

# A Strategy for Adults with a Learning Disability

2012 - 2017



**Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council  
Caerphilly County Borough Council  
Monmouthshire County Council  
Newport City Council  
Torfaen County Borough Council  
Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board**

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## FOREWORD

We are proud to present this very first integrated strategy for learning disability services for the populations of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen. Our pride comes not only from having worked together to produce a future direction for learning disability services, but also from knowing we have built it based on the views of people with a learning disability and their carers.

It is important that this strategy does not become a substitute for action, but provides the framework within which a wide programme of change and service improvement takes place. The strategy will also be subject to regular review in order to respond to changing circumstances. As Partners we have committed to delivering it together.

Our aim is to develop a future model for health and social care based on the principles of person centred care and the promotion of independence and social inclusion. Successful delivery will therefore mean action in many areas across all of our services, both in the statutory and third sector. It is likely to lead to opportunities for us to work much more closely together to consider how we use our resources, and most importantly offer the best services to the populations we serve.

It is also a chance for us to recognise together the diversity of our population and as such to commit to an approach that enables people with a learning disability to be treated in the way they wish, as far as is possible.

**The Mental Health and Learning Disability Partnership Board**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

A Partnership Board has recently been established to oversee and direct the development of mental health, learning disability and specialist services for adults. In relation to services for people with a learning disability, the partnership is between the local authorities of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport, Monmouthshire and Torfaen, Aneurin Bevan Health Board and voluntary sector representation.

One of the initial key tasks for the Partnership Board is to produce an integrated strategy outlining the future direction of services for adults with a learning disability. The current paper outlines the strategy and has been developed following consultation with people with a learning disability, carers and a range of stakeholders.

## **2. THE PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY**

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a clear strategic direction regarding the future planning and delivery of services for adults with a learning disability who live within, or have services commissioned by, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport, Monmouthshire and Torfaen. It describes the core principles that are fundamental to service provision and outlines the key issues that need to be addressed in forthcoming years in order to deliver high quality, safe and cost effective services.

An integrated strategy agreed by all stakeholders is particularly significant at this time as there are likely to be fewer resources available over the coming years to deliver these important services. It is therefore important that all partner agencies agree the priorities in learning disability services and how we can best deliver them in a co-ordinated way.

## **3. CONSULTATION WITH PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY AND CARERS**

In order to ensure that people with a learning disability have been at the heart of developing the strategy a Listening Event was held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2011. The event was held in order to help identify the priorities for learning disability services across the five Local Authority areas.

The main event was attended by 112 people, the majority of whom were people with learning disabilities and their carers. There were also a number of health and social care professionals present, together with those who work with people with learning disabilities, and representatives from partner organisations.

The day was based on appreciative enquiry where participants were asked to focus on past experiences to build a vision for the future. The day was structured around a number of stories from people with learning disabilities and their carers who kindly shared their experiences and aspirations with the audience. Following each story there was a round table discussion where

participants were asked to identify the key themes and priorities for learning disability services, reflecting on the story they had just heard.

During the course of the discussions 9 priorities were identified. The event culminated with all participants being asked to vote on which of the priorities were most important to them. Each participant was allocated 3 votes to distribute between the 9 priorities as they saw fit. The list of priorities and the outcome of the vote are detailed in the table below:

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Number of votes received</b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	Having friendships and relationships	42
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Having a Person Centred Plan which is implemented	34
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Make moving from child to adult services better	31
4 <sup>th</sup>	Paid work	30
5 <sup>th</sup>	Accommodation – where I live	29
6 <sup>th</sup>	Accessing leisure and community opportunities	25
7 <sup>th</sup>	Planning for what happens when mum and dad are not around	22
8 <sup>th</sup>	Meeting specialist health needs such as accommodation and equipment	20
9 <sup>th</sup>	Better information about services	13
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES CAST:</b>		246 (by 82 voters)

The above priorities were central to the development of a draft strategy which was consulted upon between September and November 2011. In order to engage with as many people with a learning disability, carers, health and social care professionals, voluntary organisations and wider stakeholders as possible a range of initiatives were undertaken across the five local authority areas during the consultation period. These included:

- Delivery of several easy read presentations and facilitated discussions with people with a learning disability.
- Delivery of a presentation and facilitated discussion with many staff groups working within either local authority or health board learning disability services e.g. community learning disability teams, residential services, specialist services and day services.

- Delivery of a presentation and facilitated discussion with a range of other stakeholders e.g. care providers, advocacy groups, members of locality planning groups.
- Wide distribution of the strategy and an easy read version across the five local authorities and to relevant national stakeholders.
- Electronic provision of the strategy and easy read version on the intranet and internet of the five local authorities and health board.
- Awareness via social media such as Facebook

At the end of the consultation period a total of 75 responses had been received. The responses were carefully analysed and based on feedback a number of revisions to the strategy have been made and are now included in the current strategy.

#### 4. THE VISION

##### *The Vision:*

*To enable adults with a learning disability living within Gwent to lead fulfilling lives and have the same opportunities as other people in society. Adults with a learning disability and their carers should have access to the full range of public services and receive support from specialist services when required.*

The above vision is embedded within the context of national legislative and policy framework, Welsh Government Strategy and local Health and Social Care Well-being Strategies including the:

- ❖ Statement on Policy and Practice for Adults with a Learning Disability (2007).
- ❖ Learning Disability Strategy – Section 7 Guidance on Service Principles and Service Responses (2004).
- ❖ Fulfilling the Promises – Proposals for a Framework for Services for People with Learning Disabilities (2001).
- ❖ Practice Guidance on Developing a Commissioning Strategy for People with a Learning Disability (2011).
- ❖ The All Wales Strategy for the Development of Services for People with Mental Handicap (1983).
- ❖ NHS and Community Care Act 1990.
- ❖ Equality Act 2010.

- ❖ Mental Capacity Act 2005.
- ❖ Mental Health Act 2007.
- ❖ Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010.
- ❖ Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010.
- ❖ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

It must be noted that the above vision, and current strategy, also applies to adults with a learning disability who live outside Gwent but receive services commissioned by any one of the five local authorities or Aneurin Bevan Health Board.

## **5. CORE PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE STRATEGY**

It is proposed that the following core principles are fundamental to the future planning and delivery of services for people with a learning disability;

- ❖ Services should enable individuals to *maximise their potential and promote independence and social inclusion.*
- ❖ A *comprehensive range of services* should be available for people with a learning disability which provide *timely, responsive person centred solutions.*
- ❖ People with a learning disability should be able to *access the full range of public services and when necessary receive support from specialist services.*
- ❖ People with a learning disability and their carers should be supported to *access, use and understand appropriate information* about the range of services available and such *services should be equally available to all people with a learning disability across Gwent.*
- ❖ Services should ensure people with a learning disability and their carers are put at the *centre of planning, reviewing and changing their package of support.*
- ❖ People with a learning disability and their carers should be *fully involved and at the centre of planning, delivering and changing services.*
- ❖ When possible people with a learning disability should be provided with the *opportunity to remain in their local area maintaining family and social networks.*
- ❖ Services will strive to ensure that people with a learning disability are supported to have *a life that is safe and free from abuse.*
- ❖ Services should *promote well-being and where possible intervene at an early stage* in order to prevent difficulties becoming chronic.

- ❖ Services should be delivered in a way which is *sensitive to the diversity* present within the communities of Gwent paying special attention to those who find accessing services difficult.
- ❖ Carers, both paid and un-paid, make a significant contribution to supporting people with a learning disability and it is necessary to *ensure carers are supported appropriately*.
- ❖ Services should ensure a *cost effective* use of resource and be *open and transparent about what service provision can and cannot be provided*.
- ❖ *Partner agencies will work together* in order to meet the needs of people with a learning disability via appropriate planning, development, delivery and evaluation of services.

## 6. KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

There are a number of key areas that need to be addressed in order to deliver the vision outlined within the current strategy.

### **Enabling people to have more control over their lives through Person Centred Planning, Self-Directed Support and Access to Advocacy**

*Objective: People with a learning disability will have more choice and control over their life.*

"I'd love to do more independently"

"I'd love to get married and have children"

"I'd like to do more social activities, bowling and swimming"

"More choice in jobs!"

"People should have a right to make choices they want to"

"I want to live my life"

"If people talk over me and finish my sentences it makes me angry. I can talk for myself, I have the confidence now. People were always making choices for my life"

*Source: People with a learning disability at the Listening Event*

People with learning disabilities have often had little choice regarding how they live their life with others making decisions for them. This strategy highlights that people should have as much choice and control over their lives as possible and appropriate mechanisms should be in place to achieve this



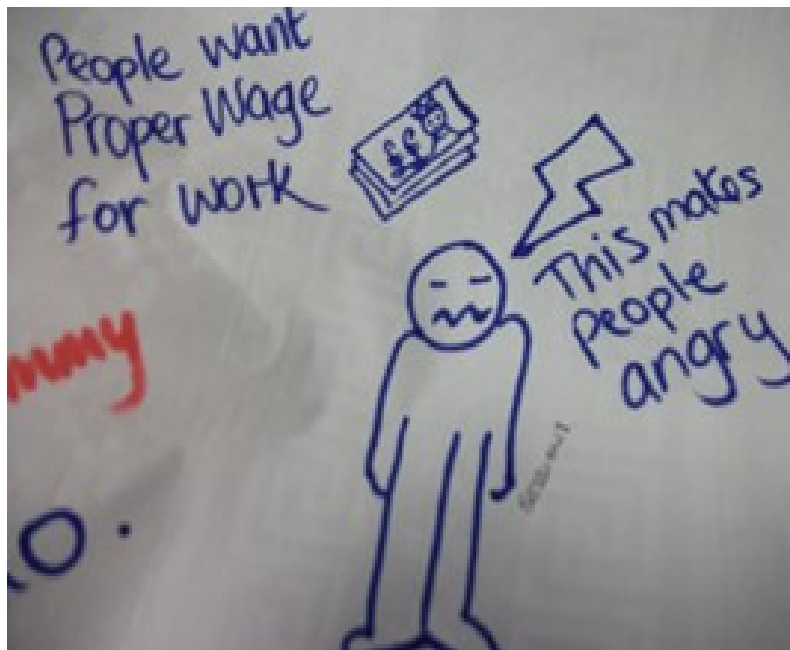
e.g. Person Centred approaches to planning, Self Directed Support and Direct Payments.

In order to empower individuals to play a full role in making decisions and ensure the individual is understood and properly represented it is essential that some people with a learning disability are able to access high quality advocacy. Advocacy options should include support for self-advocacy and access to independent advocacy.

### **Employment, Education, Leisure, Day Activities and Life Skills**

*Objective: To enable people with a learning disability to have choice regarding how they spend their time during the day.*

How people spend their time during the day is of considerable importance and appropriate opportunities will maximise an individual's potential enabling them to develop new academic, work related and life skills. In addition meaningful opportunities enable individuals to develop relationships, promote self-esteem and make a valuable contribution to society. It is necessary for a range of options to be available for individuals to choose from including employment/supported employment, education, leisure and day services.

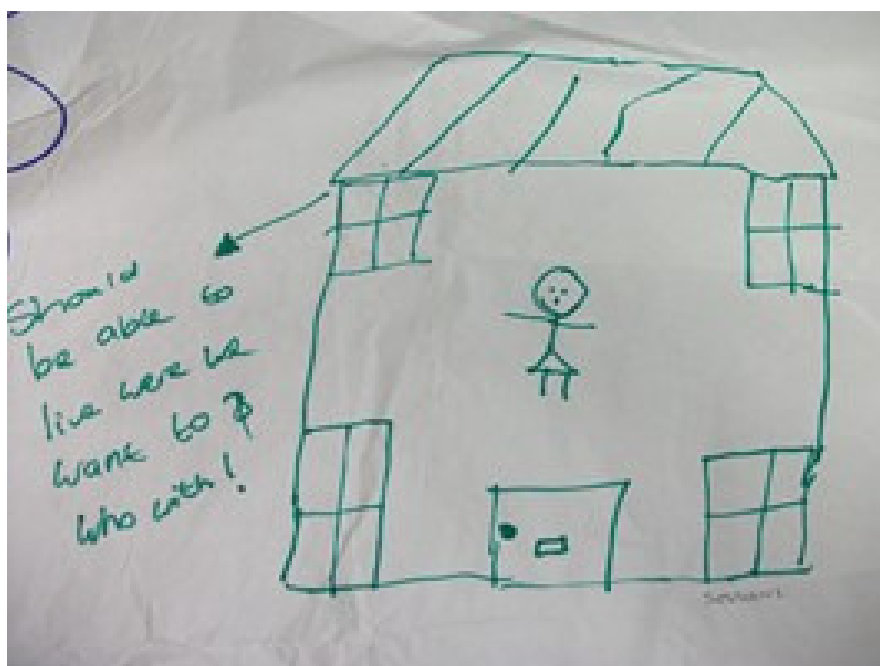


More opportunities are required for individuals who are in employment to have a “proper wage” if desired. Other individuals will want opportunities to have voluntary employment and statutory agencies should role model to other employees by providing both paid and voluntary employment opportunities.

Access to appropriate transport can be a significant difficulty and individuals need appropriate support to access a range of options that can meet their mobility needs e.g. easy read transport information, accessible public transport, travel training and access to Disability Living Allowance.

## Housing

*Objective: People with a learning disability should be able to have a choice about where they live and who they live with.*



There should be a range of good quality accommodation choices for people with a learning disability including supported living, residential accommodation, private rental, adult placements or shared lives and living with family. Whenever possible individuals should be able to choose to live in their local area and the number of out of county placements should be minimised. Individuals should also be able to choose who they live with and be supported to plan future moves effectively. There should also be opportunities for individuals to have more involvement in selecting staff who will support them within their own home.

## Access to Generic Healthcare

*Objective: People with a learning disability will have better health outcomes and appropriate access to healthcare.*

"People with learning disability generally have poorer health and many are at a higher risk of illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes. However, people with a learning disability are also discriminated against because of their disability and may not get the treatment that they need. At worst, this can be fatal."

*Source: Mark Goldring, Chief Executive, Mencap*

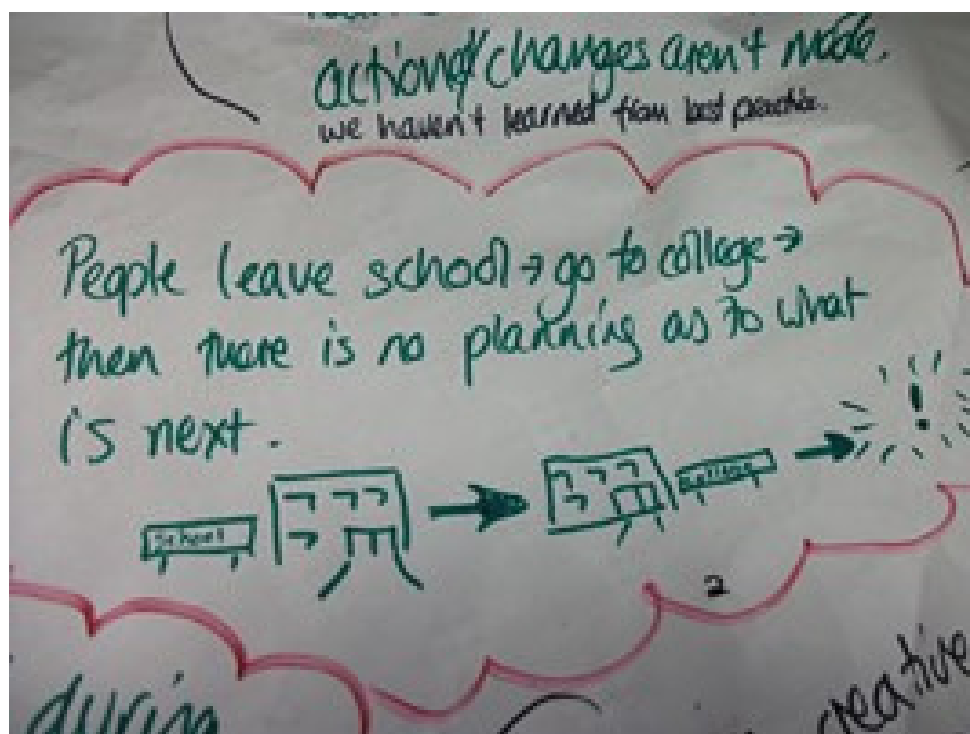
Most people with a learning disability have poorer health than the rest of the population and are more likely to die at a younger age. In addition they are

less likely to receive the health interventions they required (Disability Rights Commission, (2006); The NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights, 2009). Individuals require access to the full range of health promotion, prevention and education initiatives, services provided by independent contractors (e.g. GPs, dentists, optometrists) and other primary and secondary healthcare services (e.g. hospitals, mental health services) in order to meet their physical and wider health needs. In order to meet the needs of people with a learning disability such services will need to be flexible in their approach and interventions such as those outlined in the Mencap "Getting it Right" Charter need to be implemented within local services (Mencap, 2010). When considering primary healthcare a more proactive approach is required in relation to supporting people with a learning disability to access a good quality annual health check.

## Transition

*Objective: The transition from child to adult services will be smooth, planned and effective for all people with a learning disability.*

Whilst there are examples of good practice many individuals with a learning disability and their carers report ineffective transition planning resulting in disjointed service provision which can often lead to considerable stress for the individual and carers.



There should be a clear pathway in place to ensure that all individuals have a well planned and co-ordinated transition from child to adult services.

In addition to the transition from child to adult services individuals will also need well planned transitions with other life events e.g. retirement, moving.

## Supporting Carers

*Objective: The families/carers of people with a learning disability will receive timely and appropriate support.*

“The three things that are really important to me are information, communication and participation.”

“Carers need emotional, practical and social support.”

“Respite for main carers is essential”

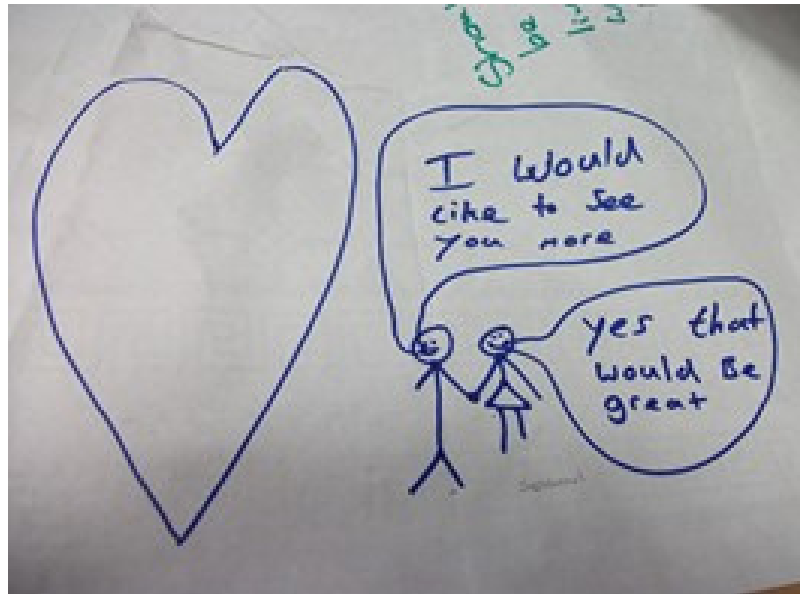
*Source: Carer at the Listening Event.*

Carers play a vital role in supporting people with a learning disability and it is necessary to ensure individuals have access to appropriate information, a carer assessment and a flexible and creative range of support options to meet their respite needs. In addition carers should have opportunities to access appropriate training and support. Finally, support for carers needs to be in line with the Welsh Government Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure which places a legal duty on both Health Boards and Local Authorities to implement a joint strategy for carers.

## Promotion of Social Networks and Emotional Well-being

*Objective: People with a learning disability will receive support and proactive interventions that promote social and emotional well-being.*

Many people with a learning disability have limited opportunities to develop a range of relationships and social networks. In addition, there are many other factors, such as lack of control, limited coping strategies and barriers to accessing the wider community that place people with a learning disability at risk of poor emotional well-being. Individuals will often only receive support from appropriate services after a difficulty has become chronic.



The implementation of proactive social interventions to support individuals to make new relationships is required, for example, the development of circles of support or support to develop social or “keeping safe” skills. Individuals may also require support to maintain a range of relationships, such as those with a partner, friends, family or to undertake their role as a parent. In addition those around the person need to be supported to implement stepped care psychological interventions such as recognising and responding to emotional needs, promoting emotional resilience and accessing information regarding mental health promotion which will promote well-being and enable individuals to have fulfilled lives.

### **Specialist Groups**

*Objective: Individuals with complex needs are able to access the range of appropriate specialist health and social care services in a timely manner.*

Some individuals with a learning disability have complex needs such as those who engage in behaviours that challenge, have a dual diagnosis of learning disability and mental health difficulties, have a profound and multiple learning disability or have forensic needs. In addition to accessing generic services such individuals require timely access to a range of specialist assessments, interventions, equipment and wider services. It is also essential that those individuals with the most complex needs are not disadvantaged due to complex funding arrangements or poor joint working between agencies.

### **A Pathway and Planning for the Future**

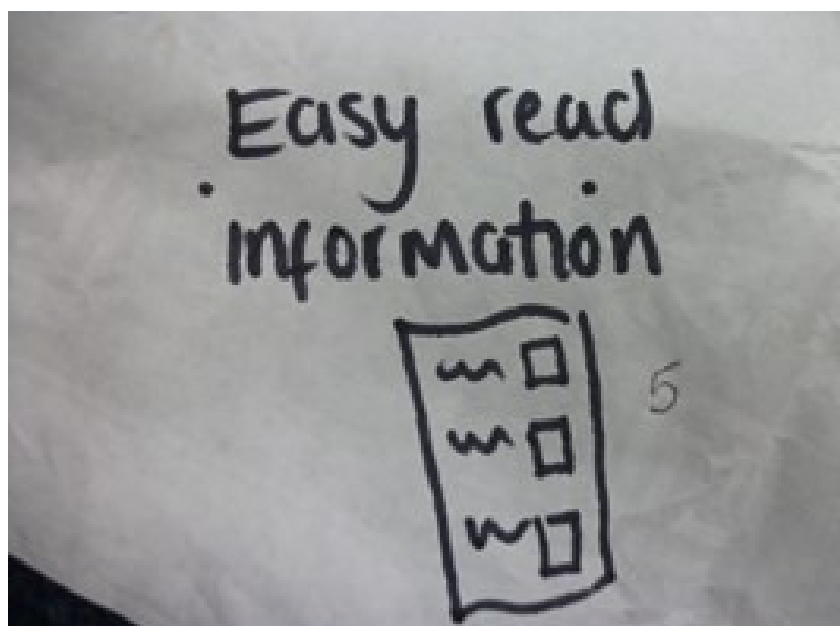
*Objective: People with a learning disability will receive a co-ordinated, safe and timely service and appropriate support to plan for the future.*

Many individuals with a learning disability will have a range of professionals working with them. It is necessary to have a co-ordinated process to ensure that the needs of individuals are identified and responded to in a timely and

safe manner by those around the individual. In order to maximise independence individuals require the right support from the right people at the right time in a co-ordinated way. Individuals also require access to appropriate support to help plan and prepare for the future.

### **Accessible Information**

*Objective: People with a learning disability and their carers will receive clear information regarding generic and specialist learning disability services.*



Individuals and their carers will require clear easy read information outlining what generic and specialist learning disability services are available, how they can be accessed and how to complain.

## **7. KEY PARTNERS IN DELIVERING THE STRATEGY**

It will be necessary to make the strategic vision described in the current paper a reality. The key partners who will all play a crucial role in the delivery of the strategy are set out below;

- ❖ **People with a Learning Disability and their Carers:** People with a learning disability and their carers are the most essential partners in shaping, implementing and continually reviewing the current strategy.
- ❖ **The agencies that form the Mental Health, Learning Disability and Specialist Services Partnership Board:** The Board has representation from Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen Local Authorities and Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board. The Board has responsibility for agreeing proposals regarding the planning and delivery of services for adults with mental health difficulties and adults with learning disabilities.

- ❖ **The Learning Disability Delivery Group:** has representation from the partner agencies outlined above and is responsible for planning the development and delivery, and implementation of, services for adults with learning disabilities.
- ❖ **Learning Disability Locality Groups:** bring together local partners including people with a learning disability and their carers.
- ❖ **Third Sector Organisations:** charitable and voluntary organisations who provide services for people with a learning disability, including advocacy and peer support.
- ❖ **Independent Providers:** organisations in the private and independent sector who provide services for people with a learning disability.
- ❖ **Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW):** organisations who have responsibility for regulating social care and health services.
- ❖ **Children’s Services, Education, the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) and Careers Wales:** have responsibility to link in with adult services in the transition of young people with a learning disability.
- ❖ **Other Statutory Agencies/Departments:** such as Housing, Leisure and the Criminal Justice System.

## 8. WHAT IS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO DELIVER THE STRATEGY

### *Key requirements in order to deliver the strategy*

- ❖ **A Shared Service User Group.** At present social care and health board staff within specialist Learning Disability services work with different populations with health board staff working with those who meet the World Health Organisation diagnostic criteria for a Learning Disability whilst Local Authority Partners work with a wider group of individuals defined as Vulnerable Adults. In order to deliver the strategy outlined in the current document and to enable social care and health board staff to work with the same individuals the Partnership Board needs to identify a resolution that will meet the social care and health needs of vulnerable adults.
- ❖ **Integrated Planning and Commissioning of Services.** At present the planning and commissioning of services for adults with a learning disability occurs separately in each of the six partner agencies. It is recommended that in order to truly meet the needs of adults with a learning disability in the future needs assessments should be undertaken jointly on a Pan Gwent basis between all partner agencies.

This could then inform joint commissioning priorities, improve outcomes and reduce inequalities across the Boroughs.

- ❖ **Integrated Service Delivery.** In order to implement the strategy outlined within the current document greater integration will be required between health and social care services for people with a learning disability. Further consideration will need to be given as to the exact model of service integration. However, at this point it is proposed that the service model will need to consider the development of;
  - (i) pooled learning disability health and social care budgets;
  - (ii) an integrated health and social care workforce and management structure;
  - (iii) appropriate governance arrangements e.g. legal requirements, implementation of quality initiatives, evidence based practice;
  - (iv) shared processes and systems;
  - (v) a single set of performance indicators.
  
- ❖ **Building Capacity within the Community.** It will not be possible for statutory agencies to deliver the current vision in isolation. It will be essential to consider how statutory agencies can work with third sector and independent providers to meet the strategy and ensure people with a learning disability can take their rightful place as a valued citizen within their local community.
  
- ❖ **Full Involvement of People with a Learning Disability and Carers.** There are currently a number of groups within the community that provide a voice to people with a learning disability and their carers. However, consideration needs to be given to how more people with a learning disability and their carers can take a more active role in the planning and delivery of the strategy.
  
- ❖ **Commitment and Ownership from all Stakeholders.** As outlined above there are a wide range of stakeholders involved in planning, delivering and monitoring services for adults with a learning disability. The delivery of any strategy will only be possible if all stakeholders are able to own a shared vision and are committed to working together to deliver it.
  
- ❖ **A Skilled and Supported Workforce.** In order to implement the strategy there will need to be a workforce that has the appropriate value base, specialist knowledge and resources. A range of competency based training and Continuing Professional Development activities will be required for a wide range of individuals from learning disability professionals to staff working in independent/voluntary organisations to primary and secondary healthcare workers and staff who work within the wider community settings e.g. leisure, housing and education.



❖ **A Willingness to do Things Differently and Effective Communication.** The delivery of a new integrated health and social care strategy for adults with a learning disability will require individuals from all partner agencies to agree new ways of working in order to achieve better outcomes for people with a learning disability. In addition it will only be possible to deliver the strategy if there are open and robust communication mechanisms in place enable all stakeholders to work together.

## **9. FUNDING THE STRATEGY**

A considerable financial investment is already made by the five Local Authorities and Aneurin Bevan Health Board in commissioning and delivering services for adults with a learning disability and their carers. The resources required to support the implementation of this strategy will come from both the redirection of current resources as services are modernised in line with the strategic direction and the Learning Disability community making better use of it's resources via;

- Improved and integrated commissioning;
- Increased economies of scale and reduction in waste;
- Re-investment of monies in local services that have traditionally been used to purchase expensive out of county placements;
- The development of cost effective models of service that are sustainable;
- The potential to regionally commission the most specialist health services e.g. low secure provision.

## **10. CONCLUSIONS**

The current strategy is the first time that the five Local Authorities and the Health Board have developed a joint strategy for adults with a learning disability across Gwent. The development of a joint strategy is a clear indication and commitment from the key partners that in the future the planning, delivery and monitoring of services will be undertaken in an integrated way. This strategy enables the key partners to be clear about the shared core principles that will underpin the future of an integrated learning disability service and outlines the key strategic issues that need to be addressed.

## **11. NEXT STEPS**

An Implementation Plan will now be devised that will describe what is necessary in order to deliver the strategy i.e. the workstreams, an action plan for each workstream, anticipated outcomes and resources required. Work will also be on-going in relation to ensuring people with a learning disability have an active role in the planning and delivery of services.

## 12. REFERENCES

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**This strategy has been equality impact assessed.**