

Step 1: Understanding demand

Housing for autistic adults and adults with a learning disability



Introduction

Drawing on existing data and information, the first step is to understand your local population, the current supply of homes, and current and future demand for housing with support for autistic adults and adults with a learning disability.

It involves:

- collecting and analysing local demographic, economic, health, social care and housing trends data
- identifying local needs and preferences for housing with support for autistic adults and adults with a learning disability
- carrying out demand projections for different types of housing.

It is important that the information collected reflects the diversity of the local population, for example different ethnic groups, LGBTQ+ communities, people living with dementia and people with visual or hearing impairments. This information will help inform your housing strategy by helping potential investors, planners, providers and development partners, understand the local context, the current and projected demand for different types of housing that meet specific needs of autistic adults and adults with a learning disability, across different localities, and create a delivery plan. This information will also be relevant to the requirements of the [Supported Housing \(Regulatory Oversight\) Act 2023](#).



KEY QUESTIONS

You will need to collect and analyse data to address the following questions:

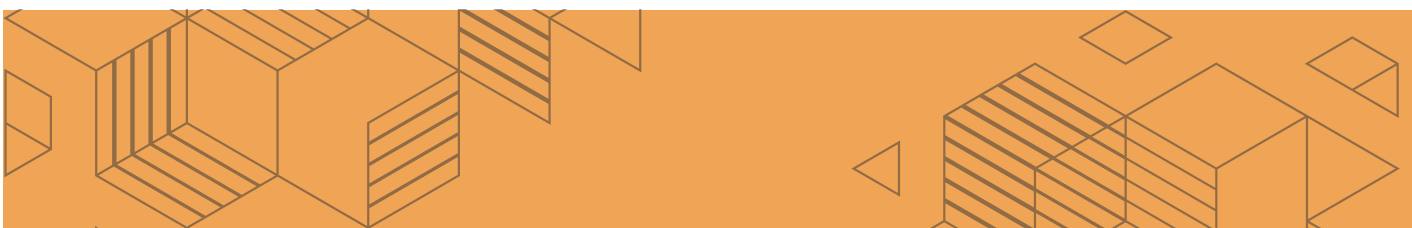
- What do we know about autistic adults and adults with a learning disability local population?
- What do we know about the current living arrangements for autistic adults and adults with a learning disability?
- How suitable is the current provision of housing? Does it require an adaptation or home improvement, or the application of technology to aid independent living, enable at home care and support?
- What is the economic status and what proportion of autistic adults and adults with a learning disability would be Care Act eligible for social and/or means restricted options?
- What do we know about housing needs and preferences?
- What are the projections for local demand for housing?
 - How many young people are likely to transition to adult services each year?
 - How many people are be living with ageing parents and may need to move in future?

How to?



You will need to:

- Outline a demographic overview and socio-economic profile of the local population, focusing particularly on autistic adults and adults with a learning disability. For example, you should highlight age groups, ethnic groups, gender – particularly in relation to underrepresentation of woman, deprivation, health issues, care and support needs, care and support eligibility status, people who fund their own care and support, and unmet needs.
- Highlight any relevant differences across different localities in the local area. Outline local projections about population growth and projected changes for each relevant demographic group. You can draw on resources such as PANSI, NHS Digital, Census data, ONS population projections, Public Health Profiles, local joint strategic needs assessments, dynamic support register, and ASCOF and SALT datasets, and/or the Housing LIN (Learning and Improvement Network) strategic housing modelling tools (see sources of information and resources below for a selection of useful contacts).
- Local areas may have specific ways of collecting data on housing demand, consider involving relevant teams (from planners and housing strategy to public health and people with lived experience) to identify ways in which such data has been collected recently.
- Identify the number of autistic adults and adults with a learning disability in the locality and their: living support arrangements, tenure types, the number of people in different types of accommodation settings (from mainstream housing or independent living to supported housing or residential care), the number of people that are able to afford and/or are eligible for different types of housing with care and support including under NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC), section 117 aftercare (free aftercare for some people who are leaving hospital after having been detained under the Mental health Act), and Mental Health Act. Consider data on household size and composition, and any information on people living in unsuitable/low standard homes or any restrictions such as forensic restrictions which could limit the area in which individuals are allowed to live. It is important to highlight how this data differs across age groups, gender, ethnic groups, and any other demographic groups that you think will provide valuable insight. You can also highlight differences across different localities in the area.
- Identify what is known nationally and locally about what autistic adults and adults with a learning disability value about housing, the factors that may contribute to people moving in later life and people's views on different types of housing, including housing with care and support, and the accessibility or adaptability of the property. You can draw on existing consultations and research with local people and/or national publications, guidance and good practice.



- Use current and projected populations, use projection tools and models to identify projected demand for different types of housing. This can be done by using internally developed bespoke models or other existing tools (see sources of information and resources below).
 - Consider the number of autistic young people and young people with a learning disability transitioning into adult services as well as hospital discharges.



SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Partners in Care and Health (PCH) (2024), Developing a housing with support pipeline for people with a learning disability and autistic people – assessing need for housing with support (p.12), using strategic housing with support needs assessment (p.29).
- PANSI, <https://www.pansi.org.uk/> – national and local projections of autistic adults and adults with a learning disability population.
- NHS England digital – information on in patients who are people with learning disabilities or autistic people.
- Assuring transformation (AT) - NHS England digital – NHS inpatient data on inpatients circumstances.
- Dynamic support register and care (education) and treatment review – aims to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions for autistic adults and adults with a learning disability.
- Education health and social care plans (EHCP) – for current information on autistic young people and young people with a learning disability.
- ASCOE, SALT, ASC-FR datasets, Census 2021 data, ONS population projections, public health profiles, English housing survey, indices of multiple deprivation, housing LIN.
- Joint strategic needs assessments, joint health and wellbeing strategies, GP disabilities register, local adult social care strategy, local housing strategies for people with learning disabilities and autistic people, local plan, housing needs assessments, local planning policies and the local Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- Any existing consultations or research with local people, anecdotal feedback from service user involvement groups, market research and nationally published reports about people's needs and preferences for housing in later life.
- The Housing LIN also curates dedicated webpages on improving the housing choice and supply of housing for autistic people and people with a learning disability.





PARTNERS TO INVOLVE

Partners for this step can both identify and agree the types of information that are needed and help identify relevant data that organisations collect but others may not be aware of. It is also important to involve partners with the necessary skills to conduct the analysis described above, whether these are local authority staff or commissioning organisations that specialise in demographic analysis.

- Local authority service managers and commissioners across adult social care, housing, data and research.
- Integrated Care Partnership, local Healthwatch, housing associations.
- Representative groups, professional networks, charities and community groups, particularly organisations representing or working with people with learning disabilities and autistic people.



CO-PRODUCTION

The 'I' and 'We' statements below are illustrative examples of co-production outcomes associated with this step. We encourage housing partnerships to adapt them as they see fit to best reflect their local context.

For individuals:

- I describe the local housing needs and preferences for autistic adults and adults with a learning disability.
- I help decide what type of information about people's needs and what data should be prioritised to understand our local population.
- I help define future change in population needs and say what impact these changes will have in housing for autistic adults and adults with a learning disability.

For the partnership:

- We have conversations to hear about key information local people would like to have to better understand housing demand.
- We make the information and data accessible to individuals and facilitate their engagement in deciding priorities.
- We share information and data about population and future needs in accessible ways and involve individuals in defining projections and impact of this on housing for people with learning disabilities and autistic people.

Further information about the benefits of and principles of co-production, as well as examples of co-production in the housing sector can be found [here](#).



EXAMPLE: CHESHIRE AND MERSEYSIDE

Cheshire and Merseyside Transforming Care Partnership developed an assessment to understand the future need for supported housing over the period 2022/23 to 2032/33. This work was based on a quantitative analysis developed by Campbell Tickell and on qualitative information gathered with commissioners from all local authorities in the region with the objective to understand local trends and the nature of future need for supported housing and housing for people with learning disabilities and autistic people in their area.

The quantitative analysis included data from all nine councils in the region and focused on identifying the projected demand for supported housing for each locality by 2032/33. The analysis 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, including:

- 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 analysis identified the need for 1,679 supported housing units across Cheshire and Merseyside over the period 2022/23 to 2032/33. This includes the projected population of people with a disability. The report details how projections could be influenced by the number of relets and other factors such as those people in NHS hospital settings who are NHS 'Specialised Commissioning Patients'.

The partnership explored how some of the demand could be met through Shared Lives and general accommodation, identifying the need for an extra 165 Shared Lives places and 380 general housing units for the period.

Through the qualitative research, the partnership worked with commissioners to identify the local trends and the nature of the supported housing needs of people with a learning disability and autistic people. The research mapped current accommodation settings, including people living with family carers/informal carers, young people in transition to adult social care eligibility, people living in Shared Lives, residential care, nursing care, hospital settings, and shared supported housing. The research identified the needs for each of these groups to support a better understanding local trends according to each type of setting.

The evidence from the quantitative and qualitative research were then combined to support the development of a gap analysis for the period and support the development of a regional housing strategy. More details can be found in [Cheshire and Merseyside Housing Strategy: People with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism](#) (ADASS Cheshire and Merseyside).



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Toolkit available at: <https://www.scie.org.uk/housing/toolkit-for-place-based-strategies-for-housing-for-autistic-adults-and-adults-with-a-learning-disability/>

