



Thurrock Council Supported Housing Strategy: 2025 to 2035



Introduction

Over recent years, with the demise of the supporting people programme, Thurrock Council, like many other local authorities, has developed its supported housing and services in an ad-hoc manner

Whilst there have been some innovative schemes developed, there has been little consistency or overarching strategic direction

In early 2024 a review was undertaken of Thurrock's supported housing for people with learning disabilities, autism and mental ill health

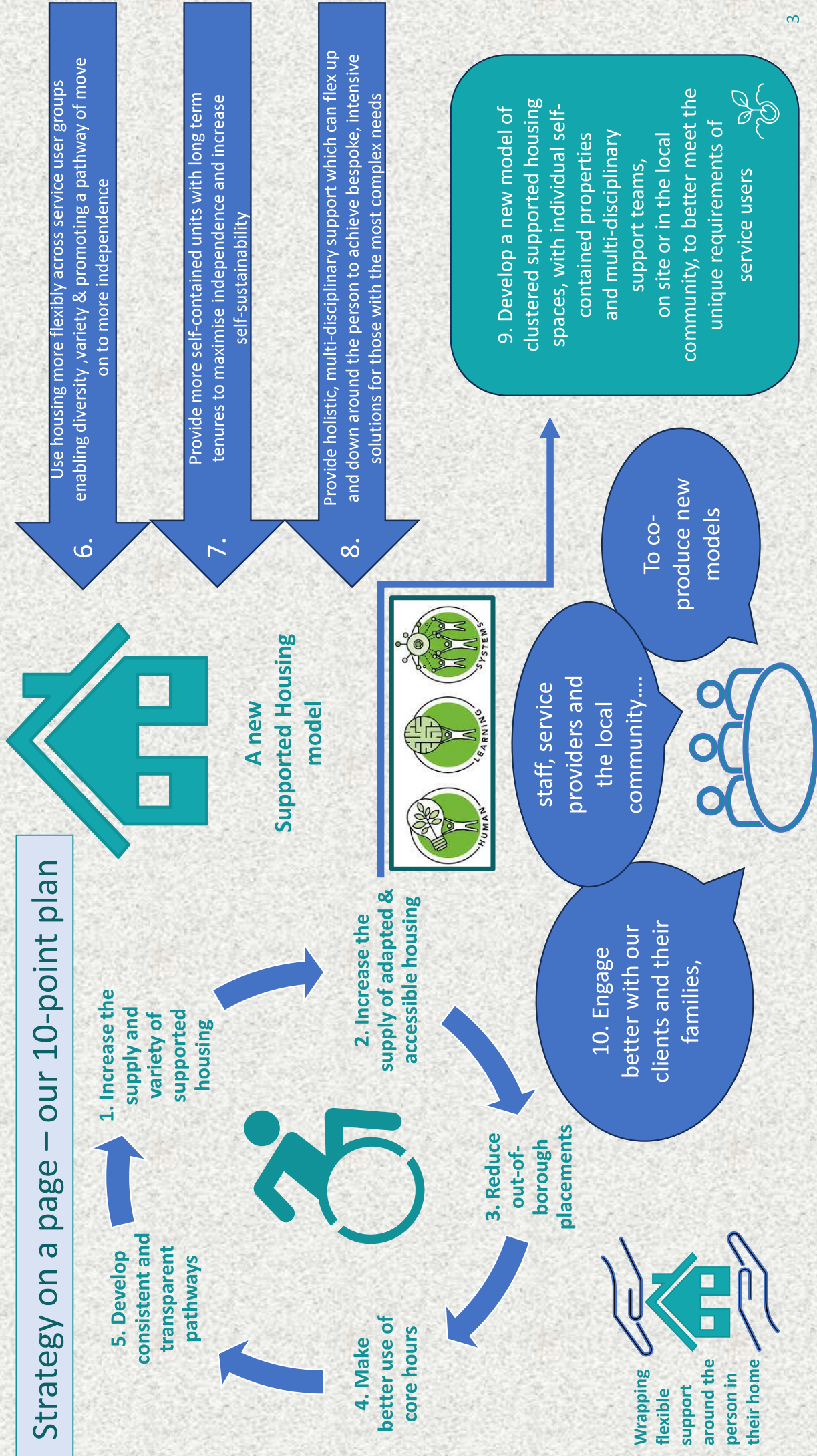
The results can be found in the document

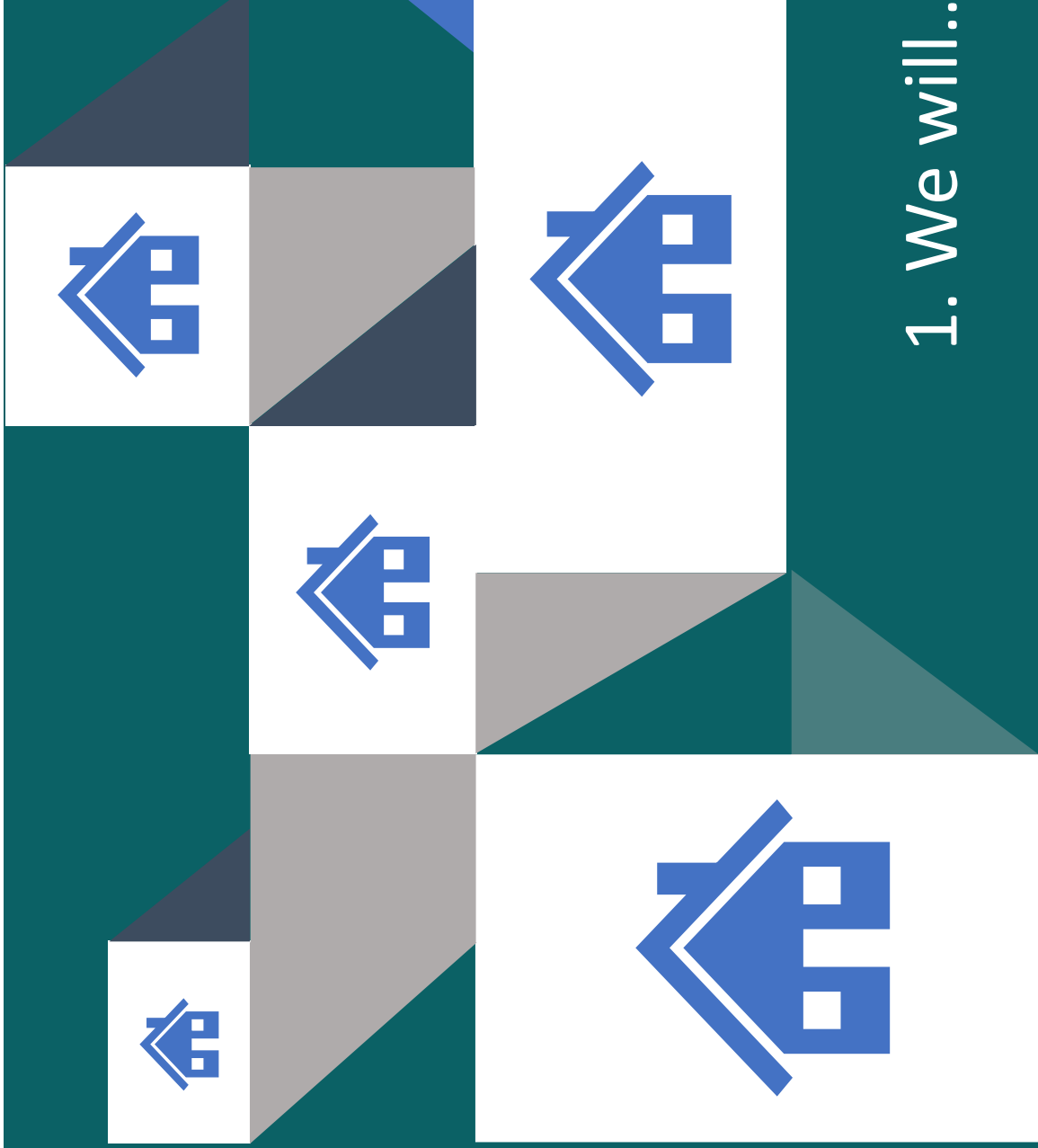
“Supported Housing Review April to July 2024” and this strategy is based on the information provided

As a result, this high-level strategy outlines plans to develop a new model of supported housing for these client groups. This is broken down into 10 “we will” statements with key areas identified simply through our “strategy on a page”

This strategy will build on the human learning systems approach through experimenting, learning and developing bespoke solutions

Strategy on a page – our 10-point plan





1. We will...

Increase our provision of supported housing, for people living with a learning disability, autism and/or mental ill health, by sixteen spaces each year

This will include a variety of housing and tenure types to meet the individual and unique needs of each of our service users

It will include providers who can support a diverse range of needs, but also those who can deliver very specialised support

This is because...

Our research indicates Thurrock will need an extra 258 supported housing spaces by the year 2040 – an average of 16 per year (around 10% of current provision)

The general population in Thurrock is growing by around 10% each year, with a predicted corresponding increase in those needing supported housing

The number of children with special educational needs living in the borough has increased by 37% since 2015, and the number of special needs schools has also increased

Fortunately, less people with a learning disability are dying from avoidable illnesses due to more preventative health measures such as better diet, increased awareness and regular health monitoring

Research shows that informal carers of people with a learning disability are getting older as their adult children are living longer; in time they may become less able to look after adult children with support needs



2. We will...

Increase the supply of housing that is adaptable, accessible and suitable for people with specific disabilities

– for example, for people using wheelchairs or other mobility aids, and people who need carefully designed housing to help manage neurodiversity



This is because...

Wheelchair accessible supported housing in Thurrock is very limited, meaning choice over the type of housing and where it is situated is equally limited

The need for housing to facilitate larger and more specialised wheelchairs has increased, as equipment develops to meet more individualised need

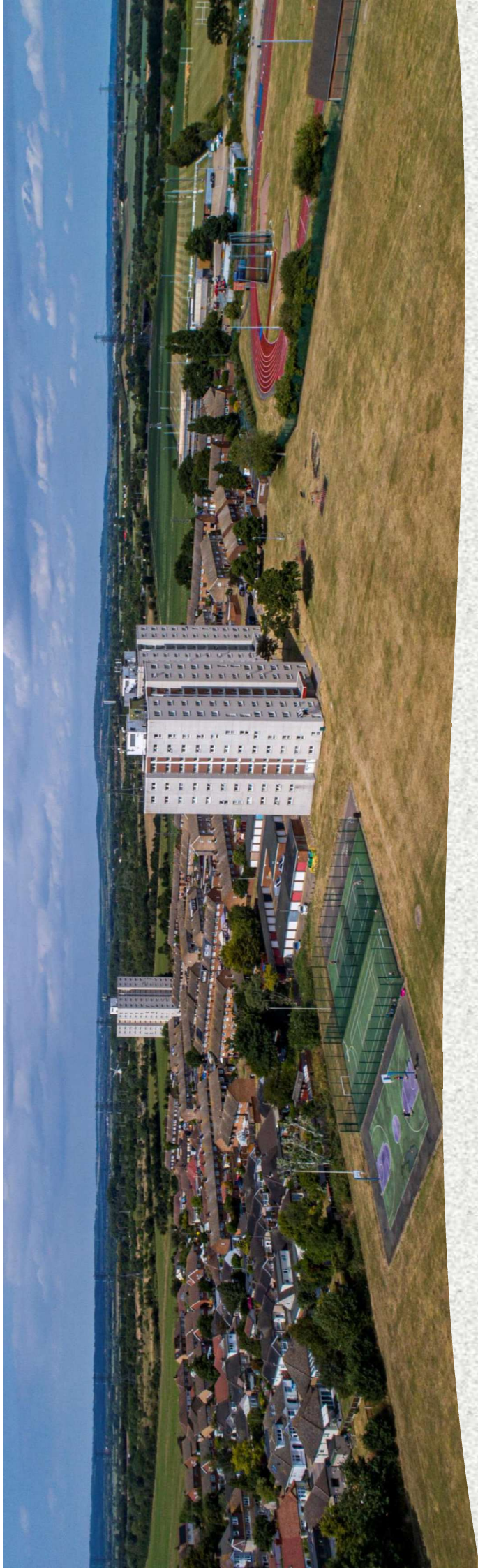
Moving out of borough to access suitable housing can impact people adversely, as they lose links with families, friends and communities



The need to avoid leaving housing empty, as providers wait for a suitable applicant, can result in wheelchair accessible properties being used inappropriately (i.e. for those without need)



We have an increased and better understanding of the design requirements which support those who are neuro-divergent (e.g. living with autism or ADHD). This includes using better insulation to reduce sound, less straight lines and more appropriate colours and textures to help manage sensory stimulation



3. We will...

Reduce the number of people moving to out-of-borough placements year on year, ensuring extra housing and support providers are made available within Thurrock

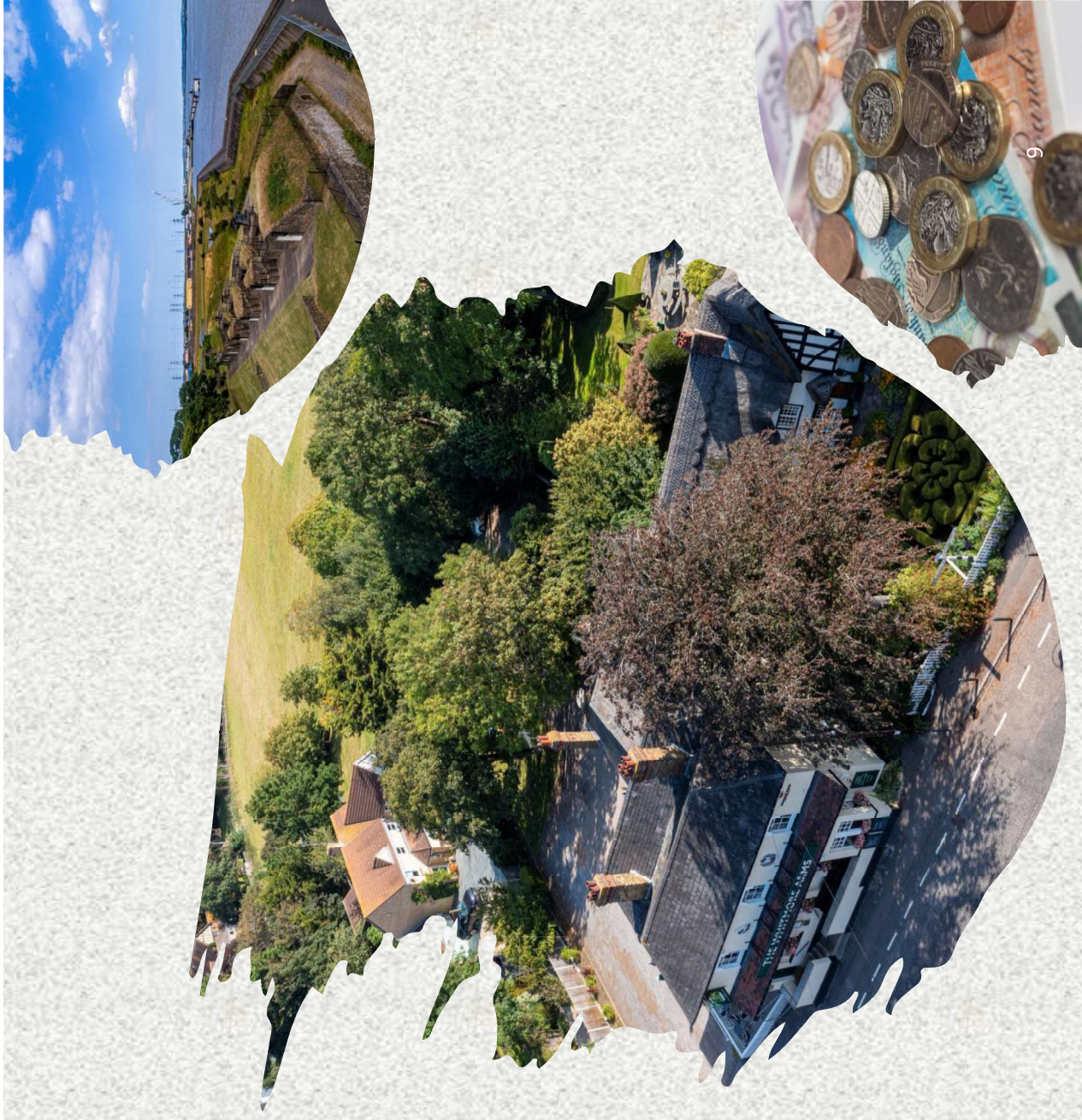
This is because...

50% of our highest cost placements are outside of the borough, meaning people cannot remain close to their families, friends and communities

We want to spend the “Thurrock pound” in Thurrock, providing more jobs in the borough and increasing the prosperity of Thurrock residents

This will help to achieve our corporate priority of:

“a strong and well-connected place that enables our borough, its diverse communities and businesses, to thrive and grow”





4. We will...

Make better use of core hours to
reduce 1:1 hours where not
necessary

Develop more clustered housing with
shared onsite teams to increase
shared core hours



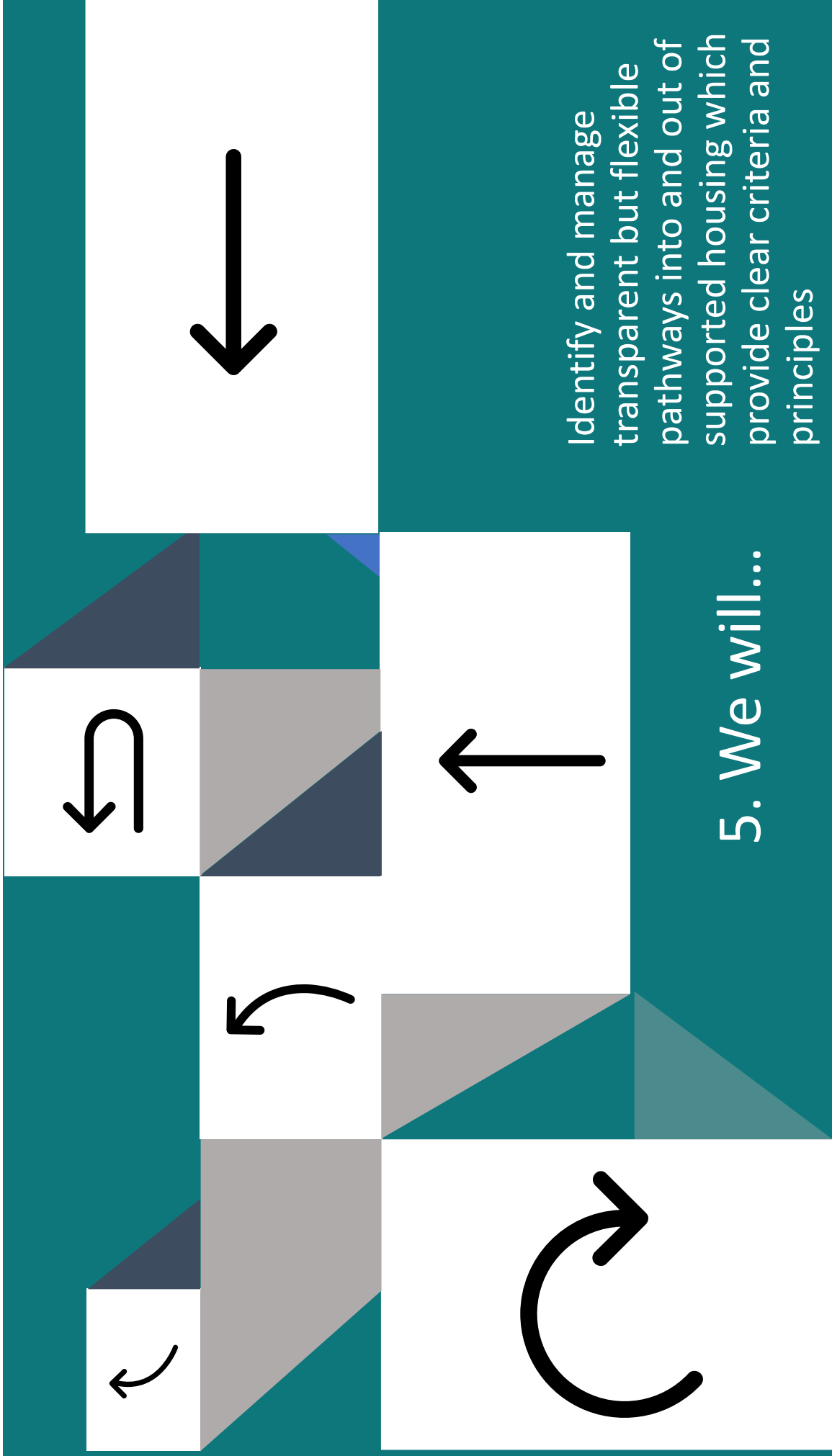
This is because....



1:1 hours are more expensive to the Council and may not always be necessary where core hours can be shared and utilised instead

This gives more clarity for providers and reduces the need for spot purchasing, enabling a framework approach to be used if deemed more suitable

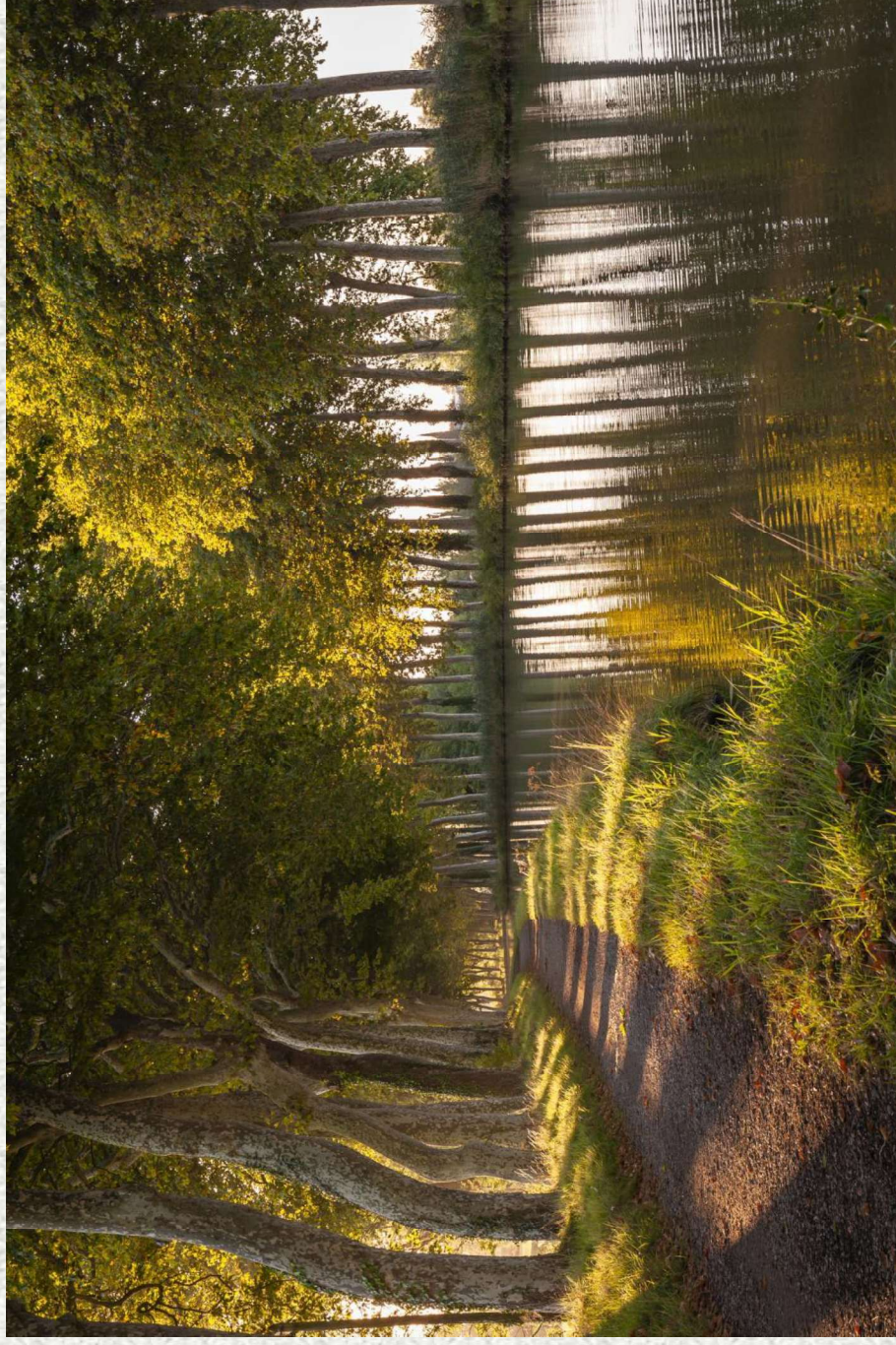
It also enables people to carry out activities together promoting community and greater independence



This is because...

Engagement with service users, families, providers and staff indicated confusion and misunderstanding around the routes into, through and out of supported housing

Pathways needs to be consistent and transparent to all, enabling people to better plan and manage their own futures and aspirations



6. We will...

Make housing more flexible
across service user groups,
rather than stipulating it is for
people with specific diagnoses
e.g. mental health or learning
disability

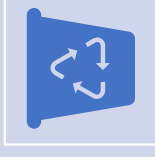


This is because...

Most people fit into more than one category of disability and some people have very complex needs

The issue of dual diagnosis (mental health and alcohol / substance abuse) is quite common, but available support is very limited

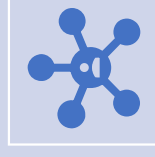
There cannot be a “one size fits all” approach



This will ensure that properties can be used more productively and reduces the waste and cost of unnecessary voids



It make best use of staffing resources and enables support workers to develop a more generic knowledge around different disability groups



It encourages workers from different disciplines to learn from and support each other – building on the integrated locality model that promotes locality-based working



7. We will...

Provide more long-term tenures in our housing, with an increased number of self-contained units, ensuring clients can remain in their homes for longer

This will encourage more independence and stability with support flexing up and down around the person rather than the person having to move when their support needs change

It will also incentivise self-improvement and development as people are able to move on to more long-term housing options

This is because...

Our engagement showed there was a dis-incentive for people to develop and improve in their mental health, if it meant moving out of the housing they enjoyed and felt settled in

People don't always want to "move on" when they no longer need the same level of support – the support should change around the person, with the ability to flex up and down as appropriate when their needs change

This will enable people to build and integrate their lives into stable local communities, amongst family, friends and local groups

This approach builds on our integrated model of care, enabling and empowering people with their communities and encourages more self-sustainment and stability



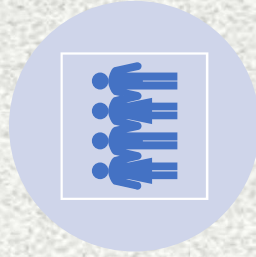
8. We will...

Provide holistic and multi-disciplinary support around the person...

... support which can flex up and down as need changes, with professionals from different disciplines working closely together to provide a consistent and person-centered approach



This is because...



We recognize that people are complex and unique – they do not fit into stereo-types, and their needs often change over time



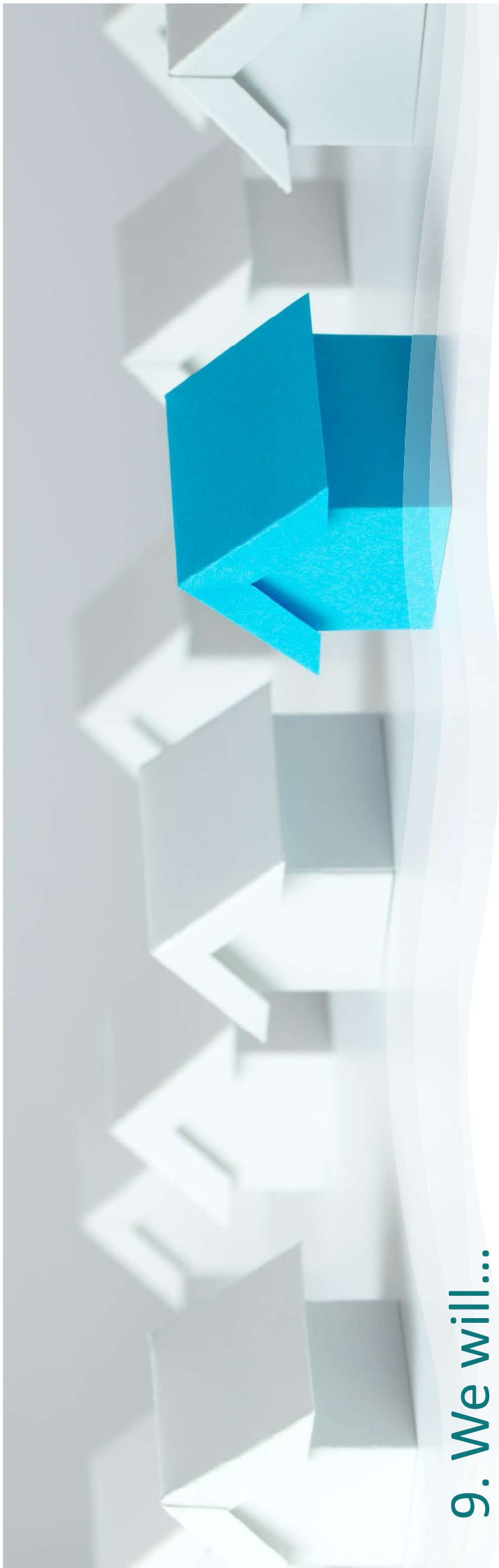
Experience has shown that multi-disciplinary teams, working around the person, provide joined up and targeted support that is timely, consistent and achieves better outcomes



Individualised and flexible support produces the best outcomes – this can be seen through the early results of the Complex Housing Intervention Programme (CHIP)



Drug and alcohol abuse often complicates existing disabilities, resulting in very complex needs. These can best be met through multi-disciplinary approaches that build up confidence through consistent working relationships



9. We will...

Develop a new model of clustered supported housing spaces with individual self-contained properties and multi-disciplinary support teams, either on site or based in the local community

This is because...

This model addresses many of the issues raised in the review:

- Self-contained housing with long term tenure
- With a multi-disciplinary support team that is based on site or in the local area
- Providing complex but flexible support to a wide range of people
- Reactive to the needs of the person – flexing to support the person in their current home instead of having to move

10. We will...

Engage better with our clients, their families, staff, service providers and the local community





This is because...

People with lived experience – both living with conditions as service users and people supporting them, (family, friends, providers and staff) - have the greatest understanding of how needs can best be met

This will encourage diversity and person-centred solutions – not a “one size fits all” response - which aligns with our Human Learning Systems approach



Next Steps...

- We will develop an action plan around our ten objectives
- We will develop project groups to further research and mobilise the actions
- The project groups will include
 - Service users
 - Their friends and families
 - Our providers
 - Our staff
 - Local community groups

