

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 12 February 2024

Report Title

Learning Disability Strategy 2024 – 2027

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

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Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected.

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

Following Cabinet approval in March 2023 to co-produce a future vision and strategy for people with a learning disability, this report outlines the outcome of a three-month period of engagement on the future vision, values, themes, and priorities.

The report seeks approval to adopt a Learning Disability Strategy for 2024 – 2027.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet approve the new Council Learning Disability Strategy (2024 – 2027).

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Proposed Learning Disability Strategy (2024 – 2027)
Appendix 2 Engagement Analysis (Produced by the Consortium)
Appendix 4 Part A - Equality Analysis Screening
Appendix 4 Part B – Equality Analysis Form
Appendix 5 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

[Good Lives: Building Change Together – Learning Disability England](#)
Learning Disability Services Cabinet Paper 2023
[Cabinet - 20 March 2023 - Learning Disability Services Report](#)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Learning Disability Strategy 2024 – 2027

1. Background

- 1.1 In March 2023, Cabinet approved a period of engagement to develop a new vision and strategy for people with a learning disability in Rotherham.
- 1.2 Following this, significant time, capacity, and resources have been invested to enable effective engagement with people with a learning disability.
- 1.3 This subsequent report outlines the outcome of a three-month period of engagement with people with a learning disability, their families, unpaid carers, partners, and other key stakeholders. It seeks approval for the Council's Learning Disability Strategy for 2024 – 2027 (Appendix 1.)

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Engagement took place from 12 July 2023 to 10 October 2023 to seek the views of people with a learning disability, their families, unpaid carers and partners on the future vision, values, themes, and priorities for people with a learning disability.
- 2.2 The engagement was led by a consortium of organisations who worked with the Council. The consortium included Genuine Partnerships, Guiding Voices, Rotherham Parent Carers Forum and Speak Up.
- 2.3 Engagement principles were agreed with the consortium and five core areas of focus were identified. The five areas align with the previous Learning Disability Strategy for Rotherham, as well as Learning Disabilities England Good Lives Framework, and the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) pillars for young people preparing for adulthood. The five areas are:
 1. Education
 2. Employment
 3. Housing
 4. Health
 5. Community Inclusion
- 2.4 These core areas of focus also align with the Council Plan, Rotherham Partnership Place Plan, the Adult Social Care Strategy and Preparing for Adulthood priorities.

Engagement Outcome

- 2.5 The subsequent sections of this report cover the outcomes of the engagement in each of the five core areas of focus. The full engagement analysis produced by the consortium is at Appendix 2.
- 2.6 *Focus area: Education.* The areas identified as being important were:
 - Feeling included
 - More opportunities for lifelong learning

- Making physical, social, and mental health as big a priority as academic need
- Schools and colleges thinking more about my outcomes, life skills, preparing me for getting a job.
- Training for staff so that everybody understands me and how to meet my needs.
- Having clear information that I can understand.

2.7 Respondents said they wanted to be better prepared to become an independent adult. Therefore, the Learning Disability Strategy prioritises Preparing for Adulthood through implementing a new transitions pathway which will incorporate the person's voice in the development and implementation.

2.8 *Focus area: Employment.* The areas identified as being important were:

- Having less worry about the future, and work
- Transport
- Being valued
- Accessible recruitment
- Reasonable adjustments
- Seek feedback and listen.
- Employ more staff from diverse backgrounds.

2.9 Improved employment opportunities for people with a learning disability has been included as a priority within the Learning Disability Strategy. This will further build on the commitment from the Council and partners to increase employment opportunities for everyone in the Borough. The Learning Disability Strategy seeks to build on the successes of the learning disability employment pathway launched in 2023, to improve, sustain and broaden employment choices and opportunities for people with a learning disability.

2.10 *Focus area: Housing.* The areas identified as being important were:

- You need to understand that thinking about housing causes me worries and anxieties.
- Appropriate, affordable housing that I can stay in as long as I wish, whatever my needs.
- Friendly face to support from the council because applying for housing, and managing a house that meets my needs, is complicated and overwhelming.
- Living with or close to people I have something in common with, in places I know:
- Continuing to have support to develop independent living skills. I want to live as independently as possible.
- Better multi-agency working to improve communication.
- Addressing the financial barriers to work created by supported housing.

2.11 Whilst some people with a learning disability, previously accommodated within hospital or clinical settings have successfully moved into bespoke accommodation and support as part of the Transforming Care agenda, there is further work to take forward within the Learning Disability Strategy.

2.12 The Council has already committed to ensuring there are appropriate accommodation solutions for people with a learning disability. This work is progressing well, with the planned delivery of Council built accommodation and planned implementation of a new Flexible Purchasing System. Accommodation with support continues as a priority within the life span of the Learning Disability Strategy.

2.13 *Focus area: Health.* The areas identified as being important were:

- Quicker diagnoses and access to help
- The transition between children's services to adult services
- Making it easier for me to book appointments for myself and offering me help to do this if I need it.
- Closer partnership working
- Having more accessible (easy read) information and advice for me and people who support me.

2.14 What people told us was important to them aligns with the priorities within the refreshed Preparing for Adulthood priorities. The Learning Disability Strategy has been designed to demonstrate the commitment to continue to build on the positive collaboration with health partners including development of joint pathways.

2.15 Whilst Rotherham has achieved the national target of 75% of people with a learning disability receiving an annual health check this will continue to be an area of priority within the Learning Disability Strategy to ensure more people can access the support available to them.

2.16 Learning Disability England, as part of its "Good Lives Framework" will be focussing on health during 2024. This will provide opportunities for the Council to link with areas of best practice and further enhance the support offer at a local level.

2.17 *Focus area: Community Inclusion.* The areas identified as being important were:

- Supportive environments
- Focus on life skills to support independence.
- Being able to travel to more places.
- Help you make friends.
- More people should be helped to have a voice.

2.18 People told us they were not always aware of the services and opportunities available. The Learning Disability Strategy will prioritise this to ensure that people with a learning disability have accessible information and a voice which is heard and listened to.

2.19 The "My Front Door" website was co designed with people with a learning disability to be easily accessible and links in with the "Local Offer" that also provides SEND information. Feedback from people accessing both websites has been very positive, but it is acknowledged that there is more that can be done to ensure information is fully accessible. The Learning Disability Strategy therefore prioritises the development of the Adult Social Care web pages, which will link into the My Front

Door website, to further strengthen the information and advice offer for people with a learning disability.

2.20 The narrative and outcomes from the engagement reflects the need for better communication about what is already happening in Rotherham. The feedback from respondents illustrates that work that is already taking place is not necessarily known or understood by people with a learning disability, their families, and some practitioners.

2.21 Furthermore, respondents identified two overall priorities that were most important to them during the engagement process:

- *Turning this into a longer-term strategy for people with learning disabilities*

The Learning Disability Strategy therefore brings together a vision and commitment to further build on successes already achieved and provide a clear journey for improvement support for people with a learning disability in both the short and long term.

- *Better quality assurance that takes account of what I say*

The commitment to develop coproduction and inclusive communication has been included as a key priority within the Learning Disability Strategy. This aligns with the Adult Social Care vision and work is underway to implement a model of co-production.

2.22 Building on the engagement outcomes has culminated in the following vision for the Learning Disability Strategy for Rotherham:

People with a learning disability are empowered, have a strong voice, and are enabled to make choices so that people feel included, safe, and secure.

2.23 The vision will be achieved through delivery of the priorities for people with a learning disability. The priorities will be co-produced and delivered in partnership with people with a learning disability, unpaid carers, and other professionals and partners. The full list of priorities can be accessed in the Learning Disability Strategy (Appendix 1).

Co-Production and Governance

2.24 What people said was very important to them was how they were treated and included. The views expressed by the respondents aligns with Rotherham's Four Cornerstones of Co-production and Inclusive Practice, where the focus is on:

- *Welcome and Care*
- *Value and Include*
- *Communication*
- *Partnership*

- 2.25 The Learning Disability Strategy therefore prioritises co production and the voice of people with a learning disability. The strategy will adopt the Four Cornerstone principles when working with people with a learning disability to deliver the Learning Disability Strategy priorities.
- 2.26 Several people with a learning disability, family members, unpaid carers, practitioners, and community groups have indicated that they would like to be involved in the co-produced delivery of the Learning Disability Strategy. This positive appetite to support co-production in the future will provide a strong and sustainable framework to develop and deliver on the priorities within the Learning Disability Strategy.
- 2.27 A workshop has already taken place with stakeholders and people with lived experience to feedback the engagement outcomes and agree what the delivery of a successful Learning Disability Strategy should look like. The workshop developed a “Making the Strategy Happen” map which will form the basis for delivery of the priorities.
- 2.28 The Learning Disability Strategy and delivery of the priorities will be governed by the Learning Disability Partnership Board which is jointly chaired by the Lead Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and people with lived experience.

3. **Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 **Option 1** It is recommended that Cabinet approve the new Learning Disability Strategy for the subsequent 3-year term (2024 – 2027). The Learning Disability Strategy provides clarity about the future priorities for people with a learning disability. It also enables continued engagement and a voice for people with a learning disability. **(Recommended)**
- 3.2 **Option 2** Do not approve the new Learning Disability Strategy. Without the Learning Disability Strategy, it will be unclear what the future priorities are for people with a learning disability and therefore difficult to plan services accordingly. It is important that following engagement people’s views are clearly represented in the Learning Disability strategy. In addition, it is an expectation of the new Care Quality Commission Assessment Framework for all Local Authorities that Learning Disability Strategies are in place. **(Not recommended)**

4. **Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 Engagement took place from 12 July 2023 to 10 October 2023 to seek the views of people with a learning disability, their families, unpaid carers and partners on the future vision, values, themes, and priorities for people with a learning disability.
- 4.2 The engagement was led by a consortium of organisations who worked with the Council. The consortium included Genuine partnerships, Guiding Voices, Rotherham Parent Carers Forum and Speak Up.
- 4.3 A stakeholder workshop agreed the scope of the engagement and areas important to people with learning disabilities, their family and unpaid carers.

- 4.4 Open questions were asked for each focus area, with supporting prompts to think about what was working, not working and what needs to change. The qualitative nature of the open questions was designed to avoid limitations and provide as much agency and scope as possible for people to have a meaningful voice and include things that are important to them personally. There was also an opportunity in the final section for people to add things that are important to them beyond the focus areas.
- 4.5 In total 249 people participated in the engagement activities, either as part of a group or individually including:
- 17 groups
 - 77 people with a learning disability (all but 1 with help or as part of a group)
 - 123 people with a learning disability and autism (all but 5 with help or as part of a group)
 - 17 family members or unpaid carers
 - 24 people in paid roles (across Education, Health, Social Care, children's and adult services, voluntary and community sector)
 - 8 other categories
- 4.6 Feedback was gathered in a variety of ways to maximise reach and enable people with living experience to engage with the focus areas, supported by people with whom they were most likely to feel comfortable.
- 4.7 The consortium devised an electronic survey that was disseminated to Schools, Colleges and specialist education needs and disability (SEND) services, adult services, Health partners and Rotherham voluntary and community organisations. Paper copies were also made available. The Council re-created the survey on their website and took the survey to the Rotherham Show in September.
- 4.8 Genuine Partnerships and Guiding Voices engaged participants at Rotherham Parent Carers Forum's Disability Fun Day in August.
- 4.9 A significant amount of information was gathered in the engagement exercise to allow the Council to develop a robust Learning Disability Strategy, but it is recognised that efforts will continue to be made to capture these opinions and voices which were not fully represented in the current engagement. This has been included as a priority within the proposed Learning Disability Strategy.
- 4.10 Incentives were offered to Schools, Colleges, Council, voluntary and community groups to facilitate an activity based on a presentation created by the consortium.
- 4.11 Respondents were asked to identify whether they are people with a learning disability or people with a learning disability and autism, their age group and whether they needed help to complete the survey, a family/carer, or a practitioner (and if so, which sector/organisation they represent). The full engagement analysis can be accessed at Appendix 2.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision.

- 5.1 February 2024 – Launch the Learning Disability Strategy with people with a learning disability their families, unpaid carers, and partners.
- 5.2 March 2024 – Coproduce the development of the priorities within the Learning Disability Strategy.
- 5.3 September 2024 – Report to Cabinet, via the annual Local Account update, on progress on delivering the priorities.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.
- 6.2 There are no immediate financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 The Care Act 2014 requires the local authority to identify those members of the community, 18 or older, who require care services. Having assessed and identified eligible unmet needs, the Council, in consultation with users of the services and their families and/or carers must meet those needs. To do so, the Council is required to engage with stakeholders to develop services which are accessible and acceptable to this group.
- 7.2 This is an area of service provision which is multi-faceted and complex and requires a detailed understanding of the local area, what services/provision is available and where the gaps are in the market. Section 5 of the Care Act 2014 also places a responsibility on the Council to promote equality and quality in provision of services for those in need of support. The proposed Strategy aims to put the individual at the heart of the process and, with their help, to develop services which not only meet their needs but in which they feel they have an investment.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 The Learning Disability strategy will be for people with a learning disability including those individuals preparing for adulthood. The strategy therefore encapsulates our ambition for all young people to:
 - Grow up prepared for the future.
 - Have improved health and wellbeing.
 - Be able to exercise control over the support they receive.

- Be able to receive support locally from a range of services that everyone values.
- For all young people to have an opportunity to have their own 'front door'
- Ensure the right support is in place based on where the young person lives.

9.2

For adults with a learning disability to:

- Have the opportunity to get a job and contribute to their community.
- Have the opportunity to choose where they live.
- Have access to a good quality health service.
- Be kept safe and protected from all forms of exploitation.
- Access services of the highest quality which make a difference in assisting people to be as independent as possible.
- Offer services that are affordable, are personalised and are what people would want to choose.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 Equalities Assessments have been completed to inform the proposals – see Appendix 3 and 4. The proposals in this report support the Council to comply with legal obligations encompassed in the:

- Human Rights Act (1998), to treat everyone equally with fairness dignity and respect with a focus on those who are disadvantaged because of disability.
- Equality Act (2010) to legally protect people from discrimination in the wider society.

10.2 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 establishes the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires that the Council, as a public body, in carrying out its functions must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

10.3 The relevant protected characteristics referred to in the Equality Act are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. Public authorities also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status.

10.4 There is a duty on the Council to keep a record to demonstrate that it has genuinely and consciously had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 A Carbon Impact Assessment has been completed, see Appendix 5.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 Partners have been involved at all stages of the engagement and Learning Disability Strategy development. They are a crucial delivery partner in the Learning Disability Strategy implementation. A system approach to Learning Disabilities Services is essential for the achievement of improved outcomes for people with a learning disability.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Risk: that the Learning Disability Strategy is not known about or understood by people with a learning disability, families, and unpaid carers.

Mitigation: Communication and Engagement Plan is developed with Advocacy support and partners. Easy read version of the Learning Disability Strategy produced.

14. Accountable Officers

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Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	29/01/24
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	24/01/24
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	24/01/24

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