

Learning Disability Consultations Executive Summary

This Executive Summary sets out the key points of the two separate Learning Disability consultations which took place from December 2016 and February 2017 to gain people's views about what future support and services should look like for people with Learning Disabilities.

1. The Consultation

- 1.1 The first public consultation took place from 5 December 2016 to 2 February 2017 with customers and residents of Rotherham regarding the Learning Disability and Autism offer.
- 1.2 The 90 day consultation provided a questionnaire which was co-produced with the not for profit organisation Speak Up. This asked for input from customers, carers, staff and members of the public on the Learning Disabilities and Autism offer within Rotherham.
- 1.3 The questionnaire was available online by hard copy on request and information was also captured through 23 separate engagement events across the borough.
- 1.4 There were 627 people from across Rotherham who engaged in the completion of questionnaires or attended one of the 23 engagement opportunities (one to ones, focus / discussion groups). This consisted of customers, carers, staff, members of the public and stakeholders, and young people who may access services in the future.
- 1.5 A total of 487 questionnaires were completed either online or via requesting a hard copy.
- 1.6 70% of the customers who completed the questionnaire had a Learning Disability and 5% had Autism. The majority were young with 70% being under the age of 45.
- 1.7 The second piece of consultation took place from 27th September – 22nd December 2017 and focussed on people thoughts and opinions of the current in house services service provision.
- 1.8 The online questionnaire was co-produced with over 100 people and was easy read. Hard copy questionnaires were provided upon request. In addition to the online questionnaire there was a series of engagement sessions across the borough.
- 1.9 People with a learning disability, carers, and stakeholders had the opportunity to engage digitally through a range of methods including, on line questionnaire, planned webinars' and a dedicated inbox for more individual and specific enquires.
- 1.10 The total online questionnaires completed were 497 with 47 people attending engagement sessions.

2. Key Themes from the two consultations.

- 2.1 There were some key themes from the consultations that have informed the development of the Learning Disability Strategy, the future vision and the delivery plan (see Appendix C).

- 2.2 Support to improve Choice and Control. 15% of those who responded said that they already have support they needed. A further 15% wanted more support and for those who came up with suggestions some wanted more choice and said that this may come from having a job and gaining more independence.
- 2.3 Opportunity to Work. 51% of customers said that they would want to work or volunteer (if not already). Some made suggestions about working in a bar, bakers shop, café and library and 11% wanted to work outside (parks, gardens etc). Some customers were more creative with their ideas;
- 2.4 Travel - The response was overwhelming, with 67% of people suggesting support for travel training and bus buddies, with an escort and community transport for those who are more vulnerable.
- 2.5 Future Planning. From the 92 carer respondents who were asked if the person they cared for had a plan in place for the future, 85% said no. There were worries about the future and a time when carers are no longer around. There were also anxieties around services closing.
- 2.6 Availability and Access to Services - There was a concern from people that there are insufficient services for people with a learning disability in Rotherham. There is also a perception of a lack of services/groups available and lack of local groups to access.
- 2.7 Health and Well-being - Out of the 23 engagement opportunities, health and wellbeing was raised at 22 events. Within the health and wellbeing theme, friendships were of key importance. Participants placed significance on the importance of maintaining friendship groups, making new friends and socialising outside of day centres:

"I would like to see my friends more outside of the day centre" (People's Parliament)

"Friendships are more important than where he is based".

"People currently think that Day Centres are the only option as this is what they are used to"

- 2.8 Carers Views. Carers outlined their own perspective on the quality of what a service should be like in the future;
- One third of carers want the services to remain the same
 - Others want the same and more investment
 - A third want more integration into the community
 - Approximately 22 out of 55 (40%) of the staff focused on advocating for the buildings and equipment in day centres, the majority (60%) focused on the need to offer choice, personalisation and flexibility in the services provided

Carers comments included

"He needs stimulating learning and socialising mixing with young people like himself with trained staff".

“People currently think that Day Centres are the only option as this is what they are used to”

“No care available for complex needs in Rotherham - need to access out of borough services”.

“We need to move away from a one size fits all thought to look at individuals to get the right placement for them, with people of same interests, age groups etc” and that there should be “community resources for all, not just people with learning disabilities”

“I am worried about loneliness and the accessibility of services and available services”

“Goes to Oaks as there is nothing else”

“Day Centres can’t provide choice”

“Day services unable to provide activities”

2.9 Other people felt that the current Day Centres:-

- Do not meet need
- No one to ones in place at day centre so some customers are bored
- People are pigeon holed and aren't given opportunity to try things at day centres
- Day centres should not be the only option available
- Day centres are unable to provide activities

2.10 Some people with learning disabilities commented they had to rely on others to get out and about and that money impacted on their ability to take part in activities they would like.

2.11 Some people with learning disabilities felt that their carer’s and the people who worked with them tried to put their opinions on to them, and that the parent/carer and some staff would tell them what to do, and would continue to make decisions for them.

“X is not able to make choices and control, X is better being told what to do rather than being given a choice”

2.12 People with learning disabilities felt there that the lack of other services impacted on their ability to have choice and control.

2.13 Respite services

People who responded felt that the respite was:

- important to support carers in their caring role.
- however not all carers have access to respite care as the service is not accessible to all people with a learning disability.
- there is a need to make respite accessible, fair and to enhance the skills of staff to support a wide range of support needs in a personalised way.
- a fairer respite service is needed for access to all people with a learning disability including those with autism and physical disability.

Some of the quotes captured the following:

“I love this respite centre the staff are really nice and understand me and make me feel welcome”

“They could have more staff to support me”

“Technology could be improved such as iPads, more funding and include affordable holidays”

“Sometimes I would like to go somewhere else”

2.14. Respite service for people autism

People who responded felt that:

- Respite services need to be made more available and accessible
- Respite care services are important to support carers in their caring role.

However, not all carers have access to respite care as the service is not accessible to all people with a learning disability.

- There is a need to make them accessible, fair and to enhance the skills of staff to support a wide range of support needs in a personalised way.
- carers suggested ideas to improve the services, including more accessibility and flexibility in the service.

“I’d like to have more opportunities available with different venues and options. For example respite in environments with gardens, sensory rooms and people with similar disabilities and age ranges”

3. Conclusion

The two consultations have given us information and feedback about what people think about current services and how they would like support and services to look in the future. The key theme that runs from all the consultation is that they want support and services which are ‘about them’ with a person centred approach that meets their needs. People also want a wider range of options, opportunities and choice to help them live a more fulfilled and valued life.