



A Place I Call Home:

Shaping Wiltshire's Accommodation Strategy
through understanding disabled
peoples views and experiences of
accommodation in Wiltshire
and what they would like for the future.

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Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living
11 Couch Lane Devizes Wiltshire SN10 1EB
0300 1233 442 www.wiltshirecil.org.uk
info@wiltshirecil.org.uk

Charity no. 1120611 Company no. 5480761

This report was facilitated and produced by the Wiltshire CIL User Engagement Team, under a contract with Wiltshire Council, to provide a Wiltshire Engagement Service.

The User Engagement Team works alongside people with lived experience of health and social care services to support, encourage and facilitate them to have their say, ensuring that their voices are heard and that they are able to contribute and influence how services are shaped and developed in Wiltshire.

The User Engagement Team uses creative and interactive ways of engaging with people, co-producing each piece of work uniquely, to value the authentic voice of all service users.

A Place I Call Home Key messages

Accommodation options need to reflect that everybody is different, they need to be varied, adaptable and responsive to the needs of people in Wiltshire.



People want to live in a place they call home, with the people they choose in their local community.



A priority for any accommodation is that it supports positive relationships both with close networks and with people in the wider community.



The most important factors for people when considering where they live is that they feel safe, they can be independent and they can choose where they live.



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1. Introduction

In this report the responses to an online survey (Google Forms) are analysed. The survey gathered the views of people with lived experience on accommodation in Wiltshire.

We sought the views of adults with a learning disability, people who are autistic, people who have physical or sensory needs and people who have mental health needs. We asked about their experiences and views on their good life, where they live now, where they would like to live, what was important about where they lived and how their community plays a role in their lives.

Participants for the survey were sourced through Wiltshire CILs contacts, social media and through Wiltshire Council sharing the survey with the Good Lives Alliance providers.

This enabled us to get a broad range of participation and engagement to help Wiltshire Council formulate recommendations and conclusions for future strategies.

This work was carried out at the request of Wiltshire Council to support the development of the Accommodation Strategy

Aim – the purpose of this piece of work is to help shape Wiltshire's Accommodation Strategy through understanding disabled people's views and experiences of accommodation in Wiltshire and what they would like for the future.

2. Methodology

At the time of carrying out this piece of work the United Kingdom as well as the rest of the world is experiencing the effects of the Covid-19 Virus.

Due to on-going restrictions around face-to-face meetings and gatherings we were unable to hold knowledge cafes or visit establishments to carry out pieces of work with people to gather their views.

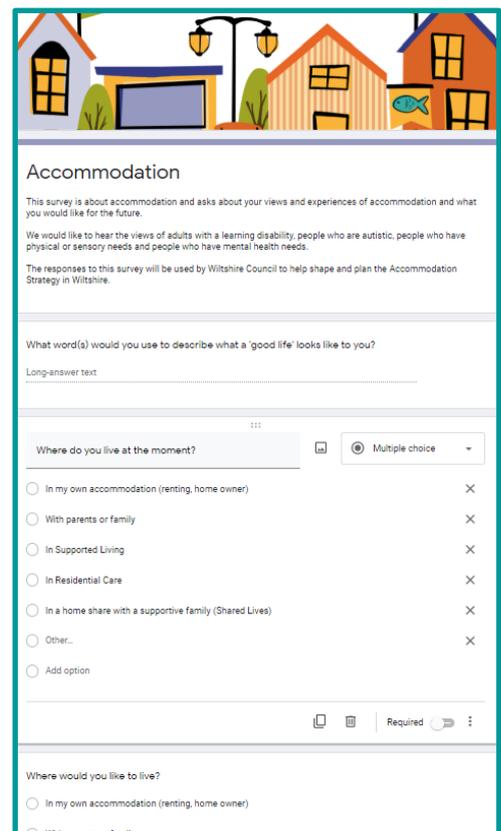
An online survey was carried out using Google Forms to gather peoples views and experiences. The survey was open for a period of 1 month (from 19th May – 18th June 2021).

The survey consisted of 10 questions. There were a variety of types of questions including ratings, multiple choice and open-ended questions as each individual's experience is unique.

The survey was designed to be short; it took between 5-10 minutes to complete.

Wiltshire CIL staff supported those that do not have access to the internet to complete the survey over the telephone.

30 responses were received to the survey.



The screenshot shows a Google Form titled "Accommodation". The form includes an introductory paragraph: "This survey is about accommodation and asks about your views and experiences of accommodation and what you would like for the future. We would like to hear the views of adults with a learning disability, people who are autistic, people who have physical or sensory needs and people who have mental health needs. The responses to this survey will be used by Wiltshire Council to help shape and plan the Accommodation Strategy in Wiltshire." Below this is an open-ended question: "What word(s) would you use to describe what a 'good life' looks like to you?" with a "Long-answer text" input field. The next question is "Where do you live at the moment?" which is a multiple-choice question. The options are: "In my own accommodation (renting, home owner)", "With parents or family", "In Supported Living", "In Residential Care", "In a home share with a supportive family (Shared Lives)", "Other...", and "Add option". The "Multiple choice" option is selected. The form also shows a "Required" indicator and a "Where would you like to live?" question with the option "In my own accommodation (renting, home owner)" visible.

Appendix A: Full list of questions

Finances

Finances in many shapes and forms contributed to how people described their good life. This is of particular relevance when you consider that Life costs £583 more on average a month if you are disabled (*Scope - The disability price tag 2019*). Being **financially stable**, having a **steady income**, an **abundance of resources** and **funding** meant that you could have a **comfortable life** and for some even a **holiday would be nice occasionally!** How affordable life is for people is also very important contributing factor towards what someone's good life is. Having **affordable rent**, an **affordable cost of living** and a **liveable wage** were all highlighted.

Purpose and Autonomy

Being **independent**, making your **own decisions** and **being in control of your future**, all things often taken for granted by many non-disabled people were highlighted as important contributing factors to people's good lives. Alongside the right for **choices**, **dignity**, **human rights** and **having your own things**.

Having things to do such as **meals out**, **walks**, **bike rides**, **nature** and **music** made life good for some.

For others having a **fulfilling career**, **my own business**, **business endeavours** or having the opportunity **to be able to work again** was very important. The importance of work and the desire to work is highlighted by the inequalities faced by disabled people in employment figures with disabled people being over a third less likely to be employed than non-disabled people (*ONS 2019*).

everyone is different, but to me is to have all the necessity in life to live a comfortable life, ability to procure my own things instead of being reliant on people who have control of my assets and have a steady income and funding

Getting the Basics Right

The necessities in life that we all expect and hope for were also mentioned such as the need for **food**, for **good health**, for **housing**, **transportation** and to **be safe**. Within these some specifics also emerged such as having **accessible housing** and being able to live **pain free** or to **be able to walk again**.

4. Accommodation

A series of questions were asked to gauge an understanding of people's current accommodation set up and their hopes and aspirations for the future in terms of where they would like to live, who with and what was good about where they lived.

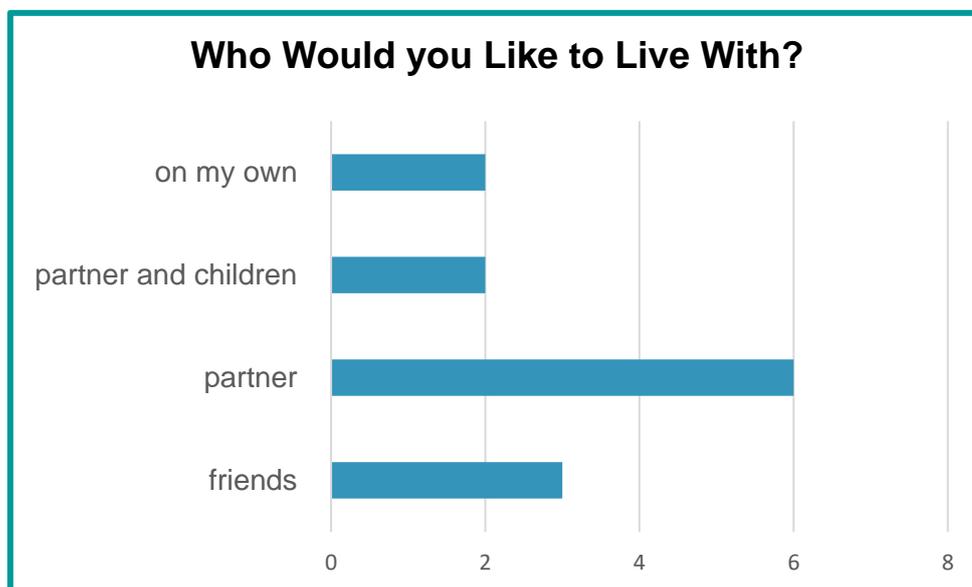
The results have been analysed based on grouping the responses into the answers people gave about where they currently live. We have then looked at whether people are content with their current arrangements or if they have a preference for their accommodation situation to change.

Own Accommodation:

Just under half (13) of the respondents lived in their own accommodation whether that be as a homeowner or a as a tenant renting a property.

All thirteen of these people when asked where they would like to live wished to continue living in their own accommodation. For some however, there were some caveats to continuing to live in their own accommodation. One person wanted to be able to **buy a property** rather than continuing to rent. Another wanted to move from private renting to a social landlord – **I would like social housing as my private landlord and neighbour harass me.**

There was some variation amongst people living in their own accommodation about who they would like to live with.



Almost 2/3 (8) of those living in their own accommodation wanted to live with a partner or their partner and children. A small number (3) indicated that their preference would be live with friends and two people would like to live on their own.

There were a variety of things that people liked about where they currently lived including its location – **it is close to town, close to my community and/or family, nice area, garden, it is in a town, it has fields in all directions.** Other qualities that people liked about their accommodation were that it was **cheap**, it is **quiet, plenty of space** and the **neighbours are nice.**

For some the work that had been done to their house has made it a great place to live for them - **it's a beautiful home and with help has been made more accessible.**

Others, despite wishing to remain in their own accommodation are struggling with where they live. Three people reported problems with their neighbours and said that they **don't get on with my neighbour**, that they **hate it where I live** and that there is **nothing nice** about where they live.

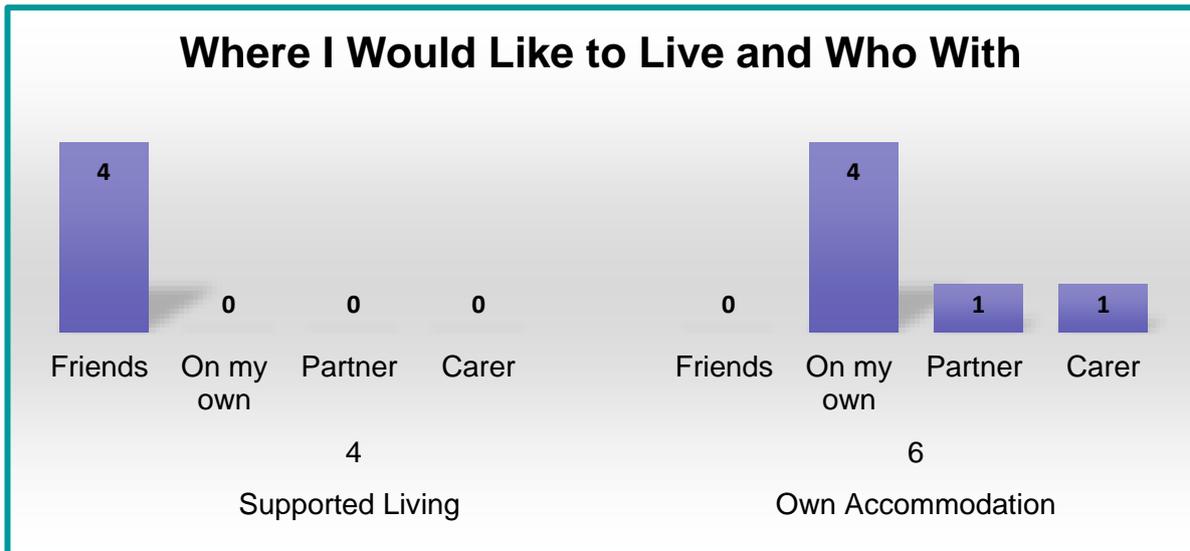
Parents or Family:

10 of the survey participants currently live in accommodation with their parents or their family.

When asked about where they would like to live **none** of them wished to continue living in their current accommodation setting with their parents or family. Four of the 10 would like to live in supported living and the remaining 6 would like to live in their own accommodation.

When looking at who they would like to live with all 4 of those who would like to live in supported living wished to live with their friends. This fits with supported living lending its self to shared living with peers.

Whereas on the other hand no one who wanted to live in their own accommodation wanted to live with their friends. Instead, the two thirds of them wanted to live on their own, one person with a partner and another with a carer.



Despite not wishing to continue living with parents or family those that currently did saw the benefits of living were they currently do. People liked being **close to family** and **being looked after by mum**, they enjoyed being **local to town**, a **friendly town**. Living in a familiar area was also good, **I know the area, I like living near where I grew up**.

For one person there was **nothing** good about where they are currently living. Two others described the challenges of living in an **abusive** and/or **controlling relationship** for many years.

Supported Living:

There were three respondents currently residing in supported living. Two of which wished to continue living in supported living, one would prefer to live in supported living on their own and the other with friends.

The two people who wished to remain living in supported living had positive things to say about where they currently lived and said that they can **do anything that I want to do** echoing the importance of being independent and having control over your life contributing towards living a good life. The other described their **bungalow, independence, support workers** as all being good things about where they currently lived.

The person who expressed dissatisfaction in their current living arrangements in supported living wishes to live with their **friends**. Highlighting the fact that living in supported living does not necessarily mean that you are living with people that you like or get on with. This person described there being **nothing** good about where they live.

Residential:

One person resides in residential accommodation, they expressed satisfaction with where they lived and wished to continue to live in residential care with their **friends**. They described being able to **have a good laugh** as a positive attribute about where they live.

Other:

There are three people who answered other to the question about where they currently live.

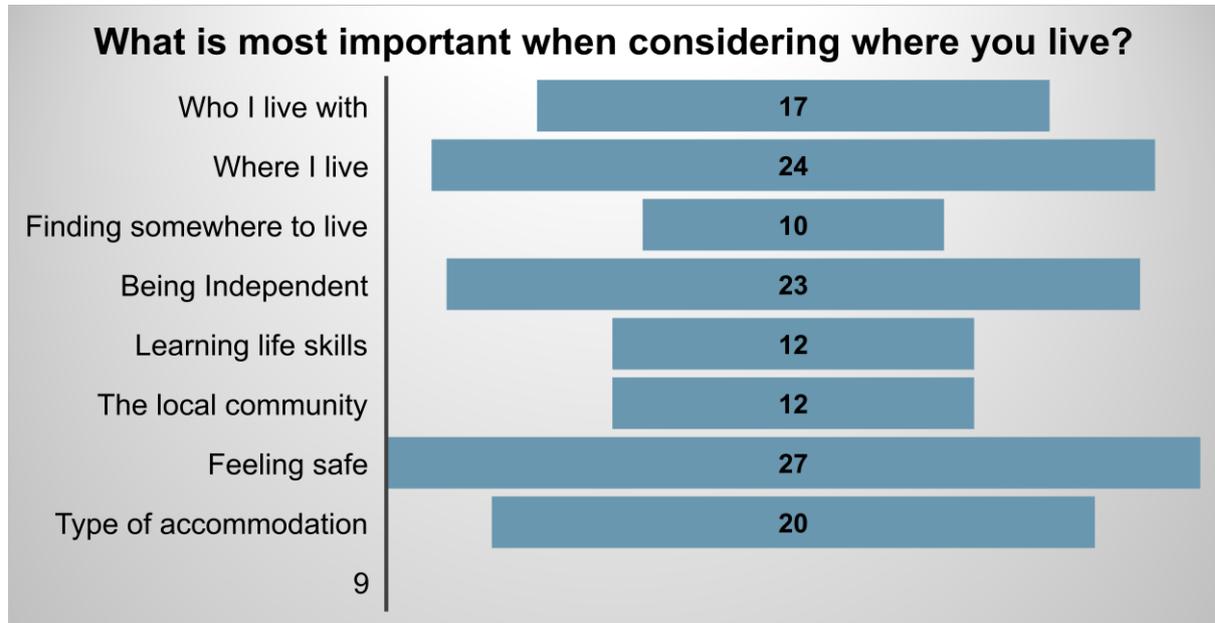
One person did not specify the type of accommodation that they currently live in but described it as **a house I need to leave**. When asked about where they would like to live, they wished to live in their own accommodation on their own.

Another person who again did not specify the type of accommodation that they currently live in expressed a desire to want to live **by the sea** on their own.

One respondent currently lives at an alcohol and drug treatment centre. In the future they would like to live in their own accommodation with **support, family, partners, friends**. They had mixed feelings about where they currently live, describing it as **overall a wonderful environment** but also recognised that they are not well **equipped to deal with mental health disabilities** and that **people need to be able to socialise and go out, but we are limited to it due to location and transportation**.

5. What is Most Important When Considering Where You Live?

We asked the survey respondents to select what the most important things are for them when considering where they lived.



The most important factor for people when considering where they live is that they **feel safe**. We saw earlier that being/feeling safe was highlighted as a contributing factor towards people's good lives. Someone's housing situation can easily influence a person's feeling of safety and security - **I would like to feel secure and not worry because the house and land is worth a lot to the Housing Association and the it could be sold out from under us, change is bad very bad and a worrying thought, I love where I live but could never afford to buy a house so live with this fear I don't know why.**

Where someone lives is also very important as it affects how people feel and connect with their community, it influences relationships and support networks all of which are important to people living a good life - **I've been trying to find accommodation for a long time now and I'm always told there isn't any in Wiltshire. I moved to a place in Swindon and there were many there from Wiltshire for the same reason. It didn't work out; I was too far away from my home and family. For someone else being near to town and shops, being close to my family was important.**

The opportunity to be independent is important to many. People commented that it would **be nice to have more independent supported living places for disabled people** in Wiltshire.

The type of accommodation plays a big role in people deciding where they can live. Many comments were made about the lack of suitable types of accommodation in Wiltshire and people **wish there were more disabled friendly homes**, that Wiltshire **needs more accessible accommodation** and **more three-bedroom homes**. Many also commented on the general lack of **choice** saying that there **aren't any**, there are **few options, very hit and miss**.

Finding somewhere to live caused many people issues including for some needing to have more support - **more help with doing the forms when autistic. More support. Knowing what's available and how to get it**. The challenge to find somewhere to live could be multifaceted, they needed to know **what options, who helps or guides us, no support!**

Bidding processes for housing is challenging, **H4W is meant to be "fair" the reality is people get overlooked or told about "bidding" on properties way out of the area they want**.

Whilst not given as an option, affordability of accommodation has been highlighted as something that people have to consider when looking at where they would like to live. The reality for many is that **rent is so expensive that you can't save enough money for a deposit to become a homeowner**.

Affordable housing stock and restricted housing stock also has an impact - **there are not enough affordable bungalows, either to rent or to buy. All affordable options are marked off for over 50s or over 55s, when there are plenty of young people who want to be able to afford an accessible home without having to live in a ground floor flat**.

given. People's actions indicated a feeling of pride in their community, people wanted to **keep it tidy** and **clean**.

Community also represented reciprocal relationships, where there were **mutual benefits** and **shared interests**. There are **essential resources** and **opportunity**.

Whilst for many the community means something positive there are a handful of people who do not feel the same. Some people asked **what community?** in response to the question about what their community means to them. Others described there being **no community in Salisbury, Wiltshire council has removed everything**. Another had negative experiences of other people in their community and found it **a bit annoying because some people don't care about the disabled people in the community** and another found **people are scary**.

What do you do in your community?

The vast majority of people did active things in their community ranging from **walking, theatre, allotments to church, photography, meeting new people** and **horse riding**. The community becomes the hub of local activity and by having a rich variety of ways in which people can come together to do things the sense of the community being a place of collaborative belonging becomes a reality.

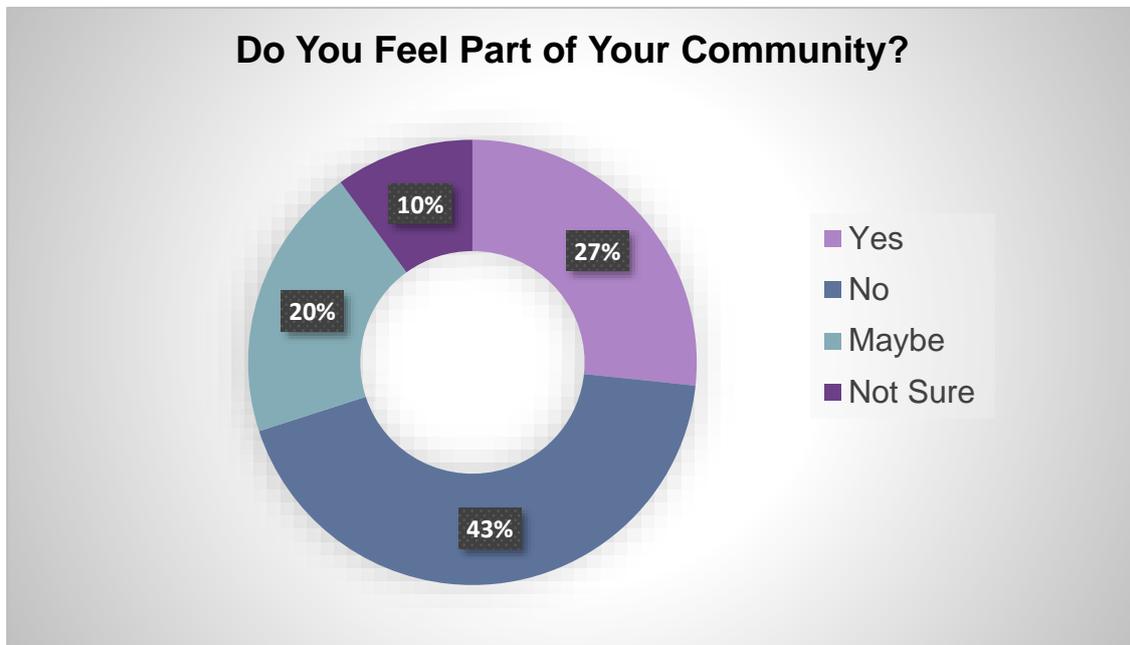
A group of people gave back to their community reiterating that the values and attitudes within a community do matter and are demonstrated. People **helped other people, volunteered** or **supported charities**. One person **mows and tidies an embankment opposite my house and it seems to make people happy as I get a lot of positive comments while doing it**.

Almost a third of the survey respondents found that they **don't do anything** in their community, that they felt there was **no community** or that they **didn't know** if they did anything. This feeling of not connecting to or doing anything in the community is represented in Social Care Futures vision of 5 key principles to unlock an equal life, with the first being 'communities where everyone belongs'. (<https://socialcarefuture.blog/2021/05/27/from-permanent-lockdown-to-an-equal-life/>)

The work that needs to be done to build communities where everyone belongs is further highlighted by almost two thirds (63%) of the survey

respondents feeling that they either did not or only maybe felt like they were part of their community.

A further 10% felt that they were not sure if they felt like part of their community and only 27% felt that they are a part of their community.



Conclusions

The purpose of this work was to understand disabled peoples experiences and views of accommodation in Wiltshire, what they need for the future.

The findings show that a variety of accommodation options need to be available to people. Options that meet individual people's needs, are accessible, affordable and in people's communities.

People want to have choice and control over who they live with and where they live. This is particularly relevant amongst people who currently reside with their parents or family.

Accommodation also needs to support relationships, which were identified as a fundamental contributor to a person's ability to live a good life. Good accommodation should enable people to stay connected with their close networks of friends and family as well as benefit from and contribute to positive community relationships.

Having accommodation where people are able and allowed to live as everyone else does is in a place that they call home is of utmost importance.

Accommodation alongside communities influence and determine how people are able to live the lives that they want to.

Recommendations

- A priority for any accommodation is that it supports positive relationships both with close networks and with people in the wider community
- Community should be defined by relationships with people and not be a geographical space. A strong community will be a place where everyone belongs and is an important requirement for people being able to live their good life.
- People need to be fully involved in choosing their accommodation, to be given all the options so that they can make informed choices about where they live

- Moving a person out of community/county to find 'suitable' accommodation will have far reaching and negative effects on quality of life.
- Communal group living is appropriate at some stages in peoples lives but is not always the long-term option as people get older. It shouldn't be seen as the first option for disabled people
- Home ownership should be a viable option for disabled people

Appendix A

Survey Questions:

1. What word(s) would you use to describe what a 'good life' looks like to you?
2. Where do you live at the moment?
 - In my own accommodation (renting, homeowner)
 - With parents or family
 - In Supported Living
 - In Residential Care
 - In a home share with a supportive family (Shared Lives)
 - Other (please specify)
3. Where would you like to live?
 - In my own accommodation (renting, homeowner)
 - With parents or family
 - In Supported Living
 - In Residential Care
 - In a home share with a supportive family (Shared Lives)
 - Other (please specify)
4. Who would you like to live with?
 - On my own
 - With friends
 - With parents
 - With partner
 - Other (please specify)
5. What do you like about where you live?
6. What word(s) would you use to describe what 'community' means to you?
7. What do you like to do in your community?
8. Do you feel like you are part of your local community?
 - Yes

- No
- Maybe
- Not sure

9. What are the most important things for you when considering where you live? tick all that apply

- Who I live with
- Where I live
- Finding somewhere to live
- Being Independent
- Learning life skills
- The local community
- Feeling safe
- Type of accommodation
- Other (please specify)

10. Is there anything else that you would like to say about accommodation options in Wiltshire?