



City of
Stoke-on-Trent



Independent Living Strategy (Plan) 2025 - 2033

Easy Read



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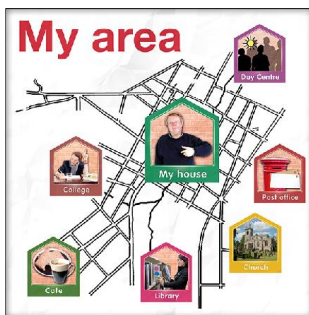
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Foreword by Councillor Duncan Walker (Cabinet Member for Adult Services)



In today's fast-changing world, **independent living** is more important than ever.

This plan shows our commitment to helping everyone in Stoke-on-Trent live good, independent lives.



Independent living means more than just having a home. It is about being free to make choices, be part of the community and achieve personal goals.



This plan is about becoming a city where everyone is equal and treated with dignity and respect.

It is about everyone getting the personalised support they need to live good, independent lives.



By working together with local authorities, healthcare services, community organisations, and individuals, we want to build a strong network of support.



This plan is not just a document; it's a call to action, encouraging us to think creatively, act with compassion, and work hard to remove barriers to independence.



We thank everyone who has shared their ideas with us. Your help and your experiences drive our shared vision of making independent living a reality for everyone.

Introduction - about this plan



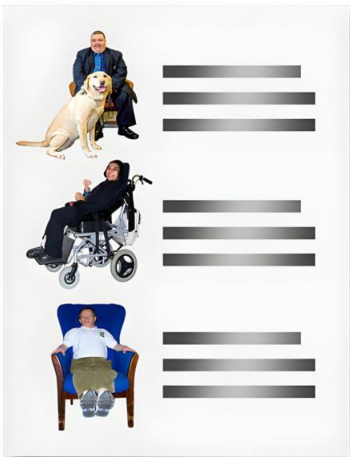
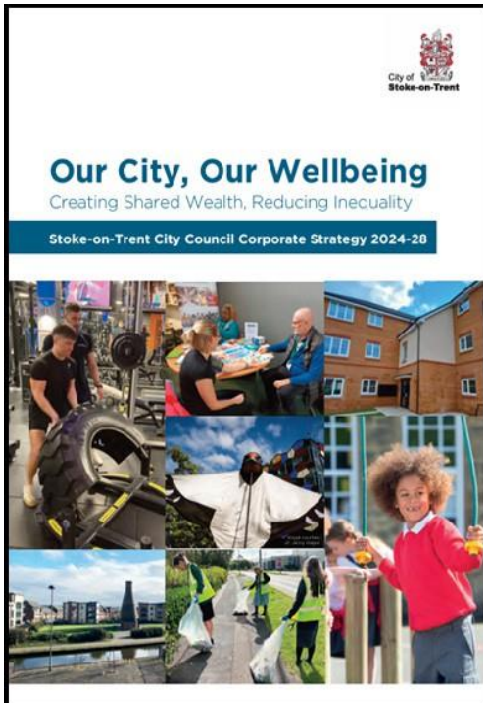
This **Independent Living Plan** focuses on adults over 18, including young adults transitioning to adulthood in Stoke-on-Trent.



This plan was written with ideas from different groups of people in Stoke-on-Trent who took part in events and meetings and answered questions in surveys.

Introduction - about this plan

This Independent Living plan fits with our big plan for everyone in Stoke-on-Trent, **Our City, Our Wellbeing**.



Our City, Our Wellbeing has 7 big ideas:

1. Healthier – improving health for everyone in the city.
2. Wealthier – less poverty and more shared prosperity (wealth).
3. Safer – creating safe, empowered communities.
4. Greener – looking after our environment.
5. Cleaner – keeping our city and communities clean.
6. Fairer – better opportunities for all.
7. Skilled – more education and skills.

Introduction - about this plan



This **Independent Living Plan** is for the staff, partnerships, organisations and people living in Stoke-on-Trent.

It also tells everyone about our goals so they can check to see how things are working and changing.



This plan is about people getting the right support for independent living, based on the big ideas of the **Care Act 2014**. These are:

- promoting wellbeing
- preventing care needs
- providing information
- social care and health services working together
- promoting fairness and equality.

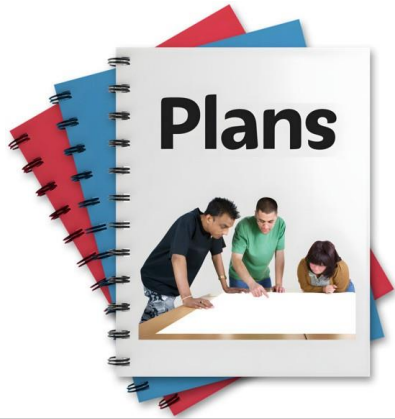


This plan aims for people to either not need services or only need them later by giving them the resources, information, and advice to help them live independently.



This plan is about working with, and listening to people in the community to help them live the life they want to.

Introduction - about this plan



This plan aims to support all adults in the city to live more independent lives.



To support more and more people, we need to work with partners to promote independence from services.



Supporting people in this way means giving them information, advice and support at an early stage before problems get bigger.



This plan is about offering choice, control, and support for people to live independently, with the right services at the right time, providing quality, person-centred care.

Background Information



There are nearly 260,000 people living in Stoke-on-Trent. The number of people living in the city is higher now than it was in the past.



Stoke-on-Trent is one of the poorest cities in the UK. It also has higher numbers of people living with health problems than lots of other areas.



Over the next few years, we think there will be more people needing services and support because of their age, disabilities and/or health problems.



This plan is about how we make sure people can get support to help them live happy, independent lives in Stoke-on-Trent.

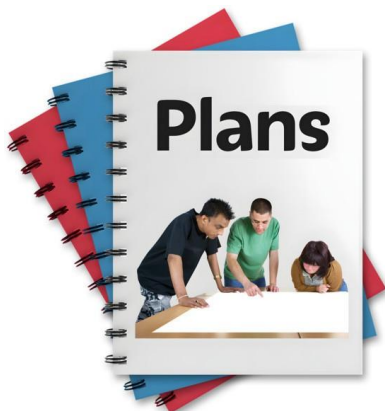
Engagement and Co-production



To write this plan, we spoke to people to get their views first. We went to community lounges, social groups, and carers groups and shared surveys for people to answer.



We also shared surveys with people who have home care, live in supported living or extra care housing and the voluntary sector (charities and community groups).



This plan is to make sure things are getting better and people have more choice and control of their own lives.



The **implementation plan** (how and when we will do things) will be made in partnership with the people of Stoke-on-Trent, healthcare services and other organisations we work with.

Priority 1 - Improving the Local Community



People told us they want to afford to go out, live a normal life, meet friends, join social groups, volunteer or work, and receive training.

They also want to live comfortably at home with support when needed.



Stoke-on-Trent is known for its strong community spirit. We aim to promote supportive communities where people are proud to live.



We have community social work teams and **community lounges** and we plan to introduce a new community care framework to improve local knowledge and partnerships.



There are 18 community lounges offering advice and support. They are open to everyone and are supported by Locality Connectors who help join partners and services together.

Priority 1 - Improving the Local Community



The **Communities Together** idea is for communities where people feel they belong. This is part of the national Community Led Support program, linking health, community, and social care systems together.



Stoke-on-Trent has lots of people who are out of work, affected by welfare reforms, fuel poverty, debt and/or using food banks.



Our Income and Advice Team helps council tenants (people who live in council housing) with budgeting their money and claiming benefits.



We have staff in some community lounges to help people return to work and our Workforce Development Team supports adults who want to learn new skills or retrain for work.

Priority 1 - Improving the Local Community



You can find out more about the community lounges and the support they offer at the Communities Together website.

www.communities-together.co.uk



The Voluntary, Community Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) is important in supporting people and dealing with problems so they don't need care services. There are lots of VCSE organisations supporting people.



A volunteering program is being set up with Voluntary Action Stoke-on-Trent (VAST).



There are nearly 1,800 registered unpaid carers in Stoke-on-Trent, but many more people care for family, friends and loved ones.

We aim to support these carers by offering information, flexibility and breaks.

Priority 1 - Improving the Local Community



The Carers Portal website has information and support, and we pay organisations to give care and support to unpaid carers.



We have new bus routes and a low-cost ticket to help people get around the city and be independent.

Our transport strategy supports access to services and promotes physical health and wellbeing.



Our vision is to work with lots of people and organisations to create a safer, stronger city with less crime, disorder, and substance misuse (drugs, alcohol).



It is very important that we make 'early interventions' (offering support before problems get worse) and work closely with the VCSE (Voluntary, Community Social Enterprise Sector).

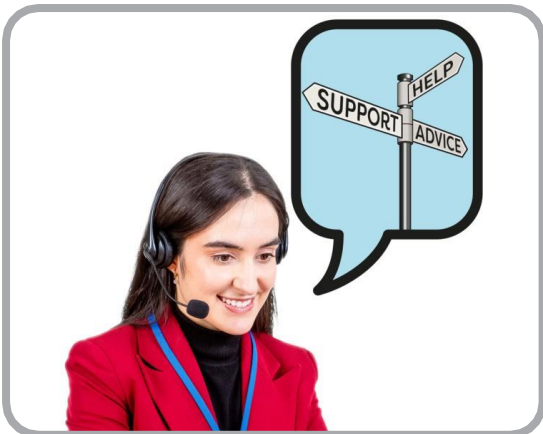
Priority 2 - Proactive, Early Support



Being proactive means working to stop problems from happening instead of waiting to deal with them afterwards.



People told us they want to do things for themselves, with the right support, equipment and technology.



Our Front Door team (the staff you speak to when you contact us) are there to give information about the right support for you. They also work with our specialist teams to support people with bigger, or long-term needs.



Our updated website is user friendly and includes self-assessment tools, an app library, and sections for residents, carers, and professionals to find information, help and support.

Priority 2 - Proactive, Early Support



Our telecare (telephone) services support about 4,000 adults in the community and our falls response service helps people stay in their own homes and not have to go into hospital.



Our Sensory Service supports people with sight and/or hearing loss and our Disabled Facilities Grants help people stay in their homes longer by paying towards adaptations like ramps, stairlifts and walk-in showers.



We use lots of different apps and digital technology to support people in their own homes and we help people learn how to use them.



The Better Care Fund supports health and care services working together to keep people well and make sure they get the right care at the right time, at home instead of having to go into hospital.

Priority 2 - Proactive, Early Support



Home First is about people getting support at home instead of in hospital or getting out of hospital faster to recover at home.

Our **enablement service** gives short-term support at home to help adults with their independence.



In the last year (2024–25), 31% or about 1 of every 3 people who completed the service needed no ongoing care. The service sets personalised goals and works with adults to reach them.

Priority 3 - Keeping Healthy and Well



People told us they value good health, having control over health decisions, staying active, and maintaining good mental health.

Feeling mentally stable helps them make better decisions and feel capable of independence.



Our **Live Life to the Max** campaign is a partnership between us, health and social care providers, and other partners to help people live healthier, more independent lives.

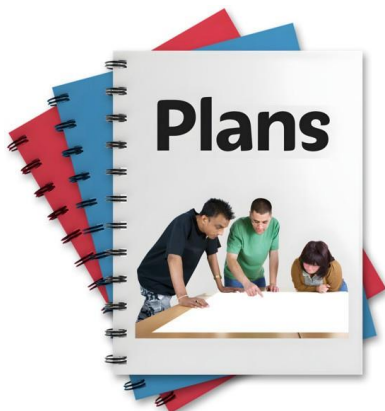
Priority 3 - Keeping Healthy and Well



Live Life to the Max is about sharing information on digital technology, telephone support services, community lounges, support from local healthcare staff and apps for health, fitness and wellbeing.



Social Prescribers link people with community support and services. They can help with lifestyle changes (like weight loss), staying independent, managing health conditions, finding work, dealing with money problems and loneliness.



Local health service providers and commissioners like North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust and the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (ICB) have their own plans and projects about independence and keeping healthy and well.



Experts by experience are people who understand their own needs, and the needs of people like them. They are getting more chances to share their thoughts and ideas about how health services work.

Priority 3 - Keeping Healthy and Well



We are part of the **Mental Health Prevention Concordat**. This is an agreement for local and national health and social care services, and partners to work together to make sure mental health services are working well.



Groups and organisations in the city help beat isolation and promote good mental health, offering support, social opportunities, and information on issues like healthy living and benefits.



The **Active You** programme supports healthy ageing with activities like the Falls Management Exercise Programme, which helps older adults with their strength and balance.



Other programmes include stopping smoking, losing weight, exercise for people with Parkinson's, substance misuse (drugs and alcohol) recovery, and for people with heart problems.

Priority 4 - Choice and Control



People told us they value having their voice heard, making daily decisions, having freedom and dignity, and being in full control of their own lives.



Direct payments give people more choice and control over their care.

We aim to increase the number of people using direct payments through awareness campaigns and making them easier to manage.



Micro-providers are people that offer personalised care and support. We plan to have more of these offering people more choice about the care and support they get.



The law says local authorities have to involve people in decisions about their care. If someone can't do this without support, they can get an **independent advocate**. In the last year (2024–25), we referred nearly 1,200 adults for advocacy support.

Priority 4 - Choice and Control



Supported Living offers care for adults with mental illness, learning disabilities, autism or physical disabilities. In Supported living, people have their own flat or room where staff can give them help and support.



Our **Translation and Interpretation Service** helps us communicate across languages and cultures. It includes translators for and interpreters in over 30 different languages for forms, information and in meetings and assessments.

Priority 5 - the Right Home



People told us they want affordable housing, access to information, services and support, having people around them, and being able to live independently.



We aim to help people live in their own homes for as long as possible using technology, equipment, supportive communities, and flexible care. We support about 1,300 people with home care.

Priority 5 - the Right Home



The **Housing Strategy 2022-27** focuses on more home ownership for people, helping with their wellbeing and independence.

Waiting List



There are fewer social (council) houses now than in the past, leading to a long waiting list.

We aim to offer the right housing to support long-term independence, including for older and disabled people.



There are more homeless people since the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many rough sleepers have lots of needs, making it hard to find placements. This often leads to bad placements and people being homeless again.



The **Supported Housing Improvement Programme** aims to improve housing standards and support for people in supported living.

Priority 5 - the Right Home



We are working with an expert provider of **HOLD** (Home Ownership for people with Long-term Disabilities) which helps people buy their own homes. Together, we are looking at this idea for Stoke-on-Trent.



We have over 800 **extra care** apartments across the city, mostly for people aged over 55, all with a care team onsite 24 hours a day to support adults that need it.



Did you know?

The adult staying with you on a long-term basis will pay you board, Lodgings and a room rent, alongside an allowance from Stoke-on-Trent City Council for the care & support you provide.

SharedLives
Stoke-on-Trent

Shared Lives Stoke offers an alternative for adults with learning disabilities to live with approved carers in a family setting.



There are over 80 **residential and nursing homes** in the city, providing care for just over 1,400 people.

We aim to keep people in their homes but high quality care homes are still needed by some people.

Key Objectives



To help people be independent, we will:

- offer early information and support so fewer people need to use care services.
- offer reablement support early to more people.
- use new technology, aids, and adaptations for people's homes
- have new training, employment, and volunteering opportunities
- support carers to stop 'burnout'
- work with partners and listen to people with lived experience
- build stronger communities by working with private, voluntary, and health sectors
- have more choice and control through person-centered working and more direct payments
- focus on care at home and when returning home from hospital
- raise awareness of mental health self-help for people
- offer more housing options to help people stay in their communities
- review and check how we work on homelessness and rough sleeping.

Opportunities and Risks



This independent living plan covers a wide area and involves many city council departments.

Each priority will be managed by a dedicated delivery group of people responsible for completing tasks and achieving goals.



These groups will report to other boards and meetings. A Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) will oversee the plan to organise and share information about how things are working.

Checking on this Plan



To check on this plan we will:

- look at services to see if they are helping people be independent
- look at outcomes like fewer hospital admissions and improved health
- use surveys to find out if people are happy with services and their quality of life
- have lots of ways to get regular feedback from people
- work with service providers to check positive outcomes.

Checking on this Plan



The **Independent Living Strategy Delivery Group** will manage and check our priorities and plans.

Our task and finish group includes various teams like adult social work, housing, public health, and the Integrated Care Board (ICB).



We also have an external group with voluntary sector organisations, providers, and a health and social care champion.



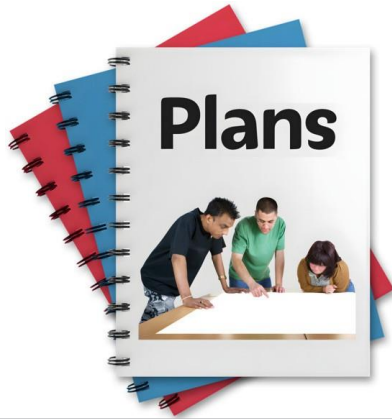
Our delivery groups will focus on specific areas and include council staff and external partners.

They will work through each priority and check progress to ensure we stay on track.



The main board will oversee the priorities, while the delivery group will manage improvements in services and ways of working.

Next Steps



We will work on and write a co-produced **implementation plan** with detailed actions for making this plan happen.



This implementation plan will be based on checking information, engagement with the people of Stoke-on-Trent, and feedback from partners.

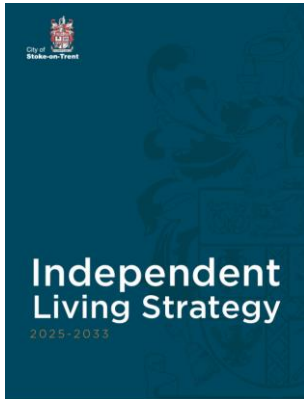


It will be updated and will include thoughts and ideas from experts by experience.



We will measure our success by looking at key information linked to each priority and outcome. This will help us understand how our decisions are changing people's lives.

Contacts, Credits and Information



This Easy Read summary is based on the full Stoke-on-Trent City Council Independent Living Strategy 2025–2033.

The full strategy has lots more information, facts and numbers about independent living.



This Easy Read summary was created by Asist (Advocacy Services in Staffordshire) in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

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www.asist.co.uk



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