

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

Angus Council would agree that the evaluation findings broadly reflect our views. We did however consider that the original survey sample was a relatively small sample for a national evaluation. We also consider that the “Same As You?” evaluation largely reflects the views of those people with a learning disability who are of higher ability and that those with more severe disabilities do not necessarily have their views reflected in the evaluation. It is our view that the needs of people with complex needs, severe and profound disabilities are not being met in the same way as other people with a learning disability and that they do not have the same opportunities and choices.

The potential impact of the welfare reforms will be considerable for people with a learning disability and we feel that this is not addressed in the evaluation.

We are of the view that the lives of people with a learning disability and/or autism have improved since the implementation of “The Same As You?” and that more people are having more control and choice in how they live their life.

Some local examples are given below:

- More people are now supported to live independently in their own homes with appropriate packages of support. There are still some people in unsuitable housing.
- People with learning disabilities/autism have more choices to live their lives the way they want to, particularly in relation to a range of meaningful day opportunities, although there are still improvements that can be made in this area.
- There are more opportunities for paid employment, work focused activities, lifelong learning and volunteering, but there are more people who would like paid employment.
- Supports for people with learning disabilities/autism are more outcome focused and more person centred, resulting in increased social and educational activities, more peer support and more opportunities to develop skills.
- There are more inclusive transition opportunities.
- There is more consultation and involvement with individuals and their families in the design of services.
- Public attitudes towards people with learning disabilities/autism are more positive and more community facilities are inclusive and accessible.
- Support for carers still needs to improve.

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 “Same As You?” provided a clear direction nationally for the development and improvement of learning disability services which encouraged partnership working and new and creative ways of working. This has increased choices and supports available to people with a learning disability in the areas of respite, day care and accommodation and has supported a reduction in the number of people living in hospital settings. It has also resulted in a more focus being given to supported employment, training and further education although these areas still require more development.

Some local examples of what has worked well are given below:

- We now have dementia ambassadors.
- There is more independent living opportunities and more focus on community inclusion.
- There are more suitable college courses to attend and more lifelong learning opportunities. There is more joint working with colleges to provide vocational and accredited training.
- There are more staff trained in person centred thinking and approaches and more life plans.
- There is more choice of daytime activities and in choosing how to spend your day. This includes more support and opportunities to access local community facilities and to make community connections. This is resulting in more social opportunities and stronger links being forged with local communities.
- There is more public acceptance and more awareness of people's rights. The public are less judgmental and discriminatory. More public facilities have improved access and equipment for those with complex disabilities. E.g. hoists in swimming pools.
- Adult protection legislation has helped lower the risks that people face.
- There is more support for employment and work related activities.
- Scotland wide bus passes are available to some. There is more access to public transport including improved bus routes, accessible timetables and safer bus stops/locations.
- There is a wider range of information available to people, when they need it in a way they understand and more involvement in the development of services and supports. There have been improvements in accessibility of information such as parenting and diabetes. There is more consultation with individuals and families.
- There are more people living the lives they want such as living independently and having a job. Increased access to advocacy services and supports has enabled more people to express their views and make decisions.

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

Funding remains an issue that needs to be addressed within the new strategy. Previous funding sources have been stopped and dried up such as Resource Transfer and Independent Living Fund and there are no new funding streams available. There is therefore less resources to meet an increasing need at a time when the needs of people with a learning disability are becoming increasingly complex and challenging. Due to the complexity of this need, crisis response is a critical issue and service availability and flexibility remains an issue in order to adequately respond.

Supported employment has had limited success nationally and more should be done in this area such as incentive schemes for employers, statutory agencies leading by example and a policy and clear direction nationally in relation to supported employment.

There is a need to ensure the new Scottish Strategy for Autism and the new learning disability strategy are aligned and to make clear if the learning disability strategy includes those people with a learning disability and autism or all people with autism.

Further education services do not adequately address the needs of people with a learning disability and how they will be addressed should be clearly laid out in policy.

It would also be helpful for the future strategy to clarify the role of the GP in supporting people with a learning disability. There remains inconsistency both locally and nationally on this role.

Further local examples of what still need to be addressed are given below:

- There are a lack of care providers who have the skills, experience and appropriately trained staff to support people well, particularly those with complex needs such as behaviour that challenges, autism, mental health issues and offending behaviour and a lack of suitable accommodation locally to support them, particularly those who still reside in a hospital environment.

- The local authority and NHS should address issues of jointly funding packages of care and administration of medication in the community so that individuals with complex needs are not disadvantaged and have restricted choices because of the complexity of their needs.

- More training and work opportunities are required, particularly for those with autism and/or other complex needs. More paid employment opportunities are needed.

- More help for carers is required, in particular more flexible respite options and better quality respite.

- More opportunities for independent living are needed.

- Public transport still needs to be more readily available and accessible, particularly for those in outlying rural locations.
- The benefit system and application process needs to be easier to navigate and understand and information needs to be more readily available and accessible.

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

Main developments have been around improved care management arrangements on a multi-agency basis and developing an integrated service and integrated teams with NHS Tayside. Better contract monitoring arrangements and closer partnership working with external care providers have been put in place.

A comprehensive transition pathway has been developed between all relevant agencies such as education, health, social work, further education establishments and adult learning providers to support individuals and families in transition from children to adult services and plan their transition supports early using a multi disciplinary approach. The Support for Learning Act was a catalyst for this work.

We have undertaken a joint project with public and private transport providers in Angus to achieve more accessible public transport vehicles, make required changes to bus routes, re-locate bus stops, introduce a symbol system to public transport and introduce user friendly timetables.

A main focus of our redesign has also been on the development of more flexible day opportunities, respite options, employment, college support, and supported living opportunities. Day opportunities have become more meaningful with more flexible options being provided to individuals including via direct payments and accessing provider support as well as those services provided by the local authority.

Further local examples of what we have done are given below:

- Developed a learning disability liaison team with health partners.
- Introduced a Down's Syndrome clinic.
- Promoted a health improvement approach within the integrated health and social work teams
- Established 2 full time transition care manager posts that work directly with individuals and families from the age of 14 onwards to support the transition process.
- Established an employment support team to follow the national

employment support model in providing a range of work related opportunities such as job ready groups, work with colleges to provide accredited vocational training courses and work skills course, support individuals in employment planning and obtaining work skills, work with local employers to provide work experience placements leading to paid employment, support individuals in paid employment and support employers providing paid employment to individuals.

- Established a college support team to provide support to enable individuals to access mainstream college courses in their local area.
- Established a leisure and recreation service that supports individuals to access community facilities in their local communities and make community connections whilst encouraging people to create natural supports and become less dependent on staff support. This also provides an alternative to day centres.
- Provided more flexible respite options for families including the establishment of a short breaks service, a dedicated respite unit and the provision of respite at home.
- Increased opportunities for independent and supported living.
- Trained all staff in person centred thinking and approaches including the training of facilitators accredited to the National Development Team. This included training in community inclusion and making connections and has involved a huge life plan initiative and ongoing staff training resulting in the implementation of better quality life plans. There has also been the introduction of 2 user friendly documents that provide good support to ward staff when people are going into hospital and comprehensive information about pain management and support.
- There have been improvements in accessibility of information and more consultation with individuals and families.
- Supported and developed more volunteering opportunities.

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

Not applicable

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

More work with GPs is required in relation to how they address health issues for people with learning disabilities. A more comprehensive database system identifying people with learning disabilities to GP's needs to be developed. There is still inequity in accessing primary health care provision for people with learning disabilities across the Angus area and nationally.

Annual health screening checks for people with a learning disability should be provided by GP practices. There should be a dedicated acute liaison team in every practice in the country.

Health care professionals need to have a better understanding and knowledge of people with a learning disability/autism, particularly how to communicate effectively with them and best support them. Some people with a learning disability still experience impatience from health professionals. There is a need for training in supporting people with a learning disability on best practice for some health professionals and the development of guidance.

Other local suggestions are listed below:

- Practical support should be available to help people with appointments and longer appointment slots should be available. Some individuals require access to appointments at a time that suits them due to specific needs. Appointment times often do not coincide with local transport times causing further difficulties for individuals and their families. Perhaps each surgery could have a trained staff member who manages appointments for people with a learning disability/autism, who can better understand the needs of the individual.
- There needs to be a wider range of user friendly health information and information regarding health needs and procedures. This needs to be given to people at the right time and include information about any changes to an individual's health care.

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

As already stated, further education services do not adequately address the needs of people with a learning disability and this should be clearly laid out in policy and should include the role of the college in educating people with a learning disability.

Further clarity is required regarding the role of further education establishments in providing additional support and care for those who attend college who require this and there is inconsistency nationally about how this support is supplied and by whom.

The proposed merging of Angus and Dundee college may result in excluding people with learning disabilities from attending college due to transport difficulties.

Further local examples are given below:

- Further work with colleges to deliver certified work focused courses and courses focussed on independent living skills.
- Continued work with educational establishments to further develop accessible courses and options for people with complex needs. There needs to be more support made available for people with complex needs to access educational opportunities.
- College courses to be more practice based with a greater range of options There needs to be more access and support made available to help people undertaking qualifications. Support provided by colleges such as scribes or adaptations should match student need rather than students being slotted into where this is available.
- There is a need for more course choices and more supported courses in a wider variety of subjects. In particular, there is a need for more choice of courses that could lead to employment and more opportunity to be part of mainstream college courses.
- Teachers and college staff should be better trained to understand the needs of people with a learning disability and autism and support them well. This includes displaying more tolerance if people do not understand.
- There is a need for more accessible information to be provided by colleges.
- There needs to be better inclusion of people with a learning disability into mainstream education from a young age and they should not be excluded from school when problems arise specifically relating to their condition.
- There needs to be a more varied variety of work experience courses in secondary school and easier access to educational transport to enable people to access a variety of learning opportunities.

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

There is a need for a range of more suitable accommodation and more supported housing options particularly for those with complex needs and those still living in a hospital environment. This includes the need for more accessible places for people to live in safe areas of the community. The lack of funding sources already mentioned and cessation of Independent Living Fund is prohibitive in taking this forward. More investment in specialist accommodation is required.

New housing regulations regarding housing benefit for people with learning disabilities where payment will be made for only one bedroom needs to be addressed as additional care needs often require that an additional bedroom is made available.

Particularly within the private provider market, large group living environments still exist and this needs to be addressed.

Other local issues are detailed below:

- **There needs to be better communication between housing and other relevant agencies.**
- **There is a need for more highly qualified and trained staff and provider options for people with complex needs including more flexible and consistent support and more flexible support times. There is also a need for provider staff to promote enablement and independence. The current 'block contract' system in place detracts from this as providers do not want to lose business or funding if individuals require less support.**
- **Support for people with current and future benefit changes.**

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

Nationally, this is an area of the “Same As You?” that seems to have been least effective. Local initiatives have had limited success and we consider that there should be a national directive developed regarding employment for people with a learning disability aimed at employer participation. This could include giving employers incentives to provide employment opportunities for example and encouraging statutory agencies to meet percentage quota targets relating to the numbers of employees with a learning disability.

Pupils with a learning disability should not automatically be excluded from school work experience placements.

Further local examples of what still needs to be done are given below:

- Provide more varied and accessible work experience placements and job opportunities including more work experience in real work settings.
- Social enterprise projects to include training opportunities for individuals on the autistic spectrum.
- Have a fairer benefits system that encourages employment including raising the disregard amount for claimants and provide more accessible information relating to better off in work calculations.
- Raise employer awareness of the benefits of employing people with a learning disability/autism and provide better access to information, education and support for employers.
- Have regular work focused events for local employers to attend.
- Provide more help and information about support available for employment and more job opportunities including more courses on applying for jobs and more workshops with information about jobs.

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

Ensuring the national policy dovetails with the autism strategy and that the strategy makes practical changes that will make a difference to people's lives.

Ensuring that the new policy places a focus on the needs of people with severe to profound learning disabilities that tend to have the highest cost care packages and live in more institutionalised forms of care.

Focus on training the workforce to be competent and knowledgeable in supporting people with complex needs, particularly autism. This may include integrated skills sets that identify the competencies required to support the complexities in need now being presented.

Identifying the needs of older carers separately within the national policy.

Reviewing the eSAY statistical return to produce more consistent and accurate results and a more effective system of performance reporting.

Addressing the funding issues that have already been highlighted in this response within the national policy.

Other future priorities are listed below:

- **Develop appropriate accommodation and good support for people with complex needs such as those with autism, behaviour that challenges and those with restricted liberty to enable them to move from hospital to community settings.**
- **There is a need for a more skilled, specialist and knowledgeable provider market to provide good quality care and support for people with complex needs, particularly autism.**
- **Make the benefits system easier to understand and access. Have a fairer benefits system that encourages employment including raising the disregard amount for claimants.**