



❖ 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



Keep in touch! lighthousefuturetrust.org.uk/parent-carer-peer-support-group

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