

Supported Living

The term “Supported Living” describes a broad range of housing and support options for people with learning disabilities and other vulnerable adults. Supported Living is distinct from residential care and from “shared lives” (adult placement) schemes which are described in other factsheets. The basic principles are:

1. People have their own home, (rented or owned) with the care and support they need being provided completely separately. This means they are able to choose how and where they live and who supports them. If someone moves, the care and support they receive can go with them. Alternatively they can stay living in the same place but change their support provider. As a result people have more control over their daily lives.
2. Supported Living focuses on one person at a time, planning for them individually. It starts with people’s relationships and social networks, taking into account family and informal (unpaid) support and community resources. Within this framework paid support can be provided in several ways, including individuals employing their own “Personal Assistants” as well as staff employed by a social care provider agency. Although support is individualised, people living together in the same house can still share some elements of basic support. (Night support is the most common example of this.)
3. Supported Living can be a suitable option for people with all levels of disability; (even the most complex) as the support is tailored to individual needs and can be provided on a 24hr basis. It is not about people living on their own without appropriate help. For some people living on their own is most suited to their needs others may prefer to share. It is agreed on an individual basis, with support hours being matched to the individuals needs.
4. The Care Quality Commission, (which regulates and assures the quality of social care services,) defines Supported Living as follows: “These services involve a person living in their own home and receiving care and/or support in order to promote their independence. The care they receive is regulated by the Care Quality Commission, but the accommodation is not. The support that people receive is continuous, but is tailored to individual needs. It aims to enable the person to be as autonomous and independent as possible, and usually involves social support rather than medical care.”
5. CQC are specifically responsible for regulating personal care services provided in Supported Living. As the definition of personal care now includes the prompting and supervision of people’s self care, nearly all supported living situations will be covered by CQC regulation. In a small number of situations people may just require lower levels of community support without personal care. These services are not regulated by CQC but where the local authority is arranging them, they will be expected to meet explicit standards of quality and value for money. .
6. Unlike residential care, (in which housing, care and support are provided together) the separation of the housing element means that Housing Benefit can be claimed to pay for housing costs. Also, people have security of tenure and can not be moved against their will. Home ownership can be a natural follow on.
7. People can also claim a wider range of benefits if they are living independently and this usually gives them more disposable income and choice of how they spend it.

Supported Living can be delivered in a range of settings and housing models including;

Individual flats and houses are “ordinary houses in ordinary streets”. Individuals would live there as tenants or owners or through shared ownership. They could rent from the local authority, a housing association, private landlord or even from parents or family. Self-contained accommodation can offer more independence but it is also important to consider how much support is needed, especially at night; whether there needs to be a second bedroom for sleep-in support, or whether a person living alone is affordable in terms of their support costs.

Community support networks can be set up linking a number of separate flats or houses. The most important feature is that residents arrange to live “together” as a community, supporting each other. Such networks are a suitable option for people with lower support needs, living in ordinary housing in a neighbourhood. There are usually a handful of flats within walking distance. One flat is occupied by the volunteer community living worker, who provides support, drawing on the skills of all the network members as well linking them into the local neighbourhood networks.

Cluster flats are small groups of self-contained flats on the same site. Usually there would be between 6 and 10 flats. There may be communal living space and shared facilities like a laundry room. There will be a manager or support workers linked to the site, usually with on call 24 hour cover for emergencies. In addition to monitoring, cluster units offer, planned individual support to develop or maintain skills and confidence in daily living. An on-site cluster gives people the best of both worlds, offering a protective environment, without the loss of privacy and choice that people can experience in residential care. Cluster flats can offer people short term accommodation, as part of a move on plan to independent living, or a longer term secure home.

Extra Care Housing is a model of housing developed for older people providing self-contained flats along with the provision of 24/7 care. People can therefore stay in their own homes, rather than have to move to residential care, as the care levels are comparable. There is no reason why some people with disabilities should not use mainstream older people’s housing including extra care housing. Schemes take referrals from individuals over the age of 55.

Features of extra care housing are:

- Accessible specially designed housing that enables independent living for older people including those with physical or learning disabilities;
- The inclusion of telecare to enable people to live safely in their own apartments;
- The provision of communal facilities to allow community activities to be organised and to provide other services (e.g. a café/restaurant, assisted bathing);
- Flexible 24 hour care delivered by an on site care team;
- The development of a mixed community including those with different levels of ability and the provision of apartments with different tenures and number of bedrooms;
- The development of sites that maximise economies of scale i.e. 50 plus units.

Similar schemes, which are beginning to be set up for younger people with disabilities, are usually;

- Smaller, about 3-6 self-contained flats and/or bungalows together
- With 24hr on-site care team and/or support tenants
- With “Assistive Technology” installed responsive to individual needs
- Staff sleep in and kitchen facilities

Shared housing - Supported Living house is a shared house with each resident having a separate tenancy of their own room and shared occupation of communal living, kitchen and bathroom space. They can be small family houses with just three or four people sharing, or occasionally larger properties. Some support can be shared with other residents alongside individual care packages. Where needed there is a sleep-in room for support staff.

Small shared houses can work well where a group get on with each other. There can be problems if someone wants to move on and is unable to, or sometimes in filling vacancies as they arise. If two tenants want to stay together, but neither of them wants a third person to move in this could lead to affordability issues about rent and care costs. Small shared houses therefore work best when friends choose positively to share together (rather than being matched because of their support needs) or when they are part of a wider range of services that can offer places for moving on.

Further factsheets can be found online at www.devon.gov.uk/factsheets

If you have any further questions please contact **Care Direct 0845 1551 007**

A large print version of this factsheet is available on

www.devon.gov.uk/largeprint-factsheets but if you would like it in a different format such as Braille or audio, or in a different language, please contact our Customer Service Centre on 0845 155 1015 or email customer@devon.gov.uk.