

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 X No

The findings of the evaluation broadly reflect our views about services for people with learning disabilities. With over seventy separate “priorities” listed the report would benefit from greater focus which the current consultation process may help it to achieve. The review is also taking place along side several other significant national policy developments such as, Self Directed Support, Health and Social Care Integration, progression of National Outcomes linking to SOA, The National Autism Strategy, national Welfare Reform and the Doran review in Education. It would be helpful for the report to link key findings from these areas to both inform their understanding of Learning Disability issues and assess the impact of this significant agenda for change on Learning Disability services to assist the framing of future national Learning Disability Policy.

Lastly greater exploration of the impact of the increasing demand for more individualised support with more individuals who have increasingly complex care needs, at a time of continued financial constraint would be useful.

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?*

Over the past ten years the “Same As You” has helped set policy direction for the following key outcomes for people with Learning Disabilities:

1. Enabling and Sustaining Independence
2. Promoting Inclusion
3. Meeting Healthcare Needs
4. Meeting Lifelong Learning Needs
5. Safety and Protection

This has brought about significant changes in the commissioning and provision of services and in turn the lives of many individuals who now have much greater community support for independent living. Both at a National and Local level the promotion of more individual, person centred approaches continues to encourage and positively challenge our understanding of how support can be delivered, for service users, carers and providers alike. Many more people with Learning Disabilities are now supported in their own tenancies and increasingly there are wider opportunities for young people to attend mainstream education. At the same time the “Same As You?” recognised that were people required more specialised care, access such services should also be made available.

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

While the ongoing development of increasing personalisation, promoting independence and Inclusion can be recognised as key successes for the "Same As You?" they also present issues which need to be addressed. The following areas present on-going challenges which may require greater attention.

Keeping safe

Extensive evidence suggests that many disabled people still experience harassment or abuse as part of their every day life and that there remains a lack of recognition of the scale and nature of this problem ("Hidden in Plain Sight" Equality and Human Rights Commission 2011). It might be useful for each Health Board and Local Authority to agree and implement a specific Action Plan to address this matter along with national government support.

Transitions

Transition planning remains central to meeting key national and local outcomes for supporting people with learning disabilities, as noted within SAY? (2000). This is dependent upon good joint working across and within a range of key partner agencies. Work to effectively address and evidence developments remains ongoing and this would remain a priority area to ensure better positive post school education and employment outcomes for people with learning disabilities. In addition it is recognised from the recently published national Autism Strategy there are gaps in provision for young people in transition with ASD.

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?

During the past ten years West Lothian Council in partnership with other key stakeholders have developed a range of support services in line with the core principle of the Same As You?. This has included the progressive development of a Person Centred approach to supporting independence. Along with other partners across Lothian through the Lothian Learning Disability Partnership Board outline PCP Standards have been adopted. The Partnership Board has also set out a agreed Hate Crime Action Plan to raise awareness of this important issue.

Improved partnership working between Council and Health services has also supported, jointly funded Advocacy, emergency carer support and services for people with Asperger's through services such as "Number 6". In addition there have been a number of other improvements which include

increases to Local Area Co-ordination, Acute Hospital Liaison Nurses and Enhanced General Practice services.

West Lothian Council has also progressively reviewed the range of day support services with an increasing focus on individual support. In accordance with the "Same As You?" national review, West Lothian council recognises the need to ensure that Learning Disability Day services continue to be customer focused and person centred.

West Lothian College Assisted Programmes Staff have worked with our Social Policy Community Inclusion Team to redesign the part time portfolio in order to ensure the delivery of a more appropriate set of courses. As a result we will be delivering a year long Independent Living Programme which is intended to support those individuals who are moving into their own accommodation. Part-time courses are also run in a variety of other areas including catering, photography and art.

Good Practice - Individuals

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

N/A

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?

Health Inequalities

It is not surprising that with more people with a learning Disability living in the community then there will be greater need to ensure good access to Health services.

The risks associated with gaps in the accessibility of good healthcare for people with Learning Disabilities have been clearly documented in reports such as "Death by Indifference".

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) formal investigation into physical health inequalities experienced by people with learning disabilities and mental health problems. The investigation showed that people with a learning disability receive fewer screening tests and fewer health investigations. It showed that people with a learning disability are less likely to get the healthcare they need. Although some improvements have been made through targeted Health Inequality funding further work remains to be addressed. This includes the prioritisation given to people with a learning disability, training for healthcare professionals as many do not understand much about learning disability and relevant legislation. The DRC identified diagnostic overshadowing as a key barrier to people with a learning disability getting equal treatment. Diagnostic overshadowing is when doctors make faulty assumptions about people with a learning disability, revealing an overall lack of training and skills in understanding learning disability. They may wrongly believe that a presenting problem is a feature of someone's learning disability and that not much can be done about it. In its report the DRC calls for 'improved staff training' explicitly to reduce the risk of 'diagnostic overshadowing and unequal treatment'.

Future Priorities - Education

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

West Lothian Council has continued to promote inclusion for pupils with disabilities.

For children with special needs a co-ordinated approach continues to be taken to deliver care, working in partnership with other agencies, including integrated assessment, co-ordination of care, joint care plan documentation and jointly provided packages.

All partners are committed to develop opportunities for lifelong learning with Further Education establishments in line with recommendation (15) of 'The Same as You?'. Performance in this area continues to be monitored via national SAY returns.

Maintaining our Links with West Lothian College we continue to seek to develop more flexible and responsive services, which support people in the community through lifelong learning.

On a national level against a backdrop the regionalisation of the Further Education sector assess to Assisted Programmes will be affected by additional travel costs were programmes remain available. The further development of how education provision links with transition, employment and training opportunities needs further exploration.

Future Priorities – Independent Living

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

Assuming the continuation of the current national trends, in the coming years Learning Disability Services would expect to see further developments aimed at shifting the balance of care from institutional models of care to those enabling and sustaining greater independence. The on-going challenge will be to deliver more individualised packages of care, while assuring quality and safety within the limited resources. The development of these trends will subsequently shape all areas of our existing services from assessment and care planning to provision. Overall we expect that there will be, more people with learning disabilities with a greater access to person-centred / self-directed support. This will include improved opportunities for training, education, employment and daytime / social activities with a wider choice of accommodation and independent living. For people with complex needs, we anticipate a more integrated approach between NHS and council services on the provision of accommodation and care services.

Personalisation and Self Directed Support (SDS) have generated a national debate regarding the possibility of new and potentially innovative approaches to the assessment, allocation and self-management of

individual care services. All local authorities along with the NHS will be expected to further consider the development of such models for service provision in the coming years.

Some of the challenges that the local authorities will face when working towards delivering this agenda include:

- Fundamental shifts in policies and changing culture within organisations.
- Workforce capacity
- Working within limited financial budgets
- Developing more joint working between health and social work
- Access to quality housing through housing providers, the council and social landlords
- The Impact of Welfare reform

Future Priorities – Employment

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

The Same as You? national implementation group on Employment (Working for a change? 2003) confirmed that people with a learning disability, like everyone else, have an expectation of employment. It went on to recommend that agencies and employers work together effectively to provide continuity and person-centred support on and off the job.

In the current financial climate finding suitable employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities remains challenging. Increasing pressures on the employment market for the general population have progressively been reflected in reduced employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities. Nevertheless opportunities for partnership working are significant in this area and West Lothian council and NHS Lothian would anticipate greater partnership working to support more people with a learning disability into employment. This would include the involvement of local colleges, health services, local authority services and independent sector providers. Such partnership working would bring together a range of experience relevant to working with people with learning disabilities and increase opportunities for income generation. The SAY? Evaluation report has already noted the need to adopt a joined-up approach to enabling employment across social care, health, education, employability and welfare strategies and for Public sector employers to aim to employ more people with learning disabilities in meaningful roles.

In addition improved recognition of the social return on investment for supporting social enterprise development at a national level may be helpful.

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)**

All Local authority and NHS Learning Disability services are affected by increases in population, greater numbers of individuals with complex needs, an ageing carer population and more people with special needs (e.g. ASD). Across the whole of Scotland there are increasingly more people with learning disability. People with learning disabilities are living longer and there are more people with complex needs requiring higher levels of care and support from Local Authority services.

Simultaneously additional pressures arise from, policies within the context of the national agenda for change (e.g. SAY? 2000 & Changing Lives 2006, Personalisation,), changing legislation (e.g. SDS, AWI 2000 Act, MH 2003 Act ASP Act 2007) and users and carers asking for more individualised, flexible and responsive services.

The Same As You 2000 recommended that people's homes should not be in hospitals. However, at the same time it also recognised that they would need to keep a small number of in-patient places for some people with learning disabilities. Given the change in demographics, the significant shift to community based supports and the increased use of statutory orders under the Mental Health Act it would seem appropriate to revisit this estimate to ensure better future planning at a national level.