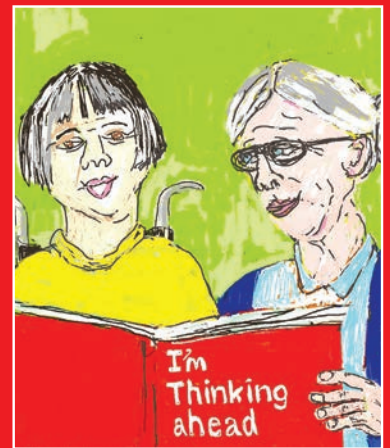


I'm Thinking Ahead



Written by
Christine Towers

TOGETHER
MATTERS



foundation for
people with
learning disabilities

Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who has been part of creating “I’m Thinking Ahead” including:

- Talking Links Self Advocacy Network facilitated by Cloverleaf Advocacy;
- Danny Miles, Essex County Council;
- Katy, Mike and Wendy Bessent;
- Kirsty and Mary McDonald;
- Nick Sims;
- Polly, Beth and Robin Mallett; and
- Kristina Blagojevitch for editing

The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities would also like to thank the funders of “I’m Thinking Ahead”:

The Bailey Thomas Charitable Fund;

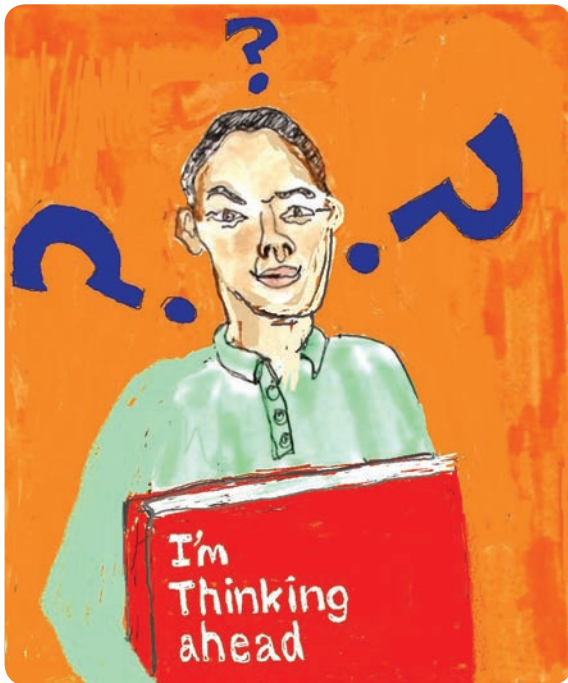
The Rayne Foundation; and

the estate of Patricia Cullen

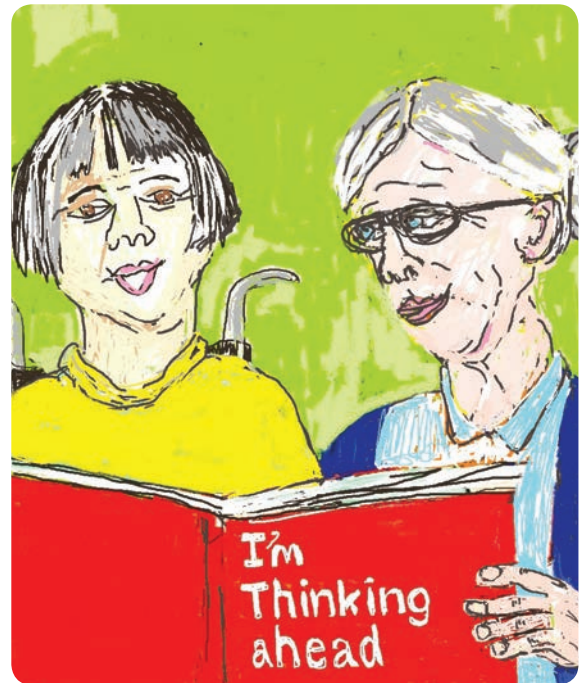
For further information about “I’m Thinking Ahead” please contact christine@togethertomatters.org.uk or info@learningdisabilities.org.uk

This guide is also available as a rewriteable PDF (you can download, fill in and save for future reference and updating) from www.togethertomatters.org.uk/resources-and-information

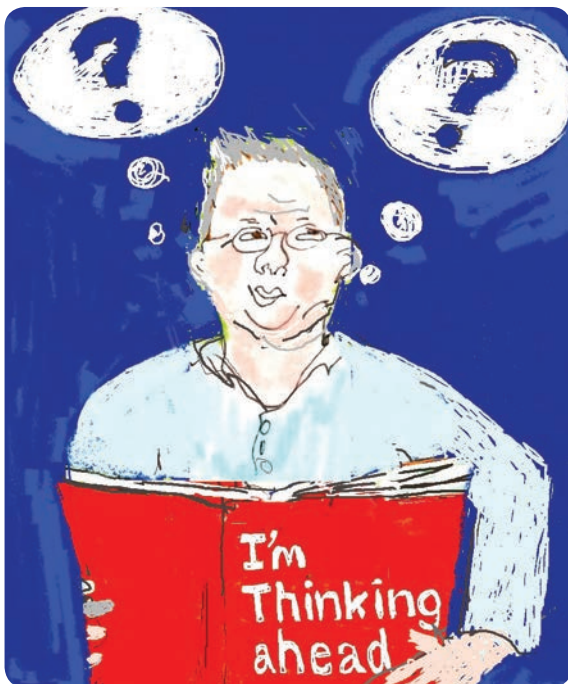
What's in “I’m Thinking Ahead”?



**All about “I’m
Thinking Ahead”**
Page 1



How to plan
Page 8



How to make choices
Page 20



**How to get the right
housing and support**
Page 34

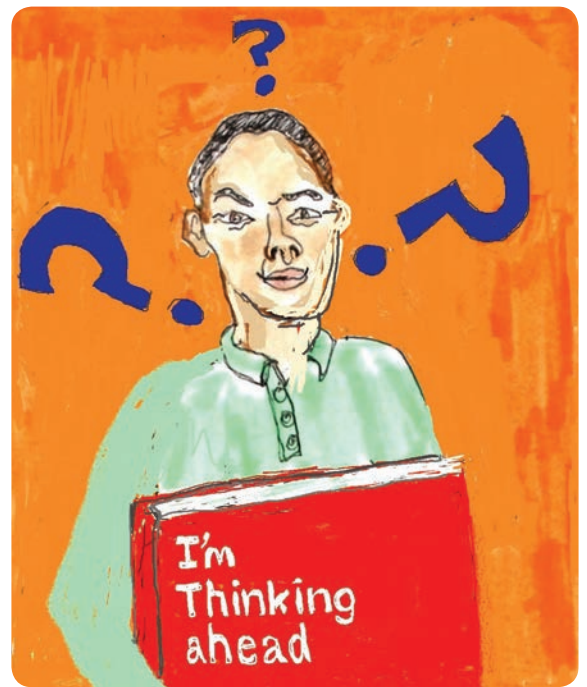
BIG **words**

Page 50: What words mean



Page 51: Ideas for using “I’m Thinking Ahead”

All about “I’m Thinking Ahead”





This is a book for people with learning disabilities to help them think about the future.



A few years ago we wrote a book called "Thinking Ahead" for their parents and other family members.



It was to help them think ahead about the future and plan with their son or daughter.



The idea was that families should be talking together a lot more about the future.



If families don't make plans together then someone else might.



That person might not know how to make a good plan.



Parents have found the book helpful.



People with learning disabilities have said they would like their own book. So here it is...

Why you might use this book



“I want to know what choices I have – I think it would be helpful to think about this with my friends and family.”



“I am leaving college next year and want to live with my friends but don’t know how to make this happen.”

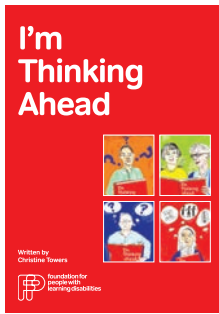


“I want to make changes in my life but my family does not talk to me about this.”



“I am worried as my mum and dad help me out but they are getting old and now need help themselves.”

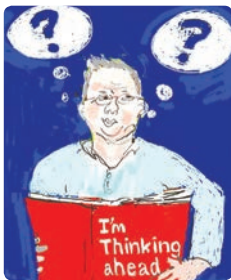
How to use “I’m Thinking Ahead”



There are 3 parts to “I’m Thinking Ahead”:



How to plan
(go to page 7)



How to make choices
(go to page 19)



How to get the right housing and support
(go to page 33)



You can start with the part that is most useful to you.



There are some ideas for people helping you to use this book on page 51.

Who could help you use this book?



You may want to look at this book with your family.



You may not have family you can plan with. Or you may choose to plan with other people.

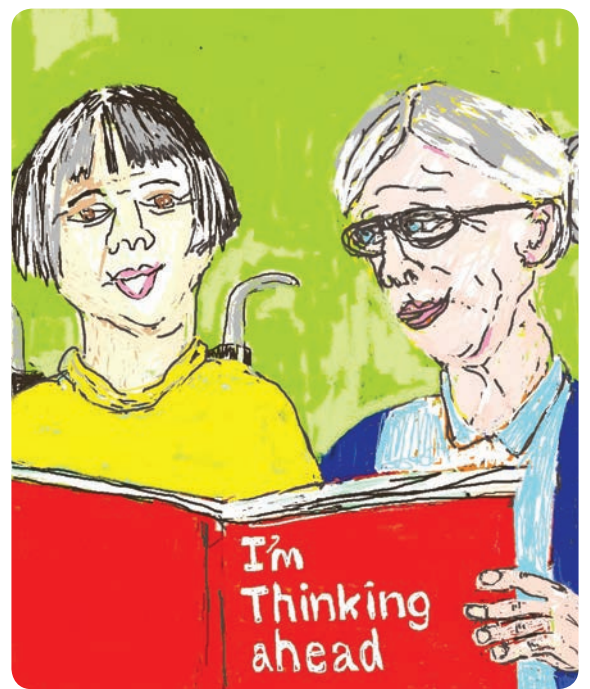


You may choose to plan with friends, with a speak-up group or an advocate.



You may choose to plan with people who are paid to support you.

How to plan



What is planning?



Planning helps you think about what you want to happen in your life.



To make a plan it helps to think about:

- what you like
- what you need
- what you want to happen in the future



Planning works best when you plan with people you like and trust.



This might be your:

- family
- friends
- neighbours



Or it might be:

- a speak-up group or an advocate
- a person who is paid to support you



Planning in this way is often called person-centred planning.

Starting to plan



On the next few pages there are some things to think about that can help you make a good plan.



Think about what you need to have a good life.
(go to page 10)



Think about what you need to keep safe and well.
(go to page 12)



Think about what you hope and wish for in the future.
(go to page 14)



More ideas to help you plan
(go to page 16)



Everyone's plan will be different. It is likely to change as your life changes.



Think about what you need to have a good life



These are things that:

- you enjoy
- make you feel good about yourself
- make you feel good about your life



James thought about what he needs to have a good life.

This is what he said...



 Very Important	 Important
 <p>Meeting up with my friends</p>	 <p>Having nice clothes and keeping them tidy</p>
 <p>Taking my dog for a walk</p>	 <p>Going on holiday to somewhere warm in the winter</p>
 <p>My job where I make information easy read</p>	



Now think about what you need to have a good life. Write your ideas on the next page.



This is what I need to have a good life

 <p>Very important</p>	 <p>Important</p>



Think about what you need to keep safe and well



These are things that help you:

- feel safe at home
- feel safe when you are out and about
- stay healthy



Sayedra thought about what she needs to keep safe and well.

This is what she said...



 Very Important	 Important
 <p>Not eating nuts as I have an allergy</p>	 <p>Going companion cycling each week</p>
 <p>Having support from the community health team who understand my epilepsy</p>	 <p>Going swimming twice a week in a warm pool</p>
 <p>Door and window sensors so I know they are closed</p>	 <p>Eating a healthy breakfast and evening meal</p>



Now think about what you need to keep safe and well. Write your ideas on the next page.



This is what I need to keep safe and well

 <p>Very important</p>	 <p>Important</p>

Think about your hopes and wishes







This helps you think about what you would like to do in the future.



Sam thought about his hopes and wishes.

This is what he said...

 My hopes and wishes	Who will I ask to help me do this?
 <p>I would like to learn the route to go on the bus to visit my sister</p>	<p>Fiona (my sister)</p> <p>The travel buddy scheme</p>
 <p>I would like to join a speak-up group for older people</p>	<p>Tasha at Let's Speak Up</p>
 <p>I would like to move to a smaller flat (that is easy to look after) and I have my own garden</p>	<p>Rob at the Housing Association</p> <p>My friend Louise</p>



Now think about your hopes and wishes. Write your ideas on the next page.



My hopes and wishes for the future



**My hopes
and wishes**



**Who will I ask to
help me do this?**

More ideas to help you plan



These ideas will help other people to understand more about your life and help you plan.



You could write down:

- what makes a day go well for you



- what makes a day go badly for you



You could ask people who know you to help you write about important things that have happened in your life. This is called a life story. This will help other people understand about your life and get to know you.





Or you could use photographs to make your life story.



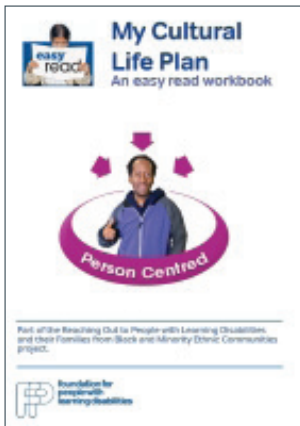
You could have a circle of support. This is a group of family, friends and other people who know you. They can help you plan.

Is there anything you want to start planning for now?

 <p>What I want to plan</p>	 <p>Who I would like to help me with this</p>

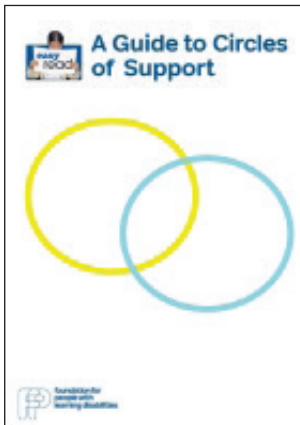


More information



My Cultural Life Plan

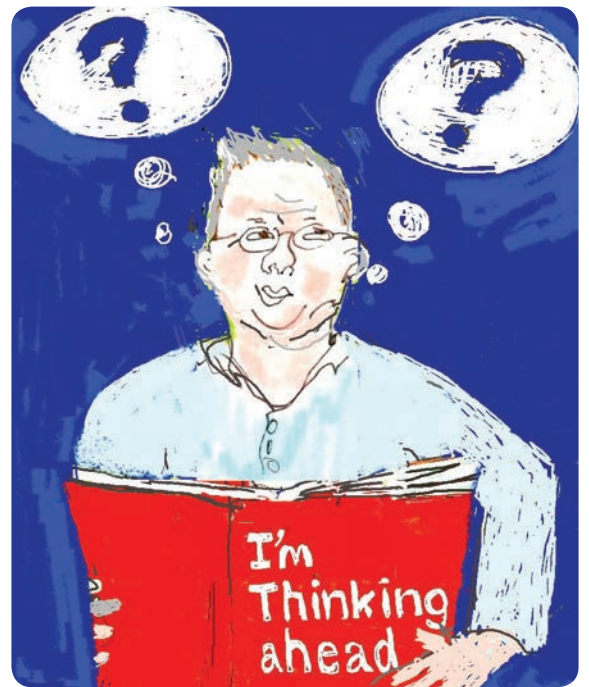
<http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/publications/my-cultural-life-plan/>



A Guide to Circles of Support

<http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/publications/guide-circles-of-support/>

How to make choices



Making choices in our lives



In our lives we make choices every day.



Making a choice means thinking about what we want to happen and what we don't want to happen.



It is not always possible to have what you choose but it's important to let people know your choice.



Making choices is the same as making decisions.



Think about what choices (decisions) you have made today.

Why is it helpful to make our own choices?



Sometimes it can be hard to make choices.



Sometimes we make choices to please other people rather than say what we want.



So it's good to practise. You can practise with choices you find easier. This may help when you have to make more difficult choices.



If you don't think about what YOU want and make choices, other people may make these choices for you.



Choosing things that you want and make you happy should help you have a good life.



It can also help you make plans for the future.

Some ideas to help you get started



We all make choices differently.



So on the next few pages there are questions to help you think about what works for you.



Question 1: What choices do you make in your life?
(go to pages 23-25)



Question 2: Who helps you to make choices?
(go to pages 26-27)



Question 3: Are there other people you could ask to help you make choices?
(go to page 28)



Question 4: What else could help you make choices, such as good information or photos?
(go to page 29)

Question 1. What choices do you make in your life?

	Choices I make	Choices I would like to make	What stops me making these?
Places I go			
Where I eat			
What I do with			
Who supports me			
Other			
Other			

The next two pages help you think about how much choice you have, and would like to have, in your life.



Think about what kind of choices you find:

- easy
- difficult



Think about what stops you making choices at the moment.




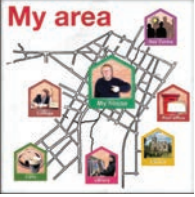



Think about what might help you get going and make it easier.



Make sure someone writes down the things you talk about.

The choices I make

	Choices I make	Choices I would like to make	What stops me making these?
What I wear 			
What I eat 			
My shopping 			
My money 			
My health 			
My friends 			

	Choices I make	Choices I would like to make	What stops me making these?
<p>Places I go</p> 			
<p>Where I live</p> 			
<p>Who I live with</p> 			
<p>Who supports me</p> 			
<p>Other</p>			
<p>Other</p>			

Question 2: Who helps you make choices?



It is sometimes a good idea to get help from people you trust when making a choice.



This might be your:

- family
- friends
- neighbours



Or it might be:

- a speak-up group or an advocate
- someone who is paid to support you



They could listen to your ideas.
They may have ideas that you would like to try out.







They may be able to help you get the information you need.






Use the next page to write about who helps you make choices.

People who help me make choices

<p>Name of person</p> 	<p>What kind of choices do they help me with?</p> 	<p>What's good about the way they help me make choices?</p> 	<p>What's not good about the way they help me make choices?</p> 

Question 3: Are there other people you could ask to help you make choices?

<p>Name</p> 	<p>What kind of choices could they help me with?</p> 	<p>How could they help me?</p> 

Question 4: What else could help you make choices?



Having information in the form you need it. This might be through:

- spoken words
- pictures and photos
- videos
- the internet
- or something else



Using an app on your phone or tablet.

Having prompts (things that help you choose) that you can use day to day. These might be:



- photos to look at
- objects to hold
- checklists



An example of a prompt: Susan found it hard to choose what to wear as she worried that her clothes might not match. She asked a friend to help her match up her clothes and take photos of her wearing them. Susan uses these photos as prompts to choose her clothes in the morning.



People you are with being good listeners. (On page 51 there is information about being an active listener).



Being given the time you need. Not being hurried!

What have you learnt about what helps you make choices?



1.

2.

3.

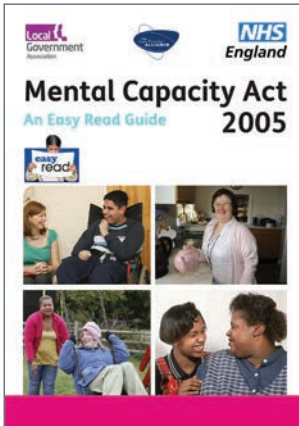
4.

What do you want to do next to help you with making choices?

 <p>What I want to do</p>	 <p>Who I would like to help me with this</p>



More information



Mental Capacity Act 2005: An Easy Read Guide

This guide helps you understand the law about people's rights when making choices (called decisions) or when other people make choices for them.

<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/12137/ntal+Capacity+Act+2005+easy+read+guide/38683f88-4b96-49d6-86ab-89b2404d2e7a>

How to get the right housing and support



Getting started with thinking about where you might live



It can feel a big thing to think about.
But don't worry.



Ask other people for help:

- family
- friends
- people who know you well

- an advocate or speak-up group
- people who support you
- Adult Social Care (such as a care manager).



It will take time.



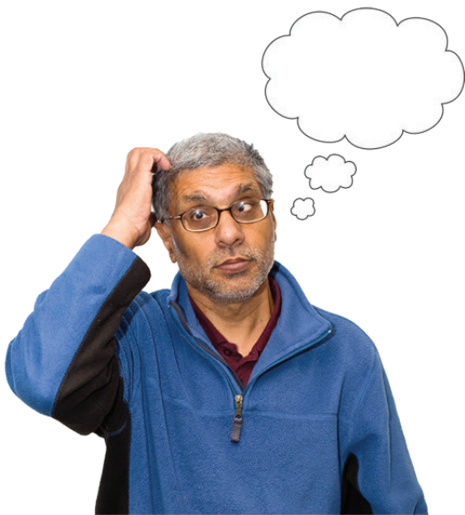
Be patient and you should find something that is right for you.



Try to answer the 3 BIG questions to get you started.

3 BIG questions

We have written **3 BIG questions** to help you start thinking about choosing somewhere to live:



Question 1

Who do you want to live with?

(go to page 36)



Question 2

Where do you want to live?

(go to page 37)



Question 3

What help would you need?

(go to page 43)



The next few pages help you think about these questions.

Question 1

Who do you want to live with?



On your own

Yes

No

Maybe



With a friend

Yes

No

Maybe



With a group of friends you know

Yes

No

Maybe



With people you would get to know

Yes

No

Maybe



With someone in your family

Yes

No

Maybe



A partner

Yes

No

Maybe



With someone who is paid to support you

Yes

No

Maybe



With a pet

Yes

No

Maybe

Anyone else?

Yes

Maybe

Question 2

Where do you want to live?



There are lots of things to think about.
It may help to answer 3 smaller questions.



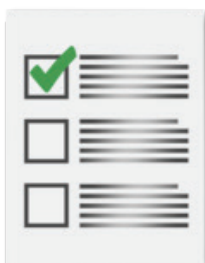
What does the house / flat need to be like?
(go to page 38)



Who do I want to live near?
(go to page 40)



What do I want to live near?
(go to page 41)



On the next 4 pages there are some ideas to help
you think about these 3 smaller questions.

What does the house/flat need to be like?



On the ground floor

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



Above the ground floor

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



Small and cosy

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



Lots of space

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



With a garden

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



No garden you have to look after

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



On a quiet road

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



On a busy road

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



With your own front door / street intercom

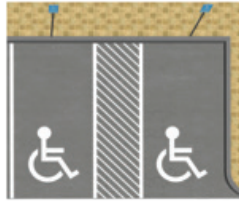
- Yes
- No
- Maybe

What does the house/flat need to be like?



No stairs or steps

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



Car parking space

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



Allowed to have a pet

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



No pets allowed

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Anyone else?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Who do you want to live near?



Your mother

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



Your father

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



A brother or sister

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



A grandparent

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



Friends

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



People who look out for you

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Anyone else?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

What do you want to live near?



A local shop

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



A street with lots of shops

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



A park or green space

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



Bus stops or a train station

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



Place of worship

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



A place to exercise

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



Somewhere to meet people, like a café

- Yes
- No
- Maybe





A health centre

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Anything else?

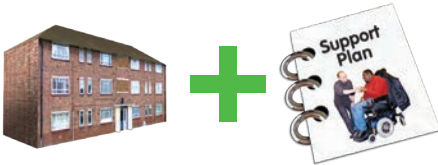
- Yes
- No
- Maybe

These are the most important things about where I want to live

 <p>Things I must have</p>	 <p>Things I would like to have</p>

Question 3

What help would you need?



It's good to also think about what help you need. Your housing and support need to work well together.



Good support will help you be happy and feel safe where you live.



Think about what you need help with.
(go to page 44)



Then think about how you would like to get this help.
(go to page 47)

Think about what you need help with



Meeting friends

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No



Meeting family

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No



Travelling to places

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No



Planning food

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No



Shopping

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No



Cooking

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No



Looking after money

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No



Paying bills

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No



Getting benefits

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No

Think about what you need help with



Getting up and planning the day

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No



Showering/ washing

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No



Housework

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No



Taking medicine

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No



Keeping fit

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No



Going to appointments

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No

Anything else?



Going to work

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes

More ideas to get the help you need



It is good to think about different ways you can get the help you need.



Some support might be from people you know such as family, friends or neighbours.



Sometimes you can have a useful piece of equipment to help you (rather than a person). This equipment is called personalised technology.



This might be a door and window alarm, a big picture phone or a holder for medicines (that makes sure you take the right ones).



Some, or all, of your support might be from people who are paid to help you.



There is more information on the next page about getting paid support.

How to sort out paid support



You will need to have an assessment to get money to pay for the help you need.



To get an assessment you should get in touch with Adult Social Care.



The assessment will show if Adult Social Care will pay for your support. If they will, you will be told how much.



Money to pay for support is called a Personal Budget.



You will need a Support Plan to say how this will be spent. You can make this with Adult Social Care or other people you know.



You can ask Adult Social Care or some other service to sort out your support.





Or you can have a Direct Payment. This is when you, and people who know you well, sort out support in the best way for you.



Your Personal Budget is not the same as your benefits which are for your costs such as for food, bills and going out.

What do you want to do next about housing and support?

 <p>What I want to do</p>	 <p>Who I would like to help me with this</p>

What words mean



Adult Social Care:

The service in your local area that does assessments to find out what people need. Then, if they need support it pays for services or gives money to buy support.



Advocate:

A person who thinks about what works best for you and helps you speak up about it or speaks up for you in the best way. They are not part of an organisation that gives support.



Assessment:

The way in which Adult Social Care works out what your needs are. This is likely to be done by asking you, and/or someone who knows you well, lots of questions.



Benefits:

Money from the Government that you get, for example, because of your low income, your age or your disability.



Direct Payment:

When you choose, or someone who knows you well chooses, to sort out your own support rather than go to a service (such as a day centre). The Direct Payment is the money to pay for the support.



Personal Budget:

Money from Adult Social Care to pay for support after they have done an assessment.



Support Plan:

A plan that shows how your Personal Budget will be spent. It will have to say what support you need each day. Your local council's Adult Social Care team will need to agree it.



Ideas for using “I’m Thinking Ahead”

	General tips
	Here are some ideas for people supporting someone with a learning disability to use “I’m Thinking Ahead ”.
	We have called the person you are supporting “your relative/friend” although you may have a different relationship such as a paid supporter, an advocate or a care manager.
	It will make a big difference if you are someone who knows the person well and talks and listens in a way that works for them.
	“I’m Thinking Ahead” has been formatted in a way that facilitates conversations. The purpose of the questions and templates is to help you talk things through rather than just tick boxes.
	Don’t make it feel like a test or that your relative/friend needs to have an answer to every question. You can come back to them another time.
	Make sure your relative/friend knows there are no right or wrong answers. Let them know that they don’t need to give answers to please you or other people.
	Start with the pages that would work best for your relative/friend. You could ask them what they would like to look at first.
	Don’t worry about getting through lots of pages. It’s the thinking and talking that are important so spend as much time as is needed on one page or one question.
	The best information will be gathered if you are an active listener. This means paying attention to what they are saying and not jumping in with your own views. Reflect on what they have told you by saying: ‘It sounds like you are saying...’ or ‘Tell me a bit more about why that is important to you...’. Listen to their body language as well as any spoken words.

	It may be difficult for you to talk together about some of these things, particularly if you are a relative. So try to make the conversation easier and relaxing, by finding a comfortable space and having drinks and snacks, for example.
	Once you have started using 'I'm Thinking Ahead', try to keep going. Perhaps, before you finish for the day, you could make a date when you will continue so that it doesn't get lost amongst day to day pressures.
	Make lots of notes – to remind you of what you have already talked about, help you to recap and reflect and think about what to do next. You may want to have a notebook to write things in as you go along and then decide together afterwards what should go in the templates.
	A diary might help you to make notes about when you met, what you talked about, what you want to do next and when you will do it.
	Make sure you have the time you need – it won't help if either of you are worrying about being late or missing something else that is happening that day.

Page 9	How to plan
Page 12	It is good to start with thinking about the things that make your relative/friend enjoy their life and feel good about themselves. Assessments and reviews often focus on what a person needs in terms of their health and safety and then overlooks what makes a good life. However, the principles of well-being and prevention are central to the Care Act and include things such as having a job, and meeting up with friends and family.
Pages 13 and 15	It might be easier to make a list of everything that seems important on a sheet of paper and then go back and decide whether they are very important (must-haves) or important (would be good to have).
Page 16	Sometimes people's lives become focused on the day to day rather than the longer term. Having a conversation about hopes and wishes can help them to think about their aspirations for the future. When your relative/friend suggests something they would like to try, ask questions to find out more about it – this will help make a plan to achieve it.
Pages 13,15 and 17	The information that is collected on these pages could be useful at an assessment or a review meeting organised by Adult Social Care. Make sure it is taken along and shared with the care manager or reviewing officer.

Page 19	You could use this page to make a plan for something that could happen quite soon, for example meeting up with a friend your relative/ friend has lost touch with or having a day out to somewhere they haven't been before.
Page 21	How to make choices
Page 22	Choice can be a difficult word to understand so it may help to go through the day – perhaps chronologically – and talk together about the choices your relative/friend has made at different times.
Page 23	It may be helpful to talk about how hard it can be to make choices and sometimes it can be easier to make a choice we think other people want to hear. Emphasise that you want to find out about the choices your relative/friend would really like to make.
Page 26-27	You might want to use the boxes to tick the topics you have talked about but write notes elsewhere if you need more space.
Page 28	<p>This template enables you to look at who is helpful around making choices. Are quite a few people involved or do you need to think about how to make the circle of helpers wider? There may be people in specific roles that would be helpful, for example, an advocate.</p> <p>You could start by talking together about the help you give with making choices and how well that is working. If you encourage your relative/ friend to say what's not helpful about what you do, they may feel more confident about expressing how they feel about other people.</p>
Page 35	How to get the right housing and support
Page 36	Thinking about making changes, such as moving home, can cause a lot of anxiety. So it's helpful if you can find a reassuring and supportive way to talk about it. Perhaps explain that you are talking about this now so that people know what your relative/friend would like to happen in the future. You can explain that you don't have all the answers about housing but can look for more information. A useful website is www.housingandsupport.org.uk/home where there is lots of free information and details can be found of a member's advice line.
Page 38	We've made "Who do you want to live with?" the first question because this helps to shape the answers to the ones that follow. This question sometimes gets overlooked but is often the key to a person being happy and settled where they live. If your relative/friend says yes to a few options, you could talk more about them to find out which might work best or which they would prefer.

Page 39	It may help to talk about where other people in your relative's/friend's life went to live, such as their brothers or sisters, their friends or family friends.
Page 36-41	Yes = definitely need to have this No = definitely don't want this Maybe = it would be nice to have but I could manage without it (this helps to give a bit more flexibility).
Page 41	We've included no pets because some people have said they would be frightened if their neighbours had pets, particularly dogs.
Page 42	It is helpful to think about the network of support and friendship that your relative/friend has. This is what helps us all to feel happy, safe and connected with other people.
Page 43	Some places in the community also contribute to a person's well-being and happiness and help them to have local connections. It can be helpful to have them nearby.
Page 45	This is a big topic but the questions are there to help people get started. The information you collect can also help your relative/friend to prepare for an assessment with Adult Social Care.
Page 46-47	The boxes are an aid to thinking about the kinds of support your relative/friend might need under that heading. For example do they need help with all their shopping (yes, always), can they go to the local shop to get a few things but not the supermarket (yes, sometimes) or do they do all their shopping (no).
Page 48	You may need to explain that everyone is not entitled to paid support. However, if you have used the templates in the three sections you should have collected useful information about paid support that would be helpful.

This resource was made using Photosymbols



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**foundation for
people with
learning disabilities**

**Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities
is part of the Mental Health Foundation**

Registered Charity No.
England 801130 and Scotland SC039714

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