

Housing

Vision Statement

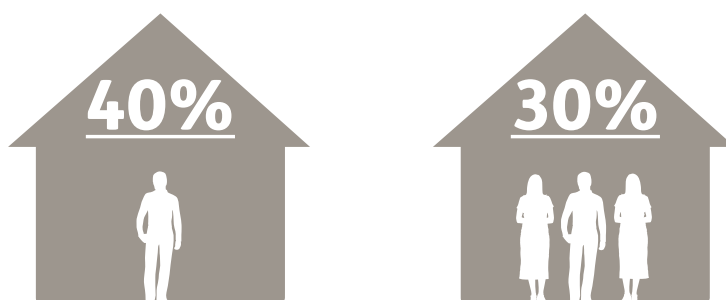


People with a learning disability have a right to live independently in the community and, where needed, should be supported to do so¹. Less than half a century ago, people with a learning disability were locked away and kept a secret from the rest of society. Many lived in large institutions – in settings that looked like old hospital wards or prison wings, where abuse was common and they had no contact with the outside world. Much has changed since then. However, there is still more that needs to be done to ensure that people with a learning disability have their right to live independently realised.

We want to see a future where people with a learning disability have a real choice about where they live and who with. Our vision is one where housing options are tailored to meet an individual's needs and aspirations. Giving choice and control to someone with a learning disability over where and whom they live with lays the foundations to achieving independence in other aspects of their life.

Current situation

Almost two thirds of people with a learning disability, known to social services, live either with family/friends or in a registered care home. Smaller numbers of people also live in supported housing or a general needs housing association/local authority accommodation. Many live with elderly parents, who worry what will happen to their children when they can no longer care for them. There is also a small, but important, group of people with a learning disability, who are placed in inpatient units, often for a long time.



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Mencap knows that the majority of adults with a learning disability want to live independently in the community, either by themselves (40%) or sharing a home with friends (30%). Families share this ambition. However, 82% of local authorities report that there is a shortage of suitable housing for adults with a learning disability in their area² and 67% say that it has become more difficult for adults with a learning disability to have their housing needs met. Due to this lack of appropriate local housing and the support options that go with it, many people with a learning disability do not get a choice about where and with whom they live, and too often they are moved into accommodation far away from family and friends, particularly if they have complex needs.

What we want

Mencap want people with a learning disability to have a real choice about where they live and who with. We believe that for this to happen:

- We must not return to an era of institutional settings, hostels or enclosed communities
- The person's needs and aspirations, and the outcomes they are hoping to achieve, must be central to all decision-making
- There must be a range of high quality housing options available that will continue to be available in the future
- People with a learning disability must get the right health and social care support to help them live independently and become part of their local community
- Social security entitlements must enable people with a learning disability to access independent living
- People with a learning disability must be able to enjoy long-term security and stability in their homes

Last reviewed: July 2016

Next review: currently being reviewed

1. UNCRPD, Article 19
2. Housing for people with a learning disability, Mencap (2012)