is shown in table 2. This suggests a need for c.165 additional Shared Lives places over the period to 2032/33.

It was outside the scope of the assessment undertaken by Campbell Tickell to estimate the need for mainstream 'general needs' housing amongst people with learning disabilities and/or autism. However, the assessment by Campbell Tickell did identify/estimate the level of 'relets' within supported housing as being 7% per annum, which identified an overall level of relets within supported housing services across all councils of c.190 per annum (shown at Campbell Tickell report in table at paragraph 6.2.12).

Based on work undertaken by the Housing LIN with other councils to estimate need for different types of housing and accommodation for people with learning disabilities and/or autism, it is assumed that approximately 20% of relets may relate to a need for general needs housing. This is shown in table 2. This suggests a need for c.380 additional general needs housing units over the period to 2032/33.

It should be noted that the estimated need for additional Shared Lives accommodation would reduce the estimated need for supported housing over the period to 2032/33.

Table 2. Estimated need for Shared Lives and general needs housing to 2032/33

Local authority	Need for Shared Lives 2032/33	Need for general needs housing 2032/33
Cheshire East	16	58
Cheshire West & Chester	26	58
Halton	19	12
Knowsley	15	30
Liverpool	10	108
St Helens	16	28
Sefton	24	16
Warrington	15	26
Wirral	26	46
Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	167	382

Qualitative evidence of need

Qualitative evidence of need has been derived from insights and evidence from commissioners about local trends and the nature of future need for supported housing and housing in their area for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

This is summarised below in relation to different 'cohorts' of people and their circumstances from evidence from all nine councils.

Current accommodation setting	Summary of evidence of need for housing/ accommodation
People living with family carers/ informal carers	Trends are mixed. Some councils (LAs) have seen an increase in numbers of adults aged 18 moving away from a family setting, and/or support of informal carers, into supported housing with care services. However, other LAs have continued to see informal carers providing a home and care and support for their family member with learning disabilities/Autism. For those informal carers who do wish to retain their caring responsibilities, LAs recognise the need to provide support to those carers in order for this to be sustainable. To support these carers there is a need for provision of additional respite accommodation.

Current accommodation setting	Summary of evidence of need for housing/ accommodation
	Most LAs are experiencing older carers being concerned about what will happen to their family member of they are no longer able to care for them. Some LAs are seeing fewer older carers who are retaining caring responsibilities, into older age. LAs recognise that there is a need to plan with older carers to avoid crisis situations from arising, for example where there may be a cohort of people who are aged 50+ living with older family carers who will need a range of housing options to move to over the next 5-10 years.
Young people in transition to adult social care eligibility	Many LAs are experiencing increasing numbers of young people in transition to eligibility for adult social care who will need housing, including supported housing. Trends amongst this cohort include: • Greater complexity of support needs • More people who have needs linked to Autism Some LAs have identified modest increases in need for Shared Lives accommodation.
People living in Shared Lives People living in residential care	Some LAs have plans to either maintain current capacity or develop and grow their Shared Lives services. All LAs have seen a reduction in the number of people with learning disabilities and/or autism living in residential care.
	This reflects people moving to supported housing, extra care housing and Shared Lives instead of residential care. Some LAs are also identifying people who are currently living in residential care who may benefit from a move to supported housing. LAs are now only developing or funding residential care models for those individuals with the most complex needs.

Current accommodation setting	Summary of evidence of need for housing/ accommodation
People living in nursing care	The majority of LAs have very small numbers of people placed in a nursing setting. In some instances NHS Continuing Health Care (CHC) teams and Integrated Care Board (ICB) partners commission these services. LAs are not seeing individuals with learning disabilities and/or autism requiring general nursing care at an older age.
People living in hospital settings	There are relatively low numbers of people in hospital settings/assessment and treatment beds. LAs recognise that some people moving from hospital require larger and/or adapted properties to meet their needs. LAs are working with their NHS partners to support discharges from these acute settings for people to return to community based accommodation. LAs also recognise that there are also people who are in community settings or other forms of accommodation settings who also need very robust specialist accommodation.
People living in shared supported housing	Most LAs are seeing some evidence of decreasing demand for the use of shared supported housing, particularly amongst younger people. However, LAs recognise that there is an ongoing role for shared supported housing and that for some people this works well, for example, where people are very settled and/or would be at risk of potential social isolation in self-contained housing. Some LAs are actively looking to decommission some shared supported housing services, particularly where there are 'matching' and compatibility issues, that are creating long term voids and/or voids that cannot be filled, and/or where the properties are of poor quality or not 'future proofed' (i.e. in terms of adaptability for people with mobility related needs).

Current accommodation setting	Summary of evidence of need for housing/ accommodation
	In these circumstances, some LAs are working with housing providers to decommission or remodel shared housing, for example where the properties are no longer fit-for-purpose. Most LAs are not seeking to commission new shared supported housing services.
People living in self contained supported housing	All LAs are experiencing increasing preference/need for self contained forms of supported housing. Most LAs have already either developed this type of supported housing and/or have plans to develop/ commission further capacity of this type of supported housing, in response to increasing need. LAs are finding that individuals are preferring this model of housing as it provides a higher standard of living, with greater privacy, better accessibility and dwellings that are Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant. LAs are also experiencing increased need for the use of technology enabled care in this type of housing, to complement staff support, which allows individuals a much greater sense of independence and these models allow for a better economy of scale with the delivery of the core care.
People living in general needs housing with support	There are typically fewer people living in general needs housing than in supported housing services. However, the majority of LAs are experiencing increasing and unmet need for people to live in general needs housing, typically in social housing, with an appropriate care and support package. This increased need is coming from: • People who do not want or need supported housing in the first place • People who no longer need to live in supported housing, i.e. they wish/need to 'move on' from supported housing to general needs housing

Current accommodation setting	Summary of evidence of need for housing/ accommodation
	• People with very complex support needs who need to live alone and for whom supported housing is often not appropriate in meeting their needs. LAs recognise that there is scope to improve the application process for and allocation of social housing through Property Pool Plus or other Choice Based Lettings systems in order for it to work more effectively and sensitively for people with learning disabilities and/ or autism. Most LAs are working with Registered Providers to develop an increased supply overall of general needs social housing (typically 1-bed units).

A young woman with long brown hair and black-rimmed glasses is looking over her right shoulder towards the camera. She is wearing a light purple long-sleeved shirt. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor space with vertical blinds on the left and a green plant on the right. A dark red, semi-transparent geometric shape is overlaid in the bottom right corner, containing white text.

To achieve the best quality of life we can
for people with learning disabilities and/
or autism to live independently, with
personalised support and care.

