

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Progress and Challenges

Q.1 Do the findings of the evaluation broadly reflect your views about services for people with learning disabilities/carer?

Yes No

Please provide any comments, evidence and/or examples here

The group felt that the report did broadly reflect their own views based upon their lived experiences. Given the relatively small sample used it was wondered whether more in-depth investigation was needed.

Q. 2 Can you give examples, either locally or nationally, of what you think has worked well over the last 10 years of *The same as you?*

Please provide any comments and/or examples here

The opportunities for people with learning disabilities have increased with people having greater independence and choice over leisure and social opportunities further to the long stay hospitals closing. A few specific examples would be individuals gaining their own supported tenancies and being able to access inclusive day care facilities that have been invested in various localities (the South Lanarkshire Council Lifestyles Services). This has been matched with carers also feeling supported with services such as respite being helpful. The empowerment of parents via advocacy efforts and services has also worked well over the period in influencing positive change.

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

Please provide any comments and/or examples here

The understanding of staff including G.P.s for a learning disabled population could be better based on the experiences of group members. The targeted support planned for transition stages or practical resources available to address behavioural needs (such as challenging behaviour) has also lacked at times. Increased choice and control is also needed over the availability of the day opportunity and housing options as it was felt that some people are still being placed wrongly. Social work resources need to make decision quicker on assessed packages of support and matched with this there needs to be greater choice when employing support staff.

Good Practice – Organisations

Q. 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?

Please provide any comments and/or examples here

The group members have found South Lanarkshire Council have improved their listening skills over time investing in partnership working. This has shown itself in their willingness to take the learning disability agenda forward and also to think “outside of the box.” Carers (although small in number) have also been encouraged to be involved in strategy. The support offered in local carer groups has been strongly valued also.

The availability of day care and the integrated lifestyles facilities in specific are also really valued. The specific partners in practice (PiP) group locally, with a supportive officer acting as a group “champion” has been a good example of local improvement.

Another valued local development has been the availability of 3rd sector support organisations such as Sense, Pamis and advocacy services.

Good Practice - Individuals

Q.5 What have you done, as an individual, to make positive changes within your local area?

Please provide any comments and/or examples here

There have been various actions taken by the parent carers within the group membership to improve things locally. This has involved participating with services to assist with the hospital discharge programme, the placement of individuals into integrated day care placements and pushing for education opportunities. A specific action had also been to secure a care package that got put into South Lanarkshire College and which benefits 6 individuals.

Some members have also taken on the responsibilities of guardianship and demonstrated the value of self advocacy in not "taking no for an answer" when dealing with service providers. There have also been members who have provided peer support to other parents. This has included advising those who do not attend meetings, updating them on various topics of interest including helping them to understand guardianship.

Future Priorities - Healthcare

Q.6 What still needs to be done to ensure that people with learning disabilities have access to better and more appropriate healthcare?

Please provide any comments and/or examples here

The training of G.P.s, hospital staff and dentists should include how to deal with the needs of people with a learning disability. The experiences of group members would indicate the need for medical staff to brush up on available support material that is readily available as current practice often falls short of the good advice that is available. There also needs to be consideration made for providing specialist services (such as special needs dentistry available via Easterhouse health centre) and staff with specific skills in learning disability within hospitals as the admission process has been problematic for a few. Given the significant help that parent carers can provide whenever their relative is admitted to hospital, there needs to be better support provided to carers who stay over in hospital.

Future Priorities - Education

Q.7 What still needs to be done to ensure that people with learning disabilities have access to better educational opportunities?

Please provide any comments and/or examples here

The continuation of integration within schools should be encouraged. Good examples of shared classes were cited even when there was a segregated base within the mainstream school.

Better choices at transition are needed. More 1 to 1 support is needed for some people with more investment in employment for support staff with a learning disability specialism. The issue is the choice and control that students have. It may be the case that existing students on social care courses may be able to provide support to both aid the person with support needs whilst at College and also provide the student with some practical experience also. The cancellation of the "Links" programme at college was considered to be a negative step.

It was felt that some skilled staff needed to be protected and maintained whilst some specialist colleges with specialist staff offered students more of a social opportunities rather than an educational one. This may call for the better assessment of individuals whilst incorporating improvements in the social learning goals set.

Future Priorities – Independent Living

Q.8 What still needs to be done to ensure that people with learning disabilities are able to live independently?

Please provide any comments and/or examples here

The key issues for our group were housing and care and support. The suitable choice, availability and affordability of these two matters are central to the groups' consideration of independent living. This included the availability of specialist nursing care and 24hr one to one support where needed. It was anticipated that this come via more input by social work resources.

There was general agreement that there was space for age appropriate smaller housing units, where people had their own space whilst also having communal living areas. In any case more social visits

Choices are widened with funding. In regards to ILF, clarity is needed surrounding what funding will be available in future to help future planning.

Future Priorities – Employment

Q.9 What still needs to be done to ensure that people with learning disabilities have access to better employment opportunities?

Please provide any comments and/or examples here

Government (national and local) led and supported initiatives are needed to provide more opportunities and supportive incentives to get people into better employment opportunities and also to help retain them at work.

The example of the "Coalyard" locally was cited as a good example but opportunities should also be better for people who have physical impairments as well.

People need to be sure that taking up opportunities does not act as a disincentive to have an independent life by negatively affecting their income or increasing their outgoings.

It was also felt that action was needed to provide employers with sufficient support and incentives also to take on disabled employees.

Future Priorities

Q.10 What other future priorities do we need to focus on? (Please list these in order of importance with the most important first)

Please provide any comments and/or examples here

1 The inclusion of people with a learning disability into more regular social and recreational opportunities.

2 Provision of accurate timely information for carers on a variety of resources and on their rights.

3 Emergency planning for individuals.

4 More targeted education required on learning disability issues to raise public awareness.