

Learning Disability Implementation Plan Consultation Outcome Report October 2023

1. Introduction

The Council and its partners have been working to refocus the work to support young people and adults with a learning disability who live in Lewisham or who are the responsibility of Lewisham Council or ICB. The focus has been on pulling together a plan of action that brings together into one place the workstreams that had been interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and so serves as a recovery plan.

The product of this work went out to consultation in September/ October 2023 as the Learning Disability Implementation Plan. The document identified seven (7) priorities for the development of services and support for people with a learning disability and their families. It set out proposals for a governance structure where five (5) delivery groups would be established each with their own action plan to be delivered and shaped across five years between 2024 and 2029. The work of those delivery groups would be the responsibility of a Learning Disability Partnership Board which itself would be to Lewisham Care Partners.

Respondents were asked to comment on the appropriateness of the identified priorities and were also asked to comment on three 'free text' questions:

1. Are there any other priorities that you would like to see us working on?
2. Three things that Lewisham needs to change, or get better at doing, for people with a learning disability?
3. Three things that Lewisham needs to change, or get better at doing, for people with a learning disability?

Respondents were also asked to complete equalities information about themselves: age, gender, ethnicity, and whether they had caring responsibilities.

2. The Consultation Process

The Consultation ran on Citizen Space for a period of six (6) weeks between the 13th of September 2023 and the 16th of October 2023. It was widely publicised on social media and other informal communication systems. A wide range of organisations working with people with a learning disability were sent the Plan and the link to the Consultation. Provider organisations with direct contact with the families of people with a learning disability were asked to distribute (350) letters to families advising of the consultation.

The Citizen Space and the hard copy letters sent out contained a direct contact mobile phone number and also advised that hard copies were available. Sixteen responses were received from the on-line consultation.

Additionally, three face to face sessions targeted at family carers were organised on the 2nd and 10th of October with a third session run slightly outside of the consultation period on the 26th of October 2023. A total of 14 family carers attended across the three events.

Lewisham Speaking Up ran five facilitated sessions for people with a Learning Disability – three (3) in person and two (2) online sessions. Fifty-two people with a learning disability attended these sessions.

A written submission was received from Lewisham Mencap.

3. Summary of consultation outcomes

While overall the number of respondents was low, there was good engagement from both web based and in person respondents.

There was general support for the seven priority areas identified (94 – 100%).

Responses to the free text questions were full. Responses to the question about 'other priorities that the Council could be working on' emphasised the importance of the wider accessibility across the borough to support citizenship'. Where not already included in the action plan used for the consultation, suggested actions will be used to strengthen the Priority 3 – A Life with Opportunities - delivery plan. There was also a focus on a priority that included was a more formal and visible assurance process looking at quality of staff: client interactions, not just contract compliance. It is envisaged that this will be added as an additional action to Priority 6 – A sustainable workforce – though there may be other priorities that it could sit better in, including Priority 3.

Respondents wrote less about what they felt the Council did well. Social opportunities such as those provided by 'Heart and Soul' and the Lewisham Mencap evening clubs were noted as positive, as was access to day opportunities and short breaks at home. This highlights the importance of socialisation and social interaction for people with a learning disability with peers, in addition to having supported access to other community opportunities.

With regard to what the Council could be doing better, many of the responses could have equally been included in the question on 'other priorities the Council could be working on'. Much of what people wanted to see was included in the consultation draft action plan. However, how people phrased their responses more powerfully reflected the direct experiences of family carers, particularly regarding social work assessment and the disjointedness caused by rapid staff turnover. Additions to Priority 3 of the action plan – Take part in communities - include access to warmer pools for people with complex physical needs and improved respite offers particularly during holiday periods and weekends for young people still at schools and college.

Respondents through Citizen Space were primarily female and primarily White British. Most were aged from 40+ with a slight weighting towards the 60+ range. About half were also informal carers of adults with a learning disability. A third identified as having a disability in their own right.

There was a more even gender divide in the face-to-face meetings for adults with a learning disability but that was most probably a factor of the location of the meetings. About half of the respondent group were white British and slightly more by way of percentage were Black, split between black Caribbean and black African. No other equalities information was collected.

Of the 14 people attending the face-to-face meetings for carers, 13 were female. No other equalities data was available.

4 The Seven Priorities

4.1 Citizen Space Survey

Sixteen responses to the online survey were received. Overall, there was agreement to the key priorities identified. The variation to 100% on questions 1,3, and 7 reflected respondents who did not complete that question.

Priority	Agree/ Strongly Agree %	Not Agree %
1. Choose where to live and with who.	94	6
2. Access to Healthcare	100	n/a
3. Take part in their communities, try new things and get a job.	94	6
4. Listen to families and unpaid carers.	100	n/a
5. Managing risks and staying safe	100	n/a
6. Staffing – skills attitudes and training	100	n/a
7. Developing the local market	94	6

4.2 People with a Learning Disability

Everyone broadly agreed with all seven themes. There was most interest in the 3 themes around housing, health and wellbeing and a life with opportunities.

The groups particularly wanted to emphasise the importance of what could be done to raise public awareness of the needs of adults with a learning disability. Attendees particularly talked about the police not being aware of learning disability and of often feeling generally that they are not welcome or don't fit in. It was felt that awareness raising was an important aspect of being part of their community and feeling safe whilst in the community.

5. Are there any other priorities that you would like to see us working on?

- a) To have much more changing places toilets across the borough.
- b) Providing quality supported living accommodation with motivated well-paid staff in the area of choice.
- c) More support to find suitable and properly skilled PA's/support workers and adequate rates of pay for them for people using Direct Payments to implement their packages.
- d) A greater integration of opportunities, for greater inclusion within our communities, to break down barriers, and discriminatory and prejudices about people with a learning disability.
- e) Sufficient funding for a wide range of services for children, young people, and adults with LD to live active and fulfilling lives and to be part of their community.
- f) Just put things into practice rather than more bluff and fluff without providing any support of value. Lost count of how many surveys Lewisham have sent over the years while providing no actual service and acute staffing problems.

- g) Young adults with learning disabilities need the same further education opportunities as their non-disabled peers. There are no adequate post-19 educational opportunities in Lewisham for young adults with severe or profound learning disabilities. This must change.
- h) Lifelong learning opportunities
- i) Another priority maybe to feel valued and happy within their community (living circumstances). To understand that ALL families have difficult times and sometimes don't get on, that this is perhaps reflected within a residential care situation too.
- j) All these 7 priorities are essential. People with Learning Disabilities need to be able to develop their OWN potential.
- k) Providers of care, for example, supported living, need careful and regular monitoring to ensure they are neither too small to deliver or too large to deliver.
- l) There is a need to be mindful that mergers do not always result in strengths being shared. Sometimes the strong staff leave with the remaining larger organisation becoming weaker by the day.
- m) Being open, honest and truthful when a family member asks a question or for information regarding their family member who lives in supported living accommodation. Even when information is withheld for the best intentions, in my experience, it can cause upset and distress.

6. Three things that you think Lewisham does well for people with a learning disability?

- a) Funds support to agencies that try hard against the odds.
- b) Groups that are supported to provide social gatherings where people can meet other people in the wider community, have an opportunity to develop skills and talents in a safe space and have a say in decisions and opportunities about their lives, and break down social isolation, e.g. Adult Learning classes, Heart n Soul, Lewisham Speaking Up, Evening Clubs. This helps people with learning disabilities to have a life outside their home, see their friends.
- c) A multi-disciplinary team which is well trained and can support individuals when they are having a difficult time. Access to speedy healthcare taking into account NHS cutbacks.
- d) Providing safe and caring living accommodation in small family-sized homes via various organisations. Through them (the providers) Lewisham provides a place for my relative to speak up for herself and those like her.
- e) A strong ethos to deliver a high-quality package of care.
- f) Day centre services and transport to these services.
- g) It is a great support to their families and carers at home, to have few hours to work, do shopping etc.
- h) Improved opportunities for voices to be heard, both the loud and silent voices

7. Three things that Lewisham needs to change, or get better at doing, for people with a learning disability?

- a) Make the Borough more accessible.
- b) Pay a decent wage to support workers to attract the right people (including people employed through Direct Payments).

- c) Make the care assessment/re-assessment process less stressful and threatening and employ social workers who don't make you feel guilty.
- d) The assessment should look at needs in a positive and holistic way rather than using a very medical model of disability.
- e) Social Workers don't always seem to know their service users well. The quick turnaround of staff needs to be somehow addressed.
- f) A more flexible approach to what a person actually needs to live a good life, developing skills, friendships and being part of the community.
- g) Make financial contributions transparent and fair for all.
- h) Increase quality activities for those who are unable to have paid employment and for whom work is not appropriate.
- i) Better opportunities for families, carers and learning-disabled people to have a say in where they would like to live and how they would like to be supported.
- j) Although budget restraints must be taken into consideration, person centred planning must be a reality.
- k) No one should have to sit indoors with nothing to do because of shifts and rota priorities.
- l) More inclusive activities and opportunities that people can join in with reasonable adjustments.
- m) More support for parents and carers. It is very difficult for individuals who have never experienced it to understand the situation of a carer.
- n) Funding for assessments (it is unclear from the submission what specific assessments were meant here)
- o) Provide good post-19 education opportunities.
- p) Provide good quality care and support.
- q) Provide high quality, interesting and varied daycentres for adults past education age.
- r) Communicate better with the providers and relatives. This has been disjointed and at times wholly ignored.
- s) Words into deeds please. High powered and quality thinking and PowerPoint presentations are useful but must translate into sustainable actions.
- t) Clear and transparent funding budgets available for all to see and engage with
- u) Ensure that the ethos is funded for the long-term to provide stability and peace of mind for all stakeholders.
- v) The day services are not a luxury and need to be protected. They are desperately needed support for carers to survive.

8. Anything else you would like to tell us?

- a) More support is needed for families using direct payments, particularly for recruitment and paying the living wage.
- b) More co-production in the planning and implementing of services. Supported by e.g. LSU
- c) Contracts should be fully assessed based on quality not price.
- d) This is another pointless waste of money. Concentrate on getting staff to deliver the current provision. People are suffering.
- e) You need to explain what the steps are after the consultation and how you are going to involve people with a learning disability and their families and carers in the next steps.
- f) Not everybody is seeking or capable of doing a job or of making a choice of who to live with.

- g) I don't like the term 'market' in the context of 'market management'.
- h) The Lewisham Money Management team is too remote from residents and their needs to make decisions about how their money should be spent. The provider should manage the person's money.
- i) Support workers should be better remunerated and trained. At present, the level of ability is poor, and the job commands little respect, so doesn't attract high quality employees.
- j) This exercise is a covert way of reducing funding for vulnerable people in Lewisham.
- k) Communications need to be clear about whether a service or idea is funded or is currently unfunded.
- l) My family member is well cared for, especially when compared with other boroughs.
- m) Everyone's experiences and needs will be different.
- n) Listen carefully to those involved and provide them/us the support we need to live this life.
- o) Particularly for family carers, this is a complex and challenging life that we have live every day. There is no break from it. We appreciate every bit of help we are given.
- p) Don't cut or stop these services. Particularly day services. We cannot imagine life without them.
- q) Our experience during the Covid lockdown resulted in my sister's mental health deteriorating.

9 Monitoring Data

9.1 Citizen Space

Gender		Ethnicity	
Female	11	Asian Or Asian British	0
Male	2	Black or Black British -African	2
Prefer not to say	1	Black Or Black British - Caribbean	1
Not answered	2	White - British	10
Total	16	Prefer not to say	2
		Not answered	1
		Total	

Age		Disability	
<18	0	Physical/ mobility related	1
18-29	2	Visual/ hearing related1	0
30-39	0	Mental Health Condition	1
40-49	2	Cognitive/ learning Disability	1
50-59	2	Longstanding illness	1
60-69	3	Prefer not to say	1
70-79	3	Other	1
80+	2	Not answered	10
Prefer not to say	1	Total	16
Not answered	1		
Total	16		

Caring Responsibilities	For pwld	For anybody
Yes	9	8
No	6	6
Not answered	1	2
Total	16	16

9.2 People with a learning disability

Gender		Ethnicity	
Female	23	Asian Or Asian British (Bangladeshi 2, non-identified 1)	3
Male	29	Black or Black British -African	13
Total	52	Black Or Black British - Caribbean	12
		White - British	19
		White Irish	3
		Mixed race	2
		Total	52

9.3 Face to Face Carers

Gender	
Female	13
Male	1
Total	14