

Progress & Challenges

Question 1: Do the findings of the evaluation broadly reflect your views about services for people with learning disabilities/carers?

YES

Comments:

Broadly accurate, but friendships and relationships is definitely more of an issue for people than is reflected in the report.

It is disappointing to see the lack of progress/improvement in some areas – more or less the same information is reflected in the original and evaluation reports. This suggests a need to be more specific in targeting objectives and plans going forward.

Suggest a larger scale evaluation needed in future – 49 people with learning disabilities and 51 family carers is a very small sample.

Question 2: Can you give examples...of what you think has worked well over the last 10 years of The Same As You?

Comments/examples:*(Please note: comments from service users involved in the organisation's Quality group have been included in responses throughout)*

Development of supported living opportunities (from residential care) – this marked a major change for the organisation and the individuals we support, with very positive results in terms of how people feel about their lives. Service users consulted about the report spoke about the way their lives have changed through having their own home.

Governance and planning locally around services for people with learning disabilities – there is an established commitment to involving people with learning disabilities, carers and service providers with the local authority and NHS in shared planning and development.

More involvement of people with learning disabilities in engaging with and influencing the organisations that provide their support (ARC Scotland's Charter for Involvement and the development of the National Involvement Network have been useful supports in this).

Some useful initiatives around health (eg. annual health checks project, hand held health records, accessible information for use by GP's, change from in-patient assessment & treatment to assertive outreach model, dementia screening, awareness raising events/groups, people with learning disabilities training to become "health champions", Bridge to Vision project). However, there is a need for work to be sustained over the long term.

Adult protection locally – good multi-agency working at operational and planning levels, and positive commitment to training.

Question 3: Can you give examples of issues in current work and/or policies that still need to be addressed?

Comments/examples:

Welfare Reform Act – changes to benefits and the impact on people with learning disabilities is a significant concern. There is a need for a co-ordinated focus at national level to ensure experiences of the process and impact on people's quality of life are captured and addressed.

Transitions planning and responding to change –while there have been some improvements, there is still a need to ensure the timing of planning works well for people and their families, so that the right supports are in place when needed, as well as improving capacity and resources to address people's changing needs promptly (eg. needs associated with ageing), to minimise disruption and maintain quality of life.

Health – concerted long term efforts are needed to address health inequalities, as well as a continued focus on improving consistency in attitudes, understanding of needs and support for people with learning disabilities when in hospital.

Good practice - organisations

Question 4: Can you provide examples of what you have done over the last 10 years within your organisation to improve services and access to services within your local area?

The development of supported living was a major change, whereby over several years more than 70 people with learning disabilities moved from residential care (and in some instances, nursing home care) to living in their own home, either on their own or sharing with others. The impact on people has been significant, in terms of individuals valuing their home and lifestyle and being more in control of their support arrangements.

In recent years we have changed our Care Home Service to reflect changing needs and demand locally. This has been carried out in partnership with the Learning Disability Service and has resulted in a smaller service, which has retained day time nursing input, includes activity support and also provides short breaks as well as permanent support.

We are currently involved in changing our day support services and looking to develop social enterprises in line with the implementation of the Day Opportunities Review in the region.

As an organisation we have worked steadily to extend and improve the involvement of people with learning disabilities in all aspects of the organisation, and have gained support on this journey through contributing to the development of, and signing up to, the Charter for Involvement and engaging with the National Involvement Network.

Along with other service providers in the Region, we have supported the development of an active Provider Group, contributing to the local Governance structure of service planning and development for people with learning disabilities and family carers.

Future priorities – healthcare

Question 6: What still needs to be done...

See 3 above.

A strong focus on prevention is needed – investing in action and supports that make a difference in terms of addressing areas of known increased risk. To be successful, initiatives need to be sustained (eg. long term funding, rather than short term projects).

Ensuring a better “journey” for people through hospital admission, treatment and discharge – experience is still too variable.

Future priorities – education

Question 7: What still needs to be done....

Service users commented on the need to have more college courses available locally (eg. both in terms of range of options and flexibility as to where they take place), alongside a focus on skills to support independent living and access to employment.

Future priorities – independent living

Question 8: What still needs to be done...

Implementation of the National Self-Directed Support strategy should make a significant impact on opportunities for people with learning disabilities to experience independent lives. It will be important to monitor how this is being introduced and supported across the country, to ensure that people with learning disabilities and family carers are reassured about the changes and genuinely experience being “in control” of the process. There also needs to be real collaboration across agencies (including health, housing and employment) to enable support to be properly and simply “joined up” around the person.

The importance of people having support to engage socially, take part in their local community and build links with others is frequently highlighted – this is a significant aspect of quality of life, and

needs to be seen as an important component in individual assessment of need and risk (avoidance of isolation).

More creative and integrated planning around housing options is needed at local community level. While good work is being done, there is still a tendency to operate in separate circles (agency wise, as well as particular needs, eg. older people, people with learning disabilities). This needs to tie in with good forward planning around individuals, so that accommodation moves are planned rather than urgent.

Support needs to be flexible and plans need to be in place to respond quickly when someone's needs change (eg. health changes). People with learning disabilities express concern to know that they will have the help they need if their circumstances change (eg. as they get older).

Accessible information needs to be available in all relevant areas, together with ensuring there are arrangements to provide support to understand and engage with information – examples of areas that worry people are receiving information about benefit changes and local authority charging information.

People with learning disabilities comment on being able to travel free on public transport as being very important to them, however more needs to be done by way of availability of transport locally and improving areas such as access and communication.

Sustaining a skilled and stable workforce to support people to live independently (including people whose needs are complex) requires ongoing action and resources, to promote social care as a valued career. People with learning disabilities comment on the importance of having good staff to support them in their lives, and recognise the contribution made by staff in helping them to manage key aspects of their day to day life.

Future priorities – employment

Question 9: What still needs to be done...

More employment support is needed.

More training for employers and co-workers to understand learning disability and the contribution and skills of people with learning disabilities.

More support for the development of social enterprises to increase training and employment options (people with learning disabilities express concern that there are few suitable employment opportunities available).

Future priorities

Question 10: What other future priorities do we need to focus on?

Benefits/income – ensuring people with learning disabilities have adequate income to ensure quality of life.

Social connections – ensuring people with learning disabilities have opportunities to make and sustain good links and friendships and avoid social isolation and risks associated with poor or harmful social relationships(eg. exploitation, hate crime).



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