

## Commissioning strategy for people with learning disabilities 2014-2016

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

**Q. What is the purpose of the commissioning strategy?**

**A.** The commissioning strategy sets out the plans for learning disability services in Torbay from 2014-2016. It looks at what services need to be provided now and in the future. It also describes what needs to change locally to modernise services and improve and enhance the lives of people with a learning disability.

**Q. How has the strategy been developed?**

**A.** The strategy has been developed in partnership with people with learning disabilities and their carers. It has been written in line with national guidance and the local market position for learning disability services. The views of people with a learning disability are integral to the plans set out in the strategy and we want to continue to talk with people as the plans develop.

The strategy is supported by Torbay Council and South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group.

**Q. Has consideration been given to what people with a learning disability want?**

**A.** Yes. Local engagement shows us that, while 86.5 per cent of people say care and support services help them to have a better quality of life, only 43.6 per cent get as much social contact as they would like.

People have told us they would like more choice, improvements to transport and support finding and sustaining work. They also told us they would like to engage in a wider breadth of activities such as spending time with friends, going to the cinema, or shopping at a time that they choose.

When it comes to living independently people want high quality care to help them in their own home, with continuity of care.

Another key part of our engagement with people showed us that they want to feel safe when using transport and accessing community activities.

**Q. What is the strategy aiming to achieve?**

**A.** We want to support more people to find work, have choice over what they do and live independently in their own community or home. We also want to ensure better planning and support for people with autism and ensure that support is in place for our much valued carers.

The plans are also built around safeguarding, advocacy and supporting people to be as healthy as they can.

**Q. What will be the priorities of the strategy?**

**A.** There are three key priority areas that we will be focusing on. These are to help people with a learning disability to:

1. Choose what they want to do
2. Live in their own home
3. Feel safe

**Q. When will the strategy be implemented?**

**A.** The strategy will be implemented over the next two years. Some plans within the strategy, such as increasing choice for transport provision will be implemented soon. Other plans, such as transforming day services to increase choice and control for people with a learning disability, will take time to develop and will need further engagement with the people who use them.

**Why do we need to change the way that services are commissioned or run in Torbay?**

Although we are proud of our services and the care and support they deliver, they do not full meet the needs of people living with a learning disability within the modern age. We know this from national policy, local information and engagement with people who use the service, carers and staff working in health and social care.

Due to medical advances more young people with severe and complex needs now survive well into adulthood, with a significant increase in the amount of people living with a learning disability into older age. Whilst this is fantastic news it does mean that more people with learning disabilities have additional support needs that come with older age, such as dementia and physical frailty. This places an increasing demand upon on our services to meet these needs.

Setting out these new plans for people with a learning disability will not only enable us to improve the outcomes for people with a learning disability, but they will enable us to ensure that the resources available to us are allocated in the best possible way.

**Q. Does the strategy mean a reduction to services for people with learning disabilities?**

**A.** Everybody with a learning disability will continue to receive a service under the new plans, but what type of service, where the service is and how people get to the service is likely to change to better meet the needs of individuals. For some people this could be a small change but for others it could be more significant.

However it is important to stress that nobody with a learning disability will be without a service. Additionally no changes will happen overnight and any change will always be done in partnership with people and their carers. The needs of individuals will be assessed as part of their annual review and the Trust will continue to ensure that choice and safety are at the heart of a person care planning.

**Q. Does the strategy form part of a cost saving exercise?**

**A.** We are facing a time of unprecedented financial pressure, with the demand upon our services increasing year on year. Therefore budget considerations have to be a key part of planning and delivering any service, and learning disability services are no different.

Whilst mindful of the challenges, the purpose of the strategy is to look at ways in which we can develop our services to enhance and modernise them, whilst ensuring they fully meet the needs of people with a learning disability now and in the future.

Implementing the strategy will ensure that people with a learning disability receive a service that is not only high quality and fit for purpose but one that is sustainable.

**Q. What happens next?**

**A.** The commissioning strategy outlines a number of options and plans that can help to achieve better outcomes for people with learning disabilities. Some of the more straightforward plans to improve services can be implemented in a quick and simple way, whilst other options within the strategy will need to be developed further. This is where service users and carers can help make a difference.

Working closely with Torbay Council a number of engagement events will be organised to ensure service users, carers and the organisations that we work in close partnership with can help shape and influence the plans set out in the strategy.