

Thinking Ahead planning guides: information and ideas



Christine Towers

Together Matters

www.togethermatters.org.uk

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Together Matters

- Focus on planning for all ages and stages of life:
 - Young people
 - Adult life
 - Growing older
- Create resources for people to plan for positive changes
- Provide workshops and training
- Consultancy/ service development
- Share stories and learning
- <https://www.togethertomatters.org.uk>

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What I'm going to talk about

Introduce Thinking Ahead guides

Focus on three topics from the guides

- Making choices
- Building friendships, community connections and support networks
- Finding the right housing and support

Highlight other resources: growing older and annual reviews

Time for questions and discussion

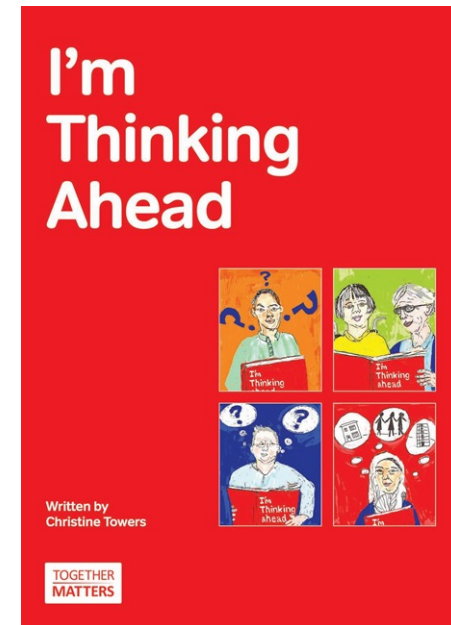
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Thinking Ahead guides

Thinking Ahead: a planning guide for families
lots of information for family carers wanting
to think about and plan for the future



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I'm Thinking Ahead: an easy-read format
to support people to have conversations
and gain skills in thinking about their
future

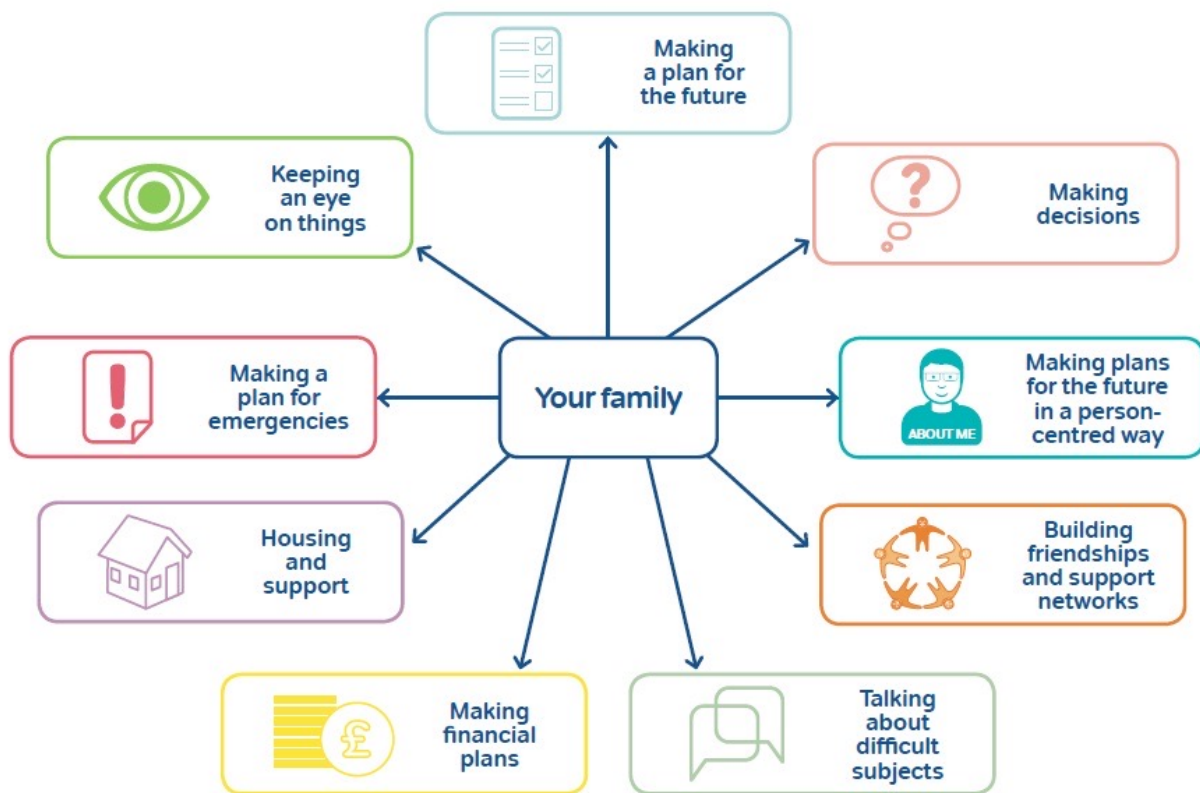
I'm Thinking Ahead

- Young people and adults can look at it themselves or with someone who supports them
- Three sections (originally):
 - How to plan
 - How to make choices
 - How to get the right housing and support
- New section added in 2021:
 - How to be part of the world of work (Essex version available)
- Helps others to talk more meaningfully with a person
- Adapt for people's communication needs



Thinking Ahead guide for families

Thinking Ahead Planning Guide



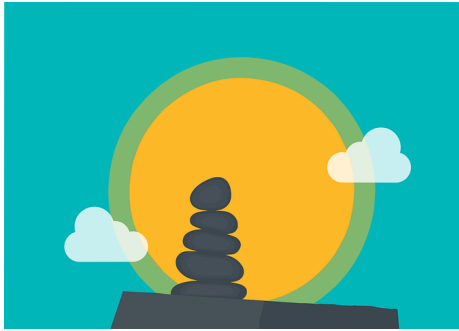
Conversations lead to plans



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- Planning can sound daunting
- Planning is basically conversations that lead to change (however small)
- Thinking Ahead guides help people to have better conversations (including talking about things that can be difficult)
- Small changes usually lead to opening things up to look at bigger changes

Times of change



- Change is often not by choice and can be stressful
 - for young people and adults
 - for family carers
- Planning helps with feeling less stressed:
 - Greater sense of control over future- less at sea
 - Clearer about what you want and more able to share this with others
 - Less dependent on the input of services to make choices- more able to shape things
 - Gaining tools and skills that go on being useful throughout life

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Thinking Ahead guide: Making decisions

1. Making decisions



- Understanding how decisions are made (Mental Capacity Act)
- Involving your relative in making decisions
- Best interests decisions
- Involving others in decisions about the future
- Others who have authority to make decisions:
 - Lasting Powers of Attorney
 - Court of Protection/ deputyship

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Decision-making and planning for the future



Decision-making underpins so much of the Thinking Ahead guide:

- Where your relative might live
- Who they might live with
- How they may be supported
- How their finances will be managed
- What opportunities to look for, such as learning or looking for work
- Who will be an advocate and keep an eye on things

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How to make choices



What choices do you make in your life?

Who helps you to make choices?

Are there other people you could ask to help you make choices?

What else could help you to make choices (such as good information or photos)?

I'm Thinking Ahead: How to make choices

The choices I make

	Choices I make	Choices I would like to make	What stops me making these?
What I wear 			
What I eat 			
My shopping 			
My money 			
My health 			
My friends 			

- This template can help your relative think about the choices they currently make and others they'd like to try to make
- If people have opportunities to practice making small decisions (e.g. clothes they wear) it may help to make bigger decisions (e.g. where they might like to volunteer)
- Being able to say what you want or need can help people to keep safe.

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People who help me make choices

People who help me make choices			
Name of person	What kind of choices do they help me with?	What's good about the way they help me make choices?	What's not good about the way they help me make choices?
			

- Use this template to think about who helps your relative make choices- what's good/ not so good about the way they do this?
- It can help you to build a picture of what helps your relative to make decisions
- This information can be shared with other people giving support, social workers etc.

Friendships and networks

3. Building friendships and support networks



What's in the Thinking Ahead guide:

- Importance of friendships and support networks
- Involving siblings
- Building a network of friends/ circle of support
- What a circle of support brings (now and future)
- Advocacy

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Importance of friendships and support networks

People with learning disabilities often miss out on opportunities to make friends but important in making life go well

- Other people involved in a person's life could:
 - Give ideas, share their contacts, create opportunities, do things together
 - Look out for them, notice whether they are safe and well, speak up when things are not right
 - Help at stressful or difficult times (such as moving home, ill health, bereavement)
- Not a substitute for paid support, but complementary. Help to do things that would be better if done through informal networks and/or might not be funded



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How to build friendships & networks

- Some people naturally draw others into their lives whilst others find it harder and need more help to do this
- Friendships often based on shared interests: look for places to meet others keen to talk about/do things related to an interest
- Find someone to give support who has skills in connecting with others and could introduce and support conversations for someone who finds it difficult (could be family, friend, paid supporter)
- Look at befriending services, advocacy groups, volunteering, work, community groups and activities, on-line groups

Social media and technology



- Look at how technology (such as having a mobile phone, laptop, using video calling) and social media (such as Facebook) can help them to be in touch with friends
- <https://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/learningdisabilities/publications/staying-safe-social-media-and-online>
- <https://www.anncrafttrust.org/how-to-stay-safe-online-guidance-for-adults-and-young-people-with-learning-disabilities/>

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Involving siblings, nieces, nephews etc



www.sibs.org.uk

- Good to involve people of same generation as may suggest different ideas to those of parents and have useful knowledge from their experience of planning their own future
- Siblings can feel left out of conversations, be worrying about their relative's future and not able to contribute their ideas
- Relatives will share a family history (especially helpful as people get older), may be able to look out for/advocate when parents no longer able to

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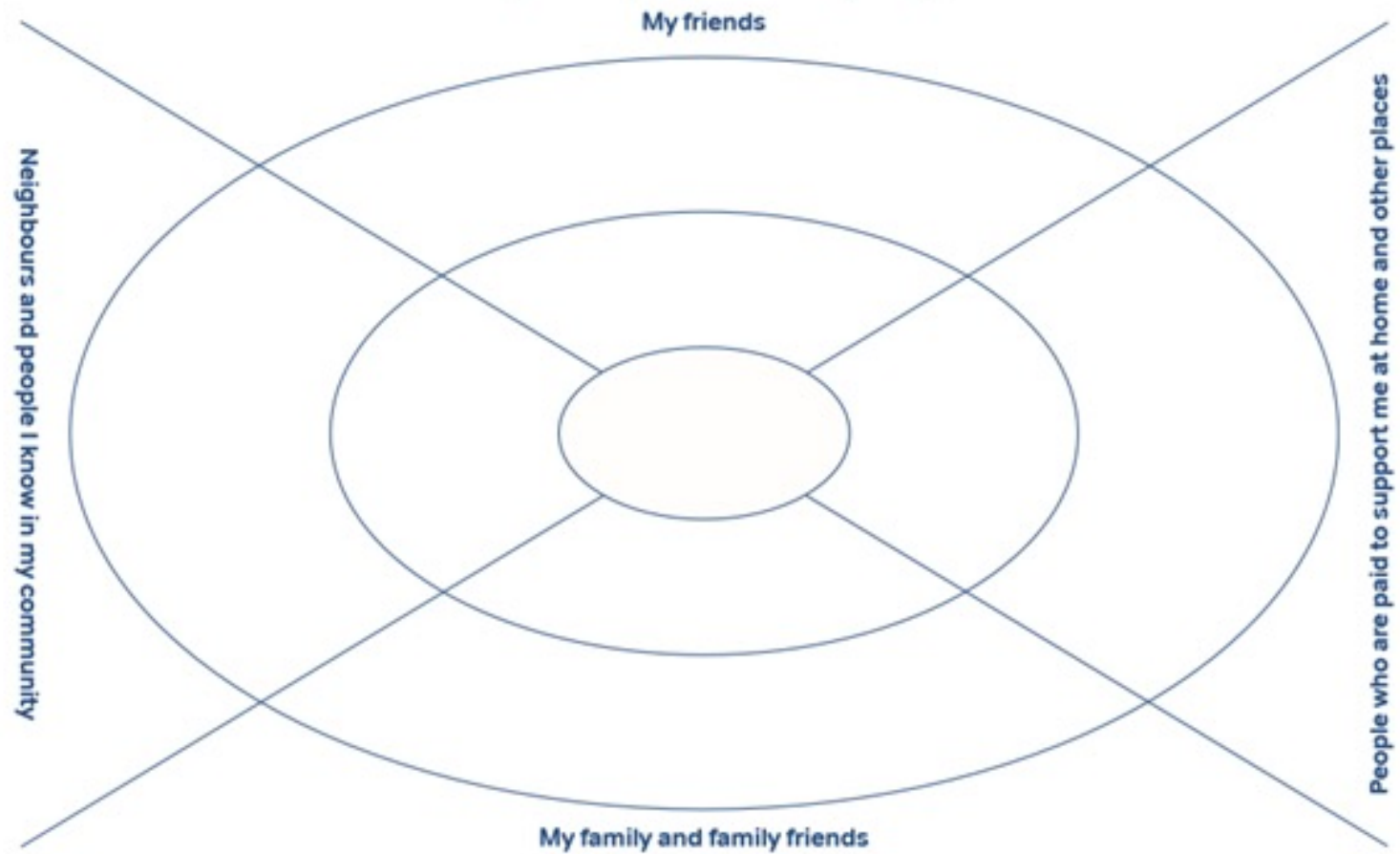
Circles of support



- A circle of support is a group of people who have a commitment to help a person have a good life- way of bringing people together to share ideas
- Family, friends, neighbours, people who share an interest, paid supporters, people who know about useful things.
- Include people of similar age
- Can help with building friendships and connections:
 - Make new things happen e.g. go out and about more
 - Share their interests and connections
 - Can contribute to longer term future planning – may continue in this role when parents are no longer able to

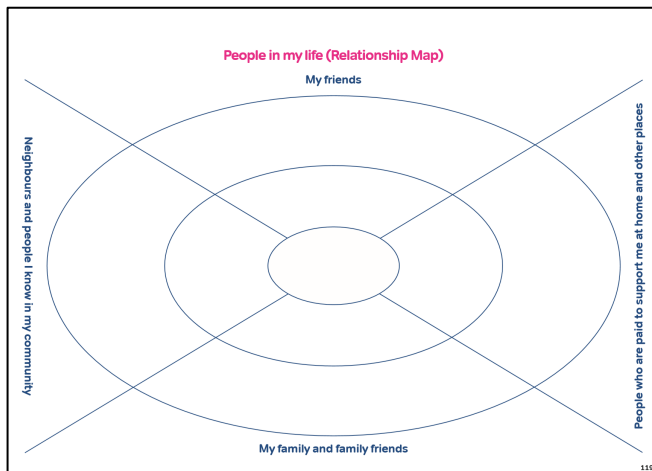
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People in my life (Relationship Map)



Tool: People in my life

To help with knowing the people in a person's life, maintaining connections and building new ones:



- Put person's name/photo in the centre
- Talk to person about who they know and fill in the different sections, writing a person's name/photo and a few useful details
- Look at where the gaps are and plan if helpful to build links e.g. may not know neighbours/ lack of friends
- Share with others (such as PAs /support workers) to keep in touch with people, not lose contact over the years e.g. after leaving college
- Think about where the gaps are and plan if want to build new connections
- People in outer areas-look at whether useful/enjoyable if they could be more involved and how- aim of drawing them into inner areas.

I'm Thinking Ahead: How to be part of the world of work

I'm Thinking Ahead: How to be part of the world of work



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Written by Christine Towers

- Easy-read guide to help young people and adults with learning disabilities think about work.
- Written for secondary school pupils, college students and adults
- Also for parents and family carers keen to support relative with work
- Anyone supporting people around work: teachers, social workers, support workers, careers advisers, Persona Assistants (PAs)

Messages in the guide



- Get to know your local community including jobs people do
- Be seen in your local community
- Talk to other people about work:
 - Your family, family friends, neighbours
 - Groups and organisations in your local area
 - Business owners, people who have jobs
- Let them know you are keen to:
 - Find out about different kinds of work
 - Get work experience, volunteer, a Saturday/holiday job
- Let them know what you are good at

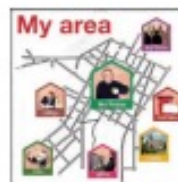
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Get to know your local community and businesses

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Get to know your community and the businesses near where you live



Find out what is going on in your local area:

- Does your village or town have a community magazine or Facebook page?
- Are there things happening in your community, such as fun runs or festivals, that you could join in or help out at?



This would help you:

- Get to know local people
- Make links with groups and organisations

It will also help local people get to know you.



You could ask people about their work: find out where they work and what they do.

Let people know you are keen to work.

Ask them for their ideas. They may be able to help you.

They may be able to offer you work experience or a work placement.

You could share your One-page Profile (page 30).



Use a notebook or computer to keep the information you find out.



On page 13 there are ideas about how to get to know your local community.

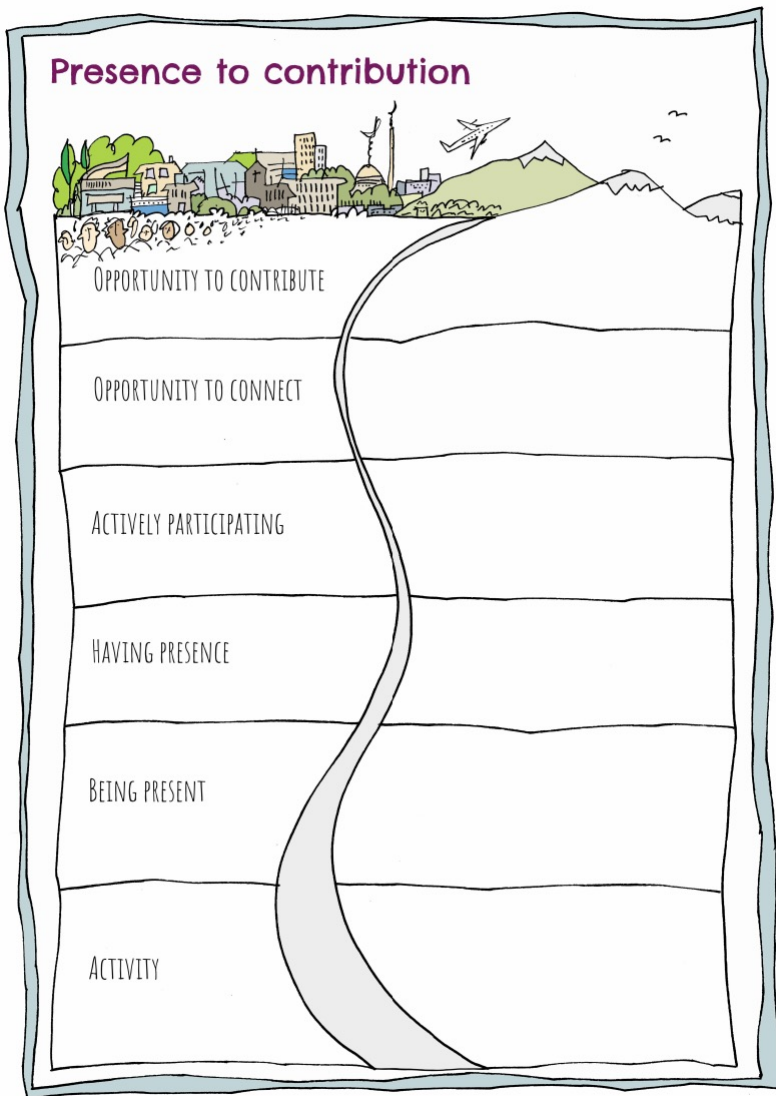
On page 14 there are ideas about how to get to know local businesses.

Use these ideas to think about what you would like to do to get started. Then write your ideas in the right-hand column.

Community mapping



Tool: from presence to contribution



To help with meeting new people and making connections in the community:

Start at the bottom of the page:

Activity: Look at activities/ places someone goes to and think about opportunities to be more involved and connect with new people.

Being present: going to a community café for a cup of tea

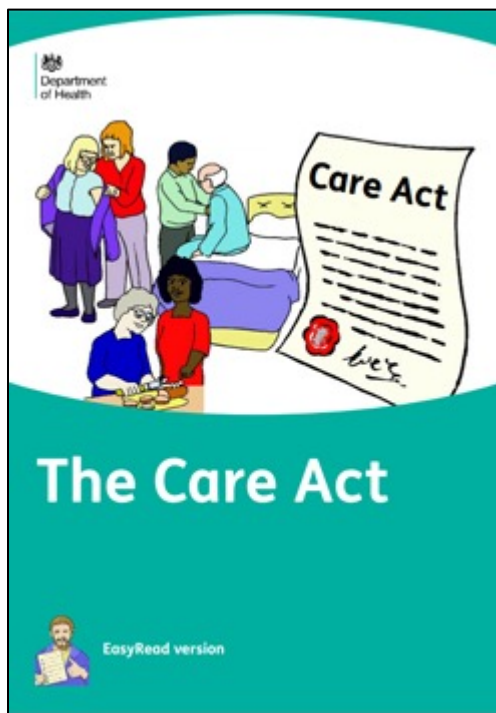
Having presence: going to counter to order tea

Actively participating: joining an over 50s computer class in the café

Connecting: chatting to people in the class, having a cup of tea with them afterwards

Contributing: writing something for their Facebook page about the class to encourage others to join

Care Act on being connected with others



The Care Act recognises the importance of contact with family and friends as well as being connected with the wider community

One of the eligibility outcomes in the Care Act is 'developing and maintaining family and other personal relationships'

Could build support for this into a care and support plan

‘Developing and maintaining family and other personal relationships’

- Additional information in Care Act about the eligibility criteria:
- Is the adult lonely or isolated?
- Do their needs prevent them from maintaining or developing relationships with family and friends?
- Examples of circumstances affecting the ability to achieve the outcome:
- The adult’s physical or psychological state may prevent them from making or maintaining relationships e.g. mental ill-health, autism.
- If the adult is unable to communicate easily and regularly – e.g. they may not have, or be able to use, a phone or computer, they may be unable to leave their home safely, they may be unable to communicate successfully or interact with others – this may prevent them from maintaining or developing relationships with family, friends and others

Role of support workers and PAs



- Give information to paid supporters and have expectation they will maintain and build friendships
- Ask support providers whether they provide training to staff on building friendships and connections

Thinking Ahead: Housing and support



Gives families background information- things to think about

- Housing and support: how it works
 - Options that may currently be available in local area
 - Options for arranging something new

- Family investment/inheriting family home

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Options that may currently exist

- Shared house (group home)
- Shared lives
- Core and cluster - single occupancy units grouped together either within a purpose-built block or defined area (e.g. street) with some shared support
- Intentional community
- Network

The guide explains each option:

- What the term means
- How support will be organised
- Things to consider
- How to explore further

Options for arranging something new

- Renting a flat/house on own
- Shared or outright ownership (including HOLD mortgages)
- Private sector leasing
- Family investment, including inheriting family home

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JMS Trust: not-for profit organisation that supports disabled people and families to set up own supported living through offering information, advice and funding

Emphasis on family carers and people with learning disabilities shaping things

<https://www.supportedlivingfunding.co.uk/>

I'm Thinking Ahead: How to get the right housing and support



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I'm Thinking Ahead: How to get the right housing and support

Question 1
Who do you want to live with?



On your own

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



With a friend

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



With a group of friends you know

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



With people you would get to know

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



With someone in your family

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



A partner

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



With someone who is paid to support you

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



With a pet

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

Anyone else?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

Who do you want to live near?



Your mother

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



Your father

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



A brother or sister

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



A grandparent

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



Friends

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



People who look out for you

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

Anyone else?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

Building of friendships, community connections and support networks could help to shape answers to some of the questions in the templates

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Three big questions

3 BIG questions

We have written **3 BIG questions** to help you start thinking about choosing somewhere to live:

Question 1

**Who do you
want to live with?**
(go to page 36)



Question 2

**Where do you
want to live?**
(go to page 37)



Question 3

**What help
would you need?**
(go to page 43)



The next few pages help you think about these questions.

1. Who do you want to live with?

Question 1

Who do you want to live with?



On your own

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



With a friend

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



With a group of friends you know

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



With people you would get to know

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



With someone in your family

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



A partner

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



With someone who is paid to support you

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



With a pet

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

Anyone else?

- ☐ Yes
☐ Maybe

2. Where do you want to live?

Question 2

Where do you want to live?



There are lots of things to think about.
It may help to answer 3 smaller questions.



What does the house / flat need to be like?
(go to page 38)



Who do I want to live near?
(go to page 40)



What do I want to live near?
(go to page 41)



On the next 4 pages there are some ideas to help
you think about these 3 smaller questions.

What does the house/ flat need to be like?

What does the house/flat need to be like?

 On the ground floor ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe	 Above the ground floor ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe	 Small and cosy ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe
 Lots of space ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe	 With a garden ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe	 No garden you have to look after ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe
 On a quiet road ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe	 On a busy road ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe	 With your own front door / street intercom ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe

What does the house/flat need to be like?

 No stairs or steps ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe	 Car parking space ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe	 Allowed to have a pet ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe
 No pets allowed ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe		
Anyone else? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe		

What do you want to live near?

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What do you want to live near?



A local shop

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



A street with lots of shops

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



A park or green space

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



Bus stops or a train station

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



Place of worship

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



A place to exercise

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



Somewhere to meet people, like a café

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe



A health centre

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

Anything else?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

Making a plan

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These are the most important things about
where I want to live



Things I
must have



Things I would
like to have

What I may need help with

Think about what you need help with



Meeting friends

- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No



Meeting family

- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No



Travelling to places

- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No



Planning food

- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No



Shopping

- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No



Cooking

- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No



Looking after money

- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No



Paying bills

- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No



Getting benefits

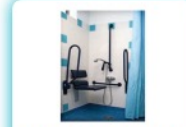
- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No

Think about what you need help with



Getting up and planning the day

- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No



Showering/ washing

- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No



Housework

- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No



Taking medicine

- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No



Keeping fit

- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No



Going to appointments

- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No

Anything else?



Going to work

- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No



- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes



- ☐ Yes, always
☐ Yes, sometimes

Keeping an eye on things

8. Keeping an eye on things



Includes information about what to consider when choosing somewhere to live and/or support

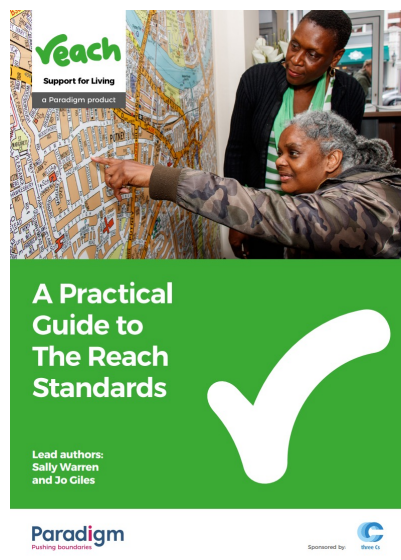
- the organisation
- location and safety of property
- how support is arranged
- quality of support

REACH Standards for supported living

- REACH Standard 1: I choose who I live with
- REACH Standard 2: I choose where I live
- REACH Standard 3: I have my own home (with a tenancy or ownership)
- REACH Standard 4: I choose who supports me and how I am supported
- REACH Standard 5: I choose my friends and my relationships
- REACH Standard 6: I get help to make changes in my life
- REACH Standard 7: I choose how to be healthy and safe
- REACH Standard 8: I choose how I am part of my community
- REACH Standard 9: I have the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens

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Information on Reach Standards



https://paradigm-uk.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/11/REACH_STAGE_07-1.pdf

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Shaping My Future

A guide for people with
physical disabilities in Essex

Section 4: My home



This is the fourth section of a six-part guide. For details about accessing the full guide and the other sections go to the back page.



1. Planning for change:
getting started



2. Family, friends
and connections



3. Learning and working



4. My home



5. Health and wellbeing



6. Going out and about

Delivered by:



Commissioned by:



www.essex.gov.uk/shaping-my-future

My home: content

Information in this section

		Useful to me?
Your rights in relation to housing	77	☐
Summary of some of the housing options	78	☐
Ideas to help with finding a property	82	☐
• Social housing	82	☐
• Renting privately or buying a property	83	☐
• Tips for viewing properties	84	☐
Help with housing costs	86	☐
Equipment and adaptations	87	☐
• How to get the right equipment and adaptations for your needs	88	☐
• Help from occupational therapy	89	☐
• Understanding the different categories of equipment and adaptations	91	☐
• Care technology	93	☐
Disabled Facilities Grant	94	☐
Role of Home Improvement Agencies	95	☐
Page for notes	96	

Why this section might be helpful

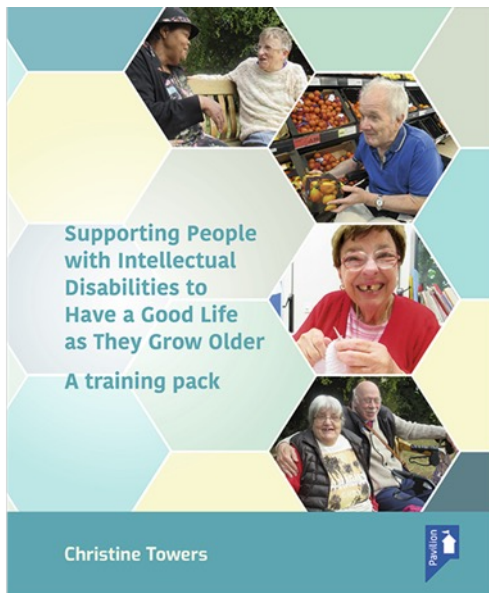
Where we live has a key bearing on our lives. Feeling safe, secure and comfortable at home can make all the difference to the way we cope with our situation. It can also have an impact on other aspects of life, such as our health and wellbeing and our ability to take up study and work opportunities, as well as any care or support we need from others.

This section provides information about the different options to help you achieve the best accommodation for your situation. It may be fairly easy to make your housing work better with pieces of equipment and some small adaptations. On the other hand, you may be thinking about major adaptations or looking for somewhere more suitable to live.

Knowing how the system works, and the terminology and organisations involved, should help to make it easier. It's advisable to plan as much in advance as possible as it can take time and effort to get the right things in place. If you are thinking of doing this planning on your own, it may be helpful to involve one or two people who would be good at thinking it through with you, or helping with practical tasks, such as viewing properties. Also, it's worth talking to people in services and organisations who have expertise in housing as they can help you to look at the pros and cons and make the best decisions.

This is the fourth section of a guide called Shaping My Future. It has five other sections but you do not need to look at them all. Choose the ones that you think might be useful to you at this point in time.

Growing older: training resources for Pavilion



Training pack for support providers (people at Leyton Road centre contributed to its development) to:

- Improve quality of life for people as they grow older through good support
 - Provides good practice ideas to support people to have an active and enjoyable life whilst feeling safe and well
 - Encourages conversations about growing older
- www.pavpub.com/learning-disability/support-people-learning-disabilities-grow-older
(there is a cost)

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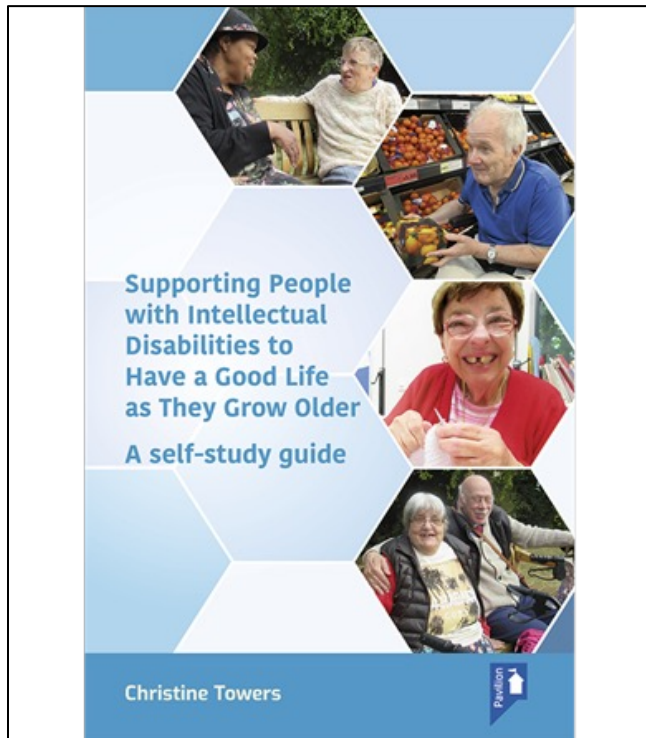
Understanding changes in people's lives

Six topics:

- Understanding growing older
- Emotional well-being
- Health
- Being active and involved
- Home life
- Bereavement and dying

Encourages idea of supporting people well throughout adult life so they age well

Self-study guide useful for family carers to advocate for good support



Talking to people about growing older

- Growing older can lead to changes that can feel difficult and worrying
- Opportunities to talk and understand can help

Find out:	Use support to:
What makes someone feel good about their life (start with this)	Build on good things e.g. make sure it continues, adapt as needs change, look for opportunities to do more or similar
What does someone find worrying or difficult in their life	Find solutions e.g. give information, explain why it's happening, reduce or remove difficulty

Good support for healthy ageing

Figure 3.1:



Talking Together: peer support activities to understand about growing older & dementia



20 activities for people with learning disabilities to talk together about growing older.

Activities include:

- Good things about growing older
- Visible and invisible signs of ageing
- Losing things
- Making a memory box
- Creating a friendly home environment
- Relaxation

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Reviews and other meetings

Template for your Annual Review: thinking about what's working well and what could be better

Use this template to think about what's working well and what could be better under different topics that you are likely to want to cover in your review. People may have different views under each topic; this doesn't matter as different views help to make up the overall picture.

There may be sections that are not relevant or you may only have time before the review to fill in the sections that seem most relevant.

The support provider section can be filled in by anyone giving support including the Community Health Team, day centre, support at home, respite and outreach services. You can add the views of more than one support provider but put in brackets whose view it is.

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How to support people with learning disabilities and/or autism to take part in their Annual Review

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Template to prepare

Name		Thoughts about what's working well	Thoughts about what could be better
What my week looks like 	Me		
	Family		
	Support provider		
Where I live 	Me		
	Family		
	Support provider		

1

Downloading Thinking Ahead and other resources



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All resources available to download free (apart from Pavilion training) from www.togethertomatters.org.uk :

- Version to download to read or print
 - Interactive version to download, save and fill in tables, templates etc. (easy to update and share with others)
 - Both guides available as full versions and individual sections.
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- Email if any queries, comments or ideas: christine@togethertomatters.org.uk

Any questions or thoughts



What have you heard that sounds interesting or useful to you?

