Housing with support strategy

Chapter 4 - People with physical and sensory impairments

What needs do people with physical and sensory impairments have in terms of accommodation?

The majority of people with physical and sensory impairments in North Somerset live independent lives with little or no reference to statutory support. However some people have impairments that are not catered for in standard accommodation and need specific adaptations or services to meet their needs. Sometimes these needs can be addressed by aids and adaptations that improve their existing accommodation but in some cases these will not be enough. People with specific or complex needs are often offered solutions that are not in the area or are not their preferred accommodation, for example residential care.

The accommodation needs of this population are widely varied, from a standard property with equipment to a purpose built property to an individual specification. Likewise support needs can vary from very low level infrequent support to a 24-hour care package on site.

Because the population requiring accessible accommodation and simultaneous care and support represent a very small number of North Somerset residents it could be assumed that they represent a minority of need but since the needs can be complex and the response specialised the solutions can represent a large proportion of the available budget.

One way to improve the efficiency of resources would be to ensure that accommodation for people with similar needs is located in one place so that support provision can be shared and staff time maximised but it should also be recognised that people do not necessarily want to live alongside others with similar needs.

People with physical and sensory impairments sometimes live with family carers and therefore there can also be a need for respite provision to allow both parties the opportunity of a break when necessary in order to sustain the situation for as long as is desirable.

Some people with PSI have impairments acquired through injury rather than present from birth. Sometimes these individuals have multiple and complex needs and therefore require very specific and quite intensive provision. The numbers of people with this level of need is hard to predict as the number of such accidents and their
impact in any one year can vary.

Another group with complex needs are those people with a dual diagnosis, where they have a PSI but might also have a MH issue, drug or alcohol dependency or offending behaviour. This group can be heavily reliant on the private rented sector for accommodation but these often lack access requirements and landlords may not allow equipment or adaptations such as ceiling track hoists.

People with high levels of care and support needs often find that these can only be catered for in residential care placements as the alternatives are few and far between. There is therefore a need for easier access to appropriate accommodation and support for this group.

**How much housing with support is needed for people with physical and sensory impairments?**

As outlined above the exact demand for accommodation with support for people with a physical or sensory impairment is hard to quantify as different people need different resources and the number in need varies each year.

- In 2016 NS adult social care received 2196 referrals regarding people with PSI, of these the majority (1757) are over 65, and there were 439 who are under 65.
- In 2015/16, 338 DFG enquiries were received, with 242 cases completed. Of these, 87 were for lifts or ramps, 50 were for stair lifts and 119 were for level access showers.
- 22 grants were for over £10k and 6 of these were over £20k
- There are 15 people with PSI who are under 65 and placed in residential or nursing care outside NS. The range of weekly costs for these placements is from £767 per week to £1830.
- There are 21 people under 65 who are placed in residential or nursing care within NS. The range of weekly costs for these placements is from £434 per week to £933 per week.
- There are 25 people receiving a direct payment (DP) from NS who are under 30 years of age, 10 of them are under 25.
- By 2030 there will be 365 people with a physical impairment aged 18-64 who will need services (25 more than 2015)
- By 2030 there will be 2602 people with a physical impairment aged over 65 who will need services (955 more than in 2015) (It should be noted that this reflects the increase in older people identified in the demographic statistics given in appendix 2.)

**How is accommodation with support for people with physical and sensory impairments funded?**

People with PSI often require accommodation that is specifically adapted to meet their needs. Despite an improvement in building standards for accessibility there is still a lack of appropriate accommodation for this group. The need for one level accommodation can mean that this type of accommodation needs a larger footprint than conventional and this may be an inhibiting factor for potential developers.
Appetite for building accessible accommodation of several units on one site has not been evident but this might be limited by the lack of data regarding need and demand which in turn is hampered by the need for accommodation being as individual as the people needing it – there is unlikely to be “one-size fits all”.

**Accommodation costs**
The HOLD (Home ownership for people with long term disabilities) scheme is available for people with PSI as well as those with LD which would allow people to own their own homes. With this group sometimes accessible accommodation is the primary need and with an appropriate home less care is required so that the risk of high cost care packages for the LA might be reduced. With cases where an injury has been sustained it is possible that this option is more accessible as there may have been a compensation payment which could meet the deposit requirement. However the model still hinges on appropriate accessible accommodation being available.

**Care and support costs**
As described above in some cases the need for care and support is diminished by appropriate accommodation. In cases where care and support are needed there is the issue experienced with other groups of ensuring that the package of care is sustainable long term. Generally people with a high level of support needs who live alone will present a financial challenge whereas those living near to others whereby some care can be shared will offer a more economic use of resources.

**What can be learned from good practice in this area?**
People with a physical or sensory impairment are diverse and have diverse needs. For this reason the accommodation and support solutions that they find are as many and as diverse as they are. There are therefore few examples of specific models which are recognised as “best practice”.

In terms of accommodation the concept of “Lifetime Homes” was developed in 1990 by a group of housing experts, including Habinteg Housing Association and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

“The group was formed because of concerns about how inaccessible and inconvenient many homes were for large sections of the population. Lifetime Homes was developed to ensure that homes are accessible and inclusive.

Lifetime Homes are ordinary homes designed to incorporate 16 Design Criteria that can be universally applied to new homes at minimal cost. Each design feature adds to the comfort and convenience of the home and supports the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life.”

Since then Habinteg has published other guidance on building accessible homes and by 2015 had provided 3300 accessible homes, a third of which are designed for

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wheelchair users. There are 5 Habinteg homes in Weston-super-Mare.

Increasingly there is a vast array of assistive technology for disabled people that has the potential to increase independence offering solutions to communication, access and safety issues. Ensuring that people can access equipment to support them can reduce the need for statutory services in some instances.

The principle of personalisation has been around for many years now and enables disabled people to arrange their own support, via a direct payment from the local authority if necessary. It recognises people’s right to choose how they are supported, when and who by. Councils have had varied levels of success in providing direct payments and also in the level of support available for people to access and use them. Using a direct payment to employ your own support workers requires taking on the responsibilities of an employer which can be a significant workload. Using an agency reduces the work but this can reduce the flexibility and personalisation of the service. Agencies will usually be delivering care and support to numerous individuals across a wide geographical area. The logistics of the business make it impractical to guarantee an individual the same staff at guaranteed times – which from an individual perspective can be the most important element of the service. Employing a personal assistant (PA) can be more successful in ensuring a personalised service but the work of recruiting, managing and paying staff can be burdensome.

There are organisations which support people to navigate the difficulties of managing a direct payment and finding support from agencies or individuals. For example in Lincolnshire the Penderels Trust offers advice, guidance and practical solutions to enable people with disabilities and older people to live independently in their own homes. Many councils provide assistance with locating PAs and North Somerset offers a “PA finder” function on the online directory which aims to put people looking for work as a PA in touch with people who are looking to employ one.
What is are strategic ambitions of North Somerset regarding housing with support for people with a physical and sensory impairment?

This chapter has considered how housing with support can be beneficial for people with a physical and sensory impairment, how much is required in North Somerset and what is needed to make it come about. It has also considered the possibility of providing housing with support for people with a physical and sensory impairment alongside people with different needs. The following table summarises the key issues and the strategic ambitions to resolve them.

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<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Ambition for future</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>There are limited affordable options for people with sensory impairments to live independently, this is predominantly due to a lack of suitable or adapted accommodation. This can lead to residential placements, often out of county. There are 15 people who are under 65 and placed in residential or nursing care outside NS. There are 21 people under 65 who are placed in residential or nursing care within NS. There are 25 people receiving a DP from NS who are under 30 years of age, 10 of them are under 25.</td>
<td>In future there will be a number of housing options for people with PSI developed in partnership with specialist providers.</td>
<td>Develop systems for recording and monitoring the needs of this group so that demand can be shared with providers. Work with provider partners to increase number and range of appropriate accommodation in North Somerset and ensure plans supported by all parties at every stage.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Providing high levels of support to one individual in the community can be an inefficient use of resources but individual choice might preclude living alongside others with similar needs. For people needing 24 hour support the cost of packages could be reduced if night time cover is shared.</td>
<td>In future NSC will work with people with a PSI to develop opportunities for independent living that will meet needs and are financially sustainable.</td>
<td>Work with people with PSI to ensure that models developed will both meet need, offer value for money and be attractive to potential residents.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>The small numbers of people with specific housing and support needs The number of people who develop complex physical</td>
<td>In future there will be increased opportunities to</td>
<td>Work with other local authorities, e.g. across BNSSG (Bristol, North</td>
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<td>reduces the viability of any scheme.</td>
<td>needs each year is estimated at not more than 3.</td>
<td>develop supported living in the area.</td>
<td>Somerset, South Gloucestershire) to consider a facility that meets needs across a wider region.</td>
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