

# Housing for people with a learning disability



## KEY POINTS

- Golden Lane Housing (GLH) is a specialist supported housing landlord who understands the needs of people with a learning disability.
- We start with the person and tailor housing around their needs in an area of their choice through a supported living approach.
- Through our specialist landlord services, we help people to maintain their tenancy.



Golden Lane Housing

working in partnership with 



Only 16% of people with a learning disability live in supported housing in the community.



# About Golden Lane Housing

Golden Lane Housing (GLH) was established as an independent national charity by Royal Mencap Society in 1998 to help tackle the problems that people with a learning disability face when it comes to finding a home.

Everyone with a learning disability has the right to suitable housing they can build their lives around. This is not the reality for many - something GLH works hard every day to change. We provide supported living housing for more than 1,850 people and help hundreds more every year with information and advice.

In January 2015, GLH became a Registered Provider this provides additional security for our existing tenants and enables us to offer a wider range of housing for even more people with a learning disability. It opens the door to enter into partnerships with other registered providers and support providers to help us deliver more.

## About supported living

Supported living is for adults with a learning disability who would like to live independently in their own home and community. This is achieved by a landlord who understands how to manage and maintain a person's home and we work in partnership with a support provider who helps the person to live the life they choose.

Individuals housing and support is built around them rather than fitting them into a service. People choose who they want to live with (if anyone), where they live, who supports them and how they are supported in their home and community.

Supported living is not just for people who are more independent. Anyone can live in their own home and community with the right support and housing.

# Finding a happy and safe home

## Putting people first

Unlike many housing providers, GLH understands people with a learning disability need different things. That is why we start with the person and look for housing to meet their specific requirements.

## Joined-up approach

Working with others is central to everything we do. We work in partnership with many different support providers, so all our tenants can access the support they need to flourish in their home and community. We work very closely with local commissioners of care and support to make sure that our housing solutions are commissioned, in line with their social services and health strategies and priorities.

Whether a person is receiving support through a local authority contract or an individual budget, we want to make sure there's always a joined-up approach.

Before a person can apply for housing with GLH the local authority or health service will carry out a housing and support assessment. Each person would have an appointed social worker or someone else from their support network to help them with this.

**We can only help people to find housing who have a level of personal support which, has been agreed through their needs assessment by the local authority or health service.**

## STEP 1 – Needs assessment

A needs assessment is carried out by the social services department which determines personal support requirements, for example how many hours a week a person requires for their personal support package.

It is vital that the local authority or health service makes reference to housing requirements during any needs assessment. It is important this includes current circumstances and future plans and needs.

## Rent

The majority of GLH tenants pay for their rent through Housing Benefit. We work closely with local Housing Benefit departments to agree rents that are reasonable and paid outside of the normal rules. This provides more financial stability and certainty that rent will be paid in full for our tenants.

If you have a disability you may be entitled to higher levels of Housing Benefit – for example, if you need an additional room for sleep over

support. This is a complex area but our expertise and relationship with local authorities is invaluable, in making sure people understand and receive what they are entitled to and get the right housing.

If a person isn't eligible for Housing Benefit or their rent is higher than the amount they can claim, we will support them to look at ways to pay for this through other income, such as, using their wages, savings or benefits.



“One day I said to my parents, I want to find my own place to live. They asked me why so I told them I wanted to become more independent.”

Sacha, GLH tenant

The personal support package needs to be in place by the time GLH finds a property for a person. The support can be provided either by social services, a care provider or through a person's own arrangements, such as an individual budget.

## STEP 2 – Housing waiting list

A person needs to put their name down on the local housing waiting list, their social worker or a person who supports them can help them to do this.

While GLH recognises that often a social housing waiting list may not be likely to result in housing, registering is an important step. This is so the councils understand the full extent of needs in their area. This can also help with any future discussions if there are differences between Housing Benefit rates and actual housing costs.

## STEP 3 – Housing needs assessment

It is important that GLH fully understands all personal circumstances. By completing a GLH Application for housing form and Housing requirements form you will give most of the initial information needed to make an assessment and consider options. GLH staff may follow up some details through a conversation.

## STEP 4 – Looking at housing options

Our development team gives advice and guidance on our rented housing options.

## Privately rented accommodation

Our Great Tenants scheme enables us to lease properties from landlords, support providers and families. GLH acts as the landlord and liaises directly with tenants.

## Planning with relatives

GLH works with discretionary trusts that own property or trusts and/or families looking at purchasing a property. GLH becomes the landlord by entering into a lease arrangement, giving peace of mind that the property will be properly managed and maintained.

## Leasing housing from other social landlords

We can lease or manage existing support provider properties. GLH acts as the landlord and liaises directly with tenants.

## STEP 5 – Finding a property

We will look to identify a suitable property based on a person's housing needs on the open market or within an existing GLH vacancy. We work closely with the person/s, families, social services, social and private landlords and developers. By combining local knowledge with our professional expertise we find the right property in an area of the person's choice. Once a property has been identified and viewed, we will secure it and arrange for any works to be done before a person moves in.

## STEP 6 – Becoming a Golden Lane Housing tenant

We allocate a named housing officer who will get in touch with all details about moving in and signing the tenancy.



## Here to help

### Specialist landlord services

We provide specialist landlord services to all our tenants - such as a 24-hour helpline, housing related benefits advice and keeping safe - helping to bridge the gap between housing and personal support.

### Change in circumstances

We are always there to help our tenants through the changes, for example, if a person needs external funding for adaptations or wants to move to somewhere new. While we cannot guarantee we will always be able to identify external adaptation funding or to provide alternative housing, we will always try to do everything we can to help them to find the right home to meet their needs.

### Get in touch

For more information and to discuss any associated costs:

**call 0300 003 7007**  
or email [enquiries@glh.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@glh.org.uk)

# Ben's story



**“Everything is just right for everyone.”**

Viv and Rik,  
Ben's parents

Friends Ben, Jenna, Rupert and John live in Cornwall and are supported by Mencap. Using Golden Lane Housing's 2014 Retail Charity Bond their home has been bought and specially adapted.

Viv and Rik, Ben's parents explain how the move has benefited him. “We thought moving in was going to be a slow transition for Ben,” says Viv and Rik. “It was absolutely amazing, and we found out we were wrong! Ben's bedroom is the converted garage. He'd chosen the colour blue for his walls and the room is just the right size for him, it's got a real feel of a lad's den. He's a huge Doctor Who fan, there's a poster above his bed, and he's got the bedding and lamp shade.

When they'd finished decorating his room, we started to buy a few pieces of furniture and put things in it, bit by bit. The smaller shelving unit is where he keeps all his books and the taller one is for his DVDs. He loves his music and has a player on the bed side table. Ben was helping to move all his things in so he could get used to his surrounds.

Some of the others had already moved into the bungalow. To help Ben settle in he had tea with them, and then came back to our house, we don't live far away. The following Tuesday he went back. We thought he was only going to stay for a couple of hours, but that was that, he'd moved in! He didn't want to come back to our house and he's never stayed since. We were quite surprised, but in a good way. We thought it was going to take a long time to get used to his new home. Ben has Down's syndrome and likes having a set

routine and a structure. We think he made the decision to move in after having tea with everyone and would have stayed that night. Having his own place has really empowered him to make choices, we've really seen him develop and grow in a short space of time. For a while, we wondered if he was going to change his mind, but it's been quite the opposite.

We see Ben every week. When he comes to our house, he lets us know when it's time for him to go home. And, if we're round at his house, he's happy to wave us off. He really does see this as home.

Ben gets on well with everyone. There's a good Mencap staff team, who have got to know what they need and when. Ben likes to have time on his own, especially if his routine has changed. Having the option to spend time in his bedroom or in another room on his own is really important. It helps him to relax, process what's happened and then he's fine. Everyone gives each other that time and space as well as having fun.

The amount of work that Mencap put in, alongside Ben's social worker helped to make the transition for Ben very successful, we are delighted. Everything is just right for everyone. It's a beautiful bungalow with a huge garden, and we can see why they enjoy living here so much.”

**To contact Golden Lane Housing: call 0300 003 7007**

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