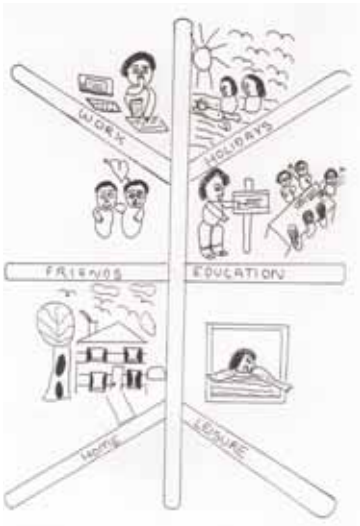




Hidden lives: improving life chances of people with a learning disability



People with a learning disability are often left out of doing things that other people do. This stops people having the same chances in life to get a job, to have friends and to be part of their community like everyone else. This is called social exclusion. Government plans like Valuing People and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 try to stop social exclusion and make sure people with a learning disability have the same chances as other people.

This report is based on the views of people with a learning disability who use our services. We found three reasons why people with a learning disability can be socially excluded. They are: discrimination, not being able to get a job and not being involved in the community.

People with high support needs and people from black and minority ethnic communities find it even harder to have the same chances as non-disabled people. They may have less money and find it difficult to get the support they need.



Some people with a learning disability have high support needs. They may have:

- profound and multiple learning disabilities
- sight or hearing problems
- mental health problems
- autism
- behaviour which can challenge other people
- or have done something that is against the law

1. Discrimination



Service users told us that they are discriminated against. They told us that people call them names or cross the street to avoid them. Sometimes people ignore them, or talk to their supporter instead of them. Discrimination makes people feel upset or lonely. It also makes people feel angry. It stops people from wanting to go out or meet new people.

2. Not being able to have a job



The Government say that only one in ten people with a learning disability has a job. But many people with a learning disability want a job.

Many employers do not think people with a learning disability with high support needs are able to work. They do not offer people the same chances to try out work.

Government programmes that support people into work don't provide enough help for people with high support needs. These programmes are aimed at people who have less severe disabilities and less support needs. There is also not enough help for people who want to work for less than 16 hours a week.

Some people do not try to get a job because they are worried that paid work may stop their benefits.

3. People are not involved in their local community



People with a learning disability find it hard to be part of their community or to do the same activities as other people. This can be because they do not have enough money, or because buses and trains are difficult to use.



Valuing People said that day centres should do more to help people to be involved in their local community and help to get a job. But some day centres don't do this well and are not very good at supporting people with high support needs.

Turning Point is also worried that 20,000 people do not get any day services at all.

We want:



A Government campaign to end discrimination. This campaign must be done jointly with people with a learning disability. Local authorities and services should also make sure that people with a learning disability are part of their local community.



The Government should set up a new programme to help people with high support needs to get a job. Benefits should be changed so people can work more easily.

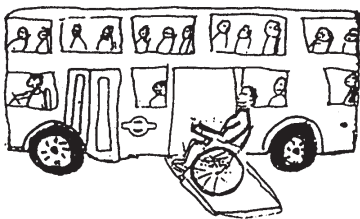
We want:



There should be a special study by the Government to find new ways to include people with a learning disability in society.



Day services should better support people to be involved in their communities, to do the same things as other people and to get jobs.



Buses and trains to be made easier to use and all people with a learning disability should get free travel.



People with a learning disability want respect, equality and opportunity. They want to be treated the same as non-disabled people. If these changes do not happen, people with a learning disability, and particularly people with high support needs, will miss out and still be socially excluded. This is not right or fair.

If you have anything you would like to say about this report then please contact:

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