

Question 1



Do the things in the easy read consultation report reflect your views and opinions about services for people with learning disabilities?

(Please tick your answer)



Yes



No

You can put any comments about this question here.

There is a need to define paid employment. There is a difference between a job where someone is paid the going rate for the job and one where someone is paid a token amount within benefit limitations. People answer that they are in paid employment regardless of type or amount.

Question 2

What do you think has worked well over the last 10 years for people with learning disabilities and family carers?

This could be changes in your local community or all over Scotland.

Please write your answer here.

People living in their own homes.

Getting married.

Better support.

Better variety of things to do and doing more now than not in Day Centre.

More choices about things to do.

The setting up of Annan & Eskdale Disability Sports Group. Group members take part in different sports. They enter competitions, swimming galas and take part in Special Olympics. They also fundraise in the community to enable them to travel to events. It makes people feel good, healthier and fitter and gives them something to focus on. People feel more confident and involved in their community. Provides a sense of achievement when non-swimmers learn to swim and people take part in competitions and win medals and trophies.





Question 3

What do you think still needs to be done by the Government to make the lives of people with learning disabilities and family carers better?

Please write your answer here.

Stabilize and simplify the benefit system. There is constant change. People worry about these changes. It looks like some people will be worse off under Personal Independence Payments. People are concerned about changes to Housing Benefit because of the cap on the number of rooms.

Accessible Information

Many group members are unable to read. There is a requirement under Equality Acts that reasonable adjustments should be made in communications. Letters from the Council and NHS are still not sent out in easy read despite Council Social Work Dept and NHS Learning Disability knowing problems in communicating with people with learning disabilities.

This is also a problem on public transport. Many group members are unable to read transport timetables and destinations. Clock symbols showing times would be easier to follow.

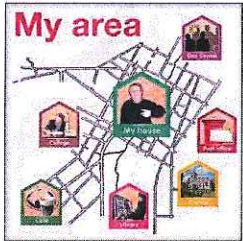
It would be helpful if all buses used a system like train to announce name of next stop and repeat name on arrival.



Question 4 - (this question is for organisations only)

- What have you done in your organisation to improve services for people with learning disabilities in your local area?
- What have you done in your organisation to improve access to services for people with learning disabilities in your local area?

Please write your answer here.



Question 5

What have you done to make things better in your local area for people with learning disabilities and family carers?

Attend ENABLE ACE Self Advocacy Group where members learn skills and gain confidence.

Presentations in schools such as anti-bullying.

Presentations at Scottish Police College and to trainee nurses.

Taken part in local and national surveys and consultations.

Helped review signs in hospital, admission leaflets and Health Passports

Group member on NHS Public Partnership Forum. Feature about this group member in PPF Newsletter.

Group Member on Nurse Education Public Interest Group. Input on desired attitudes and behaviours in curriculum.

Group member on Learning Disability Involvement Group

Group member attends Supported Employment Network meetings and is on a working group looking at increasing employer engagement.

Group helped organize and run the first conference for people with learning disabilities in D&G.

Made contact with Councillors and MSP/MP.

Take part in local and national campaigns.

Group member worked on accessible voting information



Question 6

What do you think needs to be done to help people with learning disabilities get access to good healthcare?

Please write your answer here.

Longer appointment times are necessary as it takes longer to explain problems and process information. People get flustered when rushed and end up not being able to get their problem across. They end up feeling frustrated and that appointment was a waste of time.

It would be better to be able to get same doctor all the time rather than a succession of different ones. Easier to build a relationship if get same person.

Ensure doctors, dentists and consultants can speak English clearly and fluently. It is a struggle to understand information without the added barrier of language.

NHS24 staff to be trained to understand Learning Disability and to take people seriously when they phone in when they have no support staff present.

All medical staff to have Learning Disability awareness training as still talk to carer rather than the patient.

Health Passports launched locally 18 months ago. This is seen as a good thing but need continuity as not everyone has one or has one which has been filled in.



Question 7

What do you think needs to be done to improve access to better education and learning for people with learning disabilities?

All group members valued the experience of going to college. They learned skills and made new friends. Skills learned have helped with independent living but no-one has found work as a result of college preparation. They complete course then left to it to find job. Group members feel they needed more help to find jobs. People repeat same courses over and over as that is all that is on offer.

Need to have more college places not less. Cover skills that employers need. Link courses to qualifications.

Offer wider variety of courses.

Community learning and development classes should be open to people with learning disabilities.

Variety of vocational courses should be on offer.



Question 8

What do you think needs to be done to help people with learning disabilities live more independent lives?

Improved Transport

All public transport needs to be fully accessible. We may have low level buses in one direction of a journey but not guaranteed on the other. Accessible transport information.

Support people to have and meet friends. In some parts of this rural region there is little for people to do out with day centres.



Question 9

What do you think needs to be done to help people with learning disabilities get jobs?

College courses geared to skills for work.
Educate employers about Learning Disability and remove fear.
Public Bodies to employ, offer work experience, apprenticeships to people with learning disabilities
Create more Social Enterprises.

Remove benefit barriers.

A group member is still struggling to have benefits sorted out 2 years after her part time employment ceased. This has had a knock on effect on housing benefit and household bills. Attended many different appointments in many different offices along with her support staff. Due arrears for 2 years. Support staff also confused by system and process.

Allow people to try things for a longer period without losing benefits if they return to them.

Group members prefer to use Supported Employment Service. JobCentre has many barriers which need to be addressed. Rigid appointment times need longer, technology that can't be accessed i.e Job Vacancy Points, can't read and no-one around to help. Letters and application forms not easy read. Better Off in work calculation 26 pages long. On line applications difficult for those that can't read or not confident with IT. Also often time zoned and cut out. JobCentrestaffs don't understand and therefore do not communicate well with People with Learning Disabilities.



Question 10

What do you think are the things we need to do in the future to make the lives of people with learning disabilities better?

Please write the most important things first.

Keep what is working well. All group members value their free bus pass. Being able to travel around freely has made a big difference to being independent. There are now fears that people could lose this with changes to benefit. The bus pass is a lifeline in this rural region.

Transport Issues/Friends

People like living in own homes but some find it very lonely in the evenings depending on where they live. In some places last bus in village is at 6.45pm (mid/upper Nithsdale). This makes it difficult to get out and about and meet friends. Some people also shy about making and meeting with friends.

Accessible Information

We have Group members on various public bodies where we fulfill criteria for diversity and underrepresented groups. We feel they can pay lip service to needs and adjustments of people with learning disabilities. Meetings do not provide information in alternative formats or make any adjustments despite frequent requests and inclusion in the constitution. They claim not to have time or facilities.

FEEDBACK FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO ENABLE (ACE)

TO THE SAME AS YOU SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION.

Question 1.

There were concerns about the inaccuracy of the information supplied in the PowerPoint presentation.

The number of people with learning disabilities in employment was considered to be inaccurate for the learning disability population as a whole. We recommended further research here to create a more representative picture.

There was concern raised about the number of people with learning disabilities and their families who were formally consulted as part of the consultation. It represented to many an insufficient number of people although the contention by the government representative that this event today was part of an ongoing consultation process was accepted and endorsed

Question 3.

There was general concern about the apparent inability of national government to insist that local government comply with their policies and/or initiatives. People present felt that unless these could be made mandatory then progress in many of the areas reported would be limited and subject to local interpretation especially in terms of the financial resources required for implementation. It was noted that there was a partnership agreement between local and national government but this was felt to be an insufficient process in terms of policy implementation.

Those present referred again and again to anticipated dilemmas around the upcoming benefit reductions.

Those present referred to the real dilemmas in terms of the

reduced hours of support they were currently getting from their provider organisations because of funding cuts.

Accessibility of information in many areas was cited as a major and ongoing concern. Areas where information was considered inaccessible was work, health, education and benefit information.

Question 5.

Attendance and participation on council committees around learning disability issues.

Consultative work for various councils on local issues on learning disability issues but also on issues outwith learning disability such as employment, public transport etc.

Anti-bullying campaigns in schools.

Police training around learning disability issues

Attendance at Scottish Parliament cross party groups around learning disability.

Fund-raising activities.

Volunteering, working in charity shops

Working with Historic Scotland.

Invitations to local MPs to visit ACE and ENABLE branches.

Interaction with local MPs

Support to ENABLE Scotland and ENABLE branches.

Question 6.

In terms of health care people felt that often doctors and nurses failed to take account of their learning disability and either spoke too technically or insisted on repetition of information from the person which they felt had been clearly delivered.

Others felt that GPs were less interested in people with a learning disability than other patients, felt too that they had been treated disrespectfully at pharmacists.

People felt that their health concerns on occasion were “not taken seriously” coming as it did “from a person with a learning disability”.

Question 7.

In terms of education the significant reduction in college course for adults with learning disabilities was described as ‘unfair’ and ‘discriminatory’ when compared to reductions in course availability for people with no learning disability.

The quality of college course was also brought into question with people feeling that the courses available were unlikely or simply not designed to prepare people for employment or further more pertinent and meaningful education opportunities.

Question 8.

Those present acknowledged that they were relatively very able and articulate people and said that they felt that they were in control of much of their lives but there was still a general lack of awareness both around direct payments and self-directed support/personalization.

There was a clear regret about being unable to choose ones own workers on occasion and a similar concern about not being able to interview and select ones own workers. Participants felt that being involved in recruitment and selection was often ‘an afterthought’ with participants citing an occasion when they didn’t even know who got the job. This was directed at service providers.

Some people however spoke well of their experience when interviewing and recruiting.

“ Some organisations say that they include people but they are not

always very good at it. They do it to look good but they are not really doing it if the person doesn't feel included." - quote from participant.

Participants felt that the government should provide more financial support and help to organisations who offer advocacy support – they felt that everyone should have access to advocacy support but also commented on the fact that they would like longer term advocacy support in order to build a true relationship with their advocate. Short term advocacy or single issue advocacy was regarded as unsuitable.

Question 9.

In terms of employment it was generally felt that there many more obstacles to access to employment for people with learning disabilities. Prominent among these was the described ' benefits trap' where it was felt that the disregard amount – the amount one could earn before benefits were affected- was too low, hadn't changed for years (despite an increase in wages meaning that the number of hours one could work was also reduced) and prevented progression into full-time employment.

There was concern expressed about the support available to people with learning disabilities to prepare for job interviews as well a more general concern about the opportunities for people with learning disabilities in a shrinking jobs market during a " double dip recession"

There were comments on the difficulty faced by anyone who came off benefits to work only for that job either to go or not to work out. Resuming benefits was very protracted and difficult to achieve. Participants thought that suspended benefit until it was clear that the employment was successful might help here.

There was concern expressed about the lack of or limitations to job coaching which would support people until they picked up necessary skills.

There was general appreciation of, and desire to work. This came

with an understanding of the social and financial benefits of work as well as the pleasure of making a contribution.

The quality of the job opportunities on offer was also mentioned as well as the limited opportunity, if it existed at all, of advancement.

Unpaid job placements were also criticized. In individuals personal experience this was just free labour with no prospect of being taken on at the end of the period.

Lack of meaningful support from job centres was cited as a further obstacle to breaking into the labour market.

Question 10.

People felt that the information they receive from local and national government was very often inaccessible and consequently discriminatory

Participants felt that learning disability training should be compulsory in schools and colleges.

People described difficulties with transport with drivers loathe to use ramps on occasion and impatient generally with people with mobility issues. They thought that further awareness training would help here.

Other sub –groups reiterated the view that college education should be meaningful, progressive and lead ultimately to employment opportunity. Current courses were regarded as “ just somewhere to go”

People felt that it would be really helpful if the government could run a public awareness campaign around learning disability. The challenges people face, the support they might need, their desire and right to real social inclusion and the problem with discrimination and bullying were all topics they wanted to be addressed within this campaign. People described many different experiences of bullying and intolerance, in the street, on buses and trains etc. and felt that the police failed to take this seriously

and failed to respond appropriately. They were looking for greater public awareness and support.

Many people described a sense of exclusion, of not being fully integrated within their local communities, of being denied social, employment and educational opportunities. People talked of being “second-class citizens” and there was a general desire for a community awareness-raising programme which would help people with learning disabilities be a greater and more contributing member of their local community. People wanted help from the government around this issue.