

The Right to an Ordinary Life:

Choice, Belonging and Community Living

Too many disabled people still do not have a plan for their future, are forced to live away from family and friends, or do not have the support they need to live in their community.

Disabled people have the right to choose where and with whom they live, and to have the support they need to live an ordinary life in their community.

UNCRPD – ARTICLE 19

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD – Article 19) recognises the equal right of all disabled people to live independently and be included in the community, with choice and control over where and with whom they live.

THE THREE CHOICE TEST

Community living must pass the three choice test.

Do I have a choice about:



Where I live?



1



Who I live with?



2



How I spend my time?



3

WHAT DOES REAL COMMUNITY LIVING LOOK LIKE?**Relationships and natural supports****Not everyone in my life is paid to be there.**

Community living means having opportunities to live near and stay connected to friends, family and the natural supports I choose.

**Access to my community****I can access the services and supports I need locally.**

I have access to the services, supports and opportunities I need to live well and take part in my community.

**Safety through belonging****I am known, loved, valued and seen in my community.**

Feeling safe is also about belonging – being close to family and friends, having relationships, connections and people around me who know and value me.

**Being respected as an individual****I am treated as an individual, not as part of a group.**

This does not mean I cannot live with other people. It means that living with others is my choice, and my individual needs, wishes and preferences are central to how I live my life.

**Having the right support to belong****The people supporting me have the skills to help me belong.**

Simply living in a community does not automatically mean being part of it. A person can live in a busy estate surrounded by people and still feel lonely. Paid staff need the right skills to support people to build relationships, make connections and genuinely belong in their communities.

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

To make community living a reality for everyone, we need:

- 1 Ring-fenced, multi-annual funding**

Dedicated, long-term funding to support the development of sustainable community living options.
- 2 A clear policy on community living for everyone**

A clear national policy that makes community living a reality for all people with intellectual disabilities.
- 3 An individual housing plan from young adulthood**

Every person should have an individual housing plan from young adulthood.

Planning should involve meaningful conversations with the person and the natural and chosen supports they want to involve, including family.
- 4 Regional data and accountability**

We need clear data at regional level to understand what people need, identify gaps and ensure accountability for progress.
- 5 Joined up working between health and housing**

Health and housing must work together cohesively, in line with the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027, so that people's housing and support needs are planned together.
- 6 Workforce planning for community living**

Community living requires a broader skill set. Workforce planning should recognise the importance of skills and roles such as community development, local area co-ordination and advocacy, alongside the skills needed to support people to build relationships and belong in their communities.

Community living is a human right. It means having the same choices as everyone else about where, how and with whom you live. It is about having real choice and control over your life, building and maintaining relationships, and having the support you need to live independently, belong, participate and be fully included in your community on an equal basis with others.