



## Report from

REACH - Learning Disability  
Strategy Focus Groups

November 2009



## Report to

Stoke-on-Trent Learning Disability  
Partnership Board

How to contact us:



## REACH

Winton House  
Stoke Road  
Stoke-on-Trent  
ST4 2RW

01782 747872



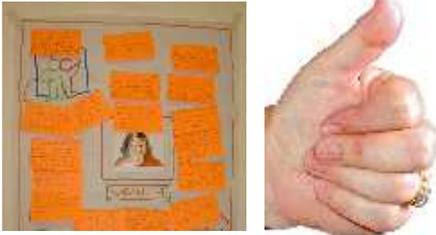
[reach@asist.co.uk](mailto:reach@asist.co.uk)



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|    | <h2>About this report</h2>   |
|    | <p>Members of the Stoke-on-Trent Learning Disability Partnership Board are writing a new Learning Disability Strategy</p>  |
|    | <p>They asked Reach to find out what people with a learning disability thought should be in the new strategy</p>   |
|  | <p>Reach held focus groups and asked people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does a good life look like?</li> <li>• What support do people need?</li> <li>• What should be in the new strategy?</li> </ul> |
|  | <p>Reach worked with <b>12</b> adults with a learning disability who all live in Stoke-on-Trent</p>  |
|  | <p>All the ideas people discussed at the focus groups are in this report</p>   |

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|    | <h2 style="text-align: center;">About the life posters</h2>   |
|    | <p>At the start of the focus groups, people were asked what a good life looks like</p>  |
|    | <p>To do this, they created a fictional character with a learning disability who has a very good life</p>   |
|   | <p>Each group created a very different character but all of them lead good lives and get the right support and services</p>   |
|  | <p>The characters the groups created were called Jake, Charles, Veronica and Molly</p> <p>The next 10 pages of this report will tell you about their lives</p>  |
|  | <p>Even though none of these characters are real, the way they are supported and the way they live contain a lot of information about the kinds of support and services people said should be in the strategy</p> |



## LD Strategy focus group 10th November 2009 Life poster for 'Jake'



Jake lives in a big residential home where gets lots of support from the staff

Where he lives is safe and free from crime



There are lots of things to do at Jake's home and he has lots of friends

He has his own bathroom, cooking facilities and a TV and DVD player in his room



Jake has a learning disability as well as mental health issues

He gets support from a social worker, is very independent and has his own bank account



Jake goes to a training centre and has a part time cleaning job, he was helped to get this by a D.E.A. at the job centre

He also goes to a large day service where he does drama and art and is learning to play a musical instrument

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|    | <p>Jake met his girlfriend at the training centre and they go to a friendship club together</p>   |
|    | <p>Jake and his girlfriend would like to get married and have children</p> <p>They want to go on holiday and move into a house and live together</p>  |
|   | <p>Jake has a busy life and often goes out in the evenings to bowling, the cinema and the theatre</p> <p>He also goes out for walks with his girlfriend and family and watches football</p>                     |
|  | <p>Jake was picked on by some people near his day service</p> <p>He is speaking to the police about this problem</p> <p>The police have had special training to work with people with learning disabilities</p> |
|  | <p>Jake has had some problems with family illness and death</p> <p>He has been able to deal with this because he has had the right support around him</p>   |



**LD Strategy focus group  
12th November 2009  
Life poster for 'Charles'**



Charles lives in a residential home with 7 other people  
It is in a neighbour hood watch area and Charles has a personal alarm



There are 4-6 staff who support the people  
Other support comes in when needed to allow for 1-1 or 2-1 support



The home has a changing places toilet  
It has enough transport for everyone to go out so nobody gets left out



Charles is deaf and has very slurred speech  
He has been trained in Makaton  
The staff and the other people at the home can communicate with Charles



Charles goes out often  
 He plays snooker and football  
 and goes swimming  
 He goes to church and takes  
 part in a poetry group



He is well supported with his  
 medical needs  
 He is being trained to use his  
 own medication



Charles is looking for a paid job  
 and has a work placement in a  
 charity shop  
 He chose the work placement  
 himself  
 He did not have to fill in a form  
 to get the job



He had support in his  
 placement for as long as he  
 needed it  
 If there are any problems he  
 can still access his support



Charles gets lots of support with  
 his benefits  
 He gets lots of support but all  
 the decisions are his

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| <br>  | <p>Charles met his girlfriend in a pub and they see each other at least 3 times a week</p> <p>They both have a learning disability</p> <p>They meet at Charles' home, the staff there are supportive of their relationship</p> |
|   | <p>They would like to get married but her parents are unsure if this is a good idea</p> <p>They have decided that they will get married anyway and hope that they will get support to do this</p>                              |
|   | <p>Charles is learning different skills so that they can one day live together independently</p>   |
|    | <p>Charles used to have a problem with a member of staff at the residential home</p> <p>He was picked on and bullied</p> <p>This made Charles feel very intimidated</p>  |
|    | <p>Charles spoke to the manager of the home, his social worker and his advocate and now the person has been sacked</p>   |

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|    | <p><b>LD Strategy focus group<br/>16th November 2009<br/>Life poster for 'Veronica'</b></p>   |
|    | <p>Veronica lives independently but gets some support from her social worker and a community nurse</p>  |
|   | <p>Veronica needs support with her money and bills<br/>She has a budget plan and her social worker and a tenancy support worker help her</p>          |
|  | <p>Veronica has a learning disability and also has arthritis<br/>She has some emotional problems and gets help with this from her community nurse</p> |
|  | <p>She is supported well during office hours but is concerned there is not enough support in place after 5pm</p>                                      |
|  | <p>She can use a 'phone-in and support' answering service but would feel better if she could see somebody face to face when she needs to</p>          |

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|                       | <p>She has access to counselling services as well as an advocate and PALS (Patient Advice Liaison Service)</p> <p>She takes her own medication</p>                      |
|  <p>Cafe</p>          | <p>Veronica has a part time job working in a small café</p> <p>She works 16 hours each week and is paid minimum wage</p>  |
|  <p>College</p>      | <p>She goes to college where she is doing a basic maths course to help her with budgeting</p>   |
|                     | <p>She goes to the gym twice a week, to bingo and a craft night where she does tapestry</p>   |
|  <p>Social Club</p> | <p>She goes to a social club at the weekends and enjoys going out for meals</p>   |
|                     | <p>She has lots of friends that she met on the internet</p> <p>She has a brother and a sister who live far away and she speaks to them using texts and the internet</p> |

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|    | <p>Her mum visits her at home and helps her with the housework</p> <p>She is teaching Veronica how to do this so that she can be more independent</p> |
|    | <p>She has a boyfriend that she met at the gym</p> <p>They would like to move in together, get married and have children</p>                          |
|   | <p>Her parents are a little worried and unsure about this</p> <p>Veronica and her boyfriend are going to go ahead as it is their choice</p>           |
|  | <p>She has a neighbour who takes drugs and plays loud music all of the time</p>   |
|  | <p>Veronica is working with an advocate who is helping her complain to the police</p>   |
|  | <p>Although it is taking a long time, the neighbour has now been warned and will be evicted if it carries on</p>                                      |

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|    | <p><b>LD Strategy focus group<br/>17th November 2009<br/>Life poster for 'Molly'</b></p>  |
|    | <p>Molly lives in a residential home with 3 other people</p> <p>There are 11 staff who work at the home</p>   |
|   | <p>Molly has a learning disability and needs quite a lot of support</p> <p>She is diabetic and the staff at the home support her with her medication</p> <p>She has a community nurse to help with her diet</p> |
|  | <p>She has a work placement in an office where she answers the phone</p> <p>She has support to help her to do her job and would like to keep this, but only when she needs it</p>                               |
|  | <p>She would like to work full time and be paid</p> <p>Molly has support from the job centre with her benefits and looking for work</p>   |

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|    | <p>Molly goes to college for a computer course and goes to a night class once a week to learn sewing</p> <p>She does some charity work</p>  |
|    | <p>Molly goes to bingo, the cinema and goes shopping with her friends</p> <p>She has a brother and a sister who live near and she sees them 3 or 4 times a week</p>   |
|   | <p>Molly met her boyfriend at bingo and they see each other twice a week</p> <p>They have no plans to get married at the moment</p>   |
|  | <p>She would like to move into her own house and live independently one day</p>   |
|  | <p>She had a problem with one of the people she lives with stealing her things</p> <p>She spoke to an advocate, staff and her social worker</p> <p>This person was spoken to and the problem was dealt with</p> |



## What support do people need?



Reach worked with 12 MPs and experts to collect detailed ideas and information for the Learning Disability Strategy



Reach used ideas posters to collect the information



MPs and experts wrote their ideas and thoughts on post-it notes which were then put onto the posters



The next two pages show everyone's ideas on what support adults with a learning disability need



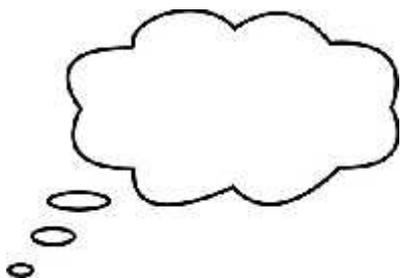
## What support do people need?



- Having carers to stop with the clients at their house
- Support to show how to use a computer
- Support with out and about bus travel and travelling times
- Support with medication
- Support to help to speak/communicate with others
- Support to go on holiday
- Support helping with money/benefits
- Support to go to the hospital/doctors/other health services
- Support to go to college
- Support to look after you when you go to the club
- More support when there is a change of housing



## What support do people need?



- Support with knowing about public transport
- Support to cook a meal
- Support to go shopping
- Support with general things like cleaning your bedroom, washing and ironing
- Support to get your hair cut
- Support to go swimming
- Support to help to get dressed
- Support with going out in the night and the day
- Support to go to meetings
- Support to go and watch Stoke city
- To have support to do anything he or she wants to providing its OK with the support worker



## What should be in the strategy?



Reach worked with 12 MPs and experts to collect detailed ideas and information for the Learning Disability Strategy



Reach used ideas posters to collect the information



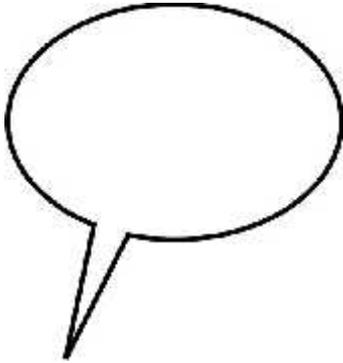
MPs and experts wrote their ideas and thoughts on post-it notes which were then put onto the posters



The next five pages shows everyone's ideas on what should be included in the learning disability strategy



## What should be in the strategy?



- More support and funding to help people to keep in touch with their friends when they move house
- More support and choice when moving house
- People need choice and variety in day services
- Outreach help and support out of office hours
- More funding for services to support people in the evenings
- Better use of clear words and pictures in the health service and other public services
- More practical experience for doctors, nurses, medical students in working with people with learning disabilities



## What should be in the strategy?



- Not to base funding on departments so that people can access help and support when it is needed
- A new funding structure for mental health and learning disability sufferers
- Refresher courses for support teams to update and relearn new issues and theories
- To be able to go out more. More day trips and holidays with support
- More clubs and activities where people can go to meet people and make new friends
- Equal rights for people with disabilities
- Bullying and hate crime



## What should be in the strategy?



- Better help with friendship and community. Being part of the community
- Important to keep improving independence
- Changes to peoples houses as they get older or get new conditions
- Help and support with money and benefits
- More disabled toilets, changing places toilets and equipment for disabled people
- Extra help with safety equipment like stair lifts, bath seats and hand rails
- Public transport needs to accommodate wheelchairs every time. More spaces for wheelchair users on public transport



## What should be in the strategy?



- More funding for the NHS, services and the council
- There should be day activities out from day services like going to the cinema, bowling and other social activities
- There should be more staff to support people
- More housing information and more actual homes for people with learning disabilities
- Better job training
- Better training for public services
- Better support and funding to help safer living
- More choice for people to decide what and when they want to do something



## What should be in the strategy?



- It is important for people to have a routine and know what they are doing
- Things to happen quicker (council, support)
- To have the right care and equipment for people who need it
- More training and help to get employment
- More help and support to know who to complain to, how to complain and where to complain
- More support and understanding from services, crisis teams, the police and the council - better training



To find out more about this report please contact Reach Project Worker Mark Evans on **01782 747872** or email **marke@asist.co.uk**