

🌀 June 2025 Update: Supported/Assisted/Independent Living 🌀

This month's group meeting focused on **how to help young people with disabilities move towards independent living**. Parents and carers shared their experiences—what worked well, what was hard, and what support made a difference. We were also joined by **Katie and Rada (founders of Lighthouse School and Lighthouse Futures Trust)**, who gave helpful advice from their own family journeys.

★ Independent Living: Real-Life Stories

Parents spoke honestly about the journey into independent or supported living. Many shared that it takes time, planning, and support. Key points included:

- **Start small:** Begin with short visits or part-time stays in supported housing.
- **Keep reviewing:** Regular meetings with social workers and community teams helped spot problems early and find solutions.
- **Build confidence:** Social activities like bowling, dance groups, or cooking can help young people feel more independent.
- **Letting go is hard:** Many parents said it was difficult emotionally, but watching their children grow more confident was worth it.

★ Housing and Support Options

We talked a lot about different types of housing and support available. This included:

- **Shared homes** or **individual flats**, depending on needs.
- Support staff who help with shopping, cooking, and routines.
- **Adapting housing** to meet physical or medical needs.
- The importance of **good housing providers** who understand the system.

Some parents are even exploring **modular buildings** (small, purpose-built homes) to make affordable housing for young people.

★ Money and Legal Help

Getting the right support often means applying for benefits or legal help. Key points discussed:

- **Housing Benefit** and **Universal Credit** are essential to cover living costs.
- **Deputyship** (legal permission to manage money) may be needed once a child turns 18.
- Court fees can be high, but some families found ways to reduce costs with support from their local authority.
- Having someone to **guide parents through the forms** and processes was very helpful.

★ The Role of Support Staff

Parents said good support workers made a big difference. Ideas shared included:

- Using **apps and handover notes** so staff stay up to date.
- Parents making **videos or doing cooking demos** to help staff understand the young person's needs.
- Making sure there's a **consistent team** around the young person.
- The importance of **training** on things like dysphagia (eating and swallowing difficulties).

★ Challenges and What Helped

Some common challenges were:

- **Waiting for social care assessments** or referrals.
- **Understanding the system** and what support is available.
- Worry about safety or loneliness in supported living.
- Managing health, money, and social needs all at once.

Helpful solutions included:

- Doing **one step at a time**—small wins help build trust.
- Having a **team around the young person** (family, staff, social workers).
- **Parent networks** sharing tips, contacts, and encouragement.

★ What's Next?

Many families are now thinking about:

- **Partnering with housing groups or charities** to create new homes.
- Starting **group projects** to help more young people move into safe, supported homes.
- Learning more about **supported employment** alongside housing plans.

★ How can parents and carers get support with this?

Contacting Adult Social Care: Individuals can reach out to Leeds City Council's Adult Social Care department via their advice helpline (0113 222 4401) or through their local One-Stop Centre/community hub.

Social Worker Support: Social workers can provide tailored support for various housing needs, including:

- **Leaving Care:** Individuals leaving care are entitled to housing support from their social worker or personal advisor.
- **Housing Adaptations:** Social workers can help arrange for adaptations to homes to improve accessibility for individuals with reduced mobility.
- **General Housing Needs:** They can also assist with finding appropriate housing solutions, including social housing or support with finding a deposit.

For more information visit leeds.gov.uk/adult-social-care



Coming in June:

Students will be attending the **SEND Next Choices fair** on the **24th of June** at Leeds Arena. Tickets are needed – this is a free event. [Click here for details: firstdirectarena.com/events/detail/send-next-choices-2025](https://firstdirectarena.com/events/detail/send-next-choices-2025)

Witherslack Group will be hosting their annual **Virtual Send Conference** on **June 25th**. Delivered via Zoom, the conference will provide a line-up of workshops to support parents and carers with “**Strategies To Support Behaviour & Mental Health**” This is a free event – to sign up and find out more, [click here or visit witherslackgroup.co.uk](https://witherslackgroup.co.uk).



Thank You!

A big thank you to everyone who joined and shared. Special thanks to Katie and Rada for their time and insight.

[Our final, in-person gathering will be 5:00-6:30pm on Thursday July 3rd](#), where we will be having a farewell social, with nibbles and soft drinks to celebrate the end of the academic year! [Please book your free ticket on Eventbrite](#) and we will see you then! (Please note, this session will not take place remotely – only in-person).

Best wishes,
Emily, Shelley & Julie



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