

## LEARNING DISABILITY STRATEGY UPDATE

### 1 Introduction:

A key focus of national policy is to enable people with a learning disability to lead fulfilling and safe lives in their communities. In short, national policy stipulates that “people should expect to enjoy as good a life as any other member of the community, with an end to institutional care by default” (No Voice Unheard, No Right Ignored, 2015). The aim is to drive system-wide change and enable more people to live in the community, with the right support, close to home. People with a learning disability should be able to lead as fulfilling and independent a life as they can and have the support to live independently when possible. They should be able to exercise more control over the support they receive with a personal budget and expect that different health and local services should organise themselves around their needs.

### 2 The Care Act 2014:

The Care Act 2014 set an important new legal framework of support, which placed new duties upon the Council relating to Adult Social Care. At the heart of the reformed system is an overarching principle to promote individual wellbeing. Other elements include:

**An asset and strengths-based approach:** A key duty is to work with people to prevent, delay or reduce their need for care and support. This includes consideration of a person’s strengths and their informal support networks, as well as their needs and the risks they face. This approach recognises the value in the other assets and resources available to people in their local area. Our starting point is to consider what people can do for themselves and build upon this.

**More personalised care services:** The Act and accompanying guidance recognises that everyone’s needs are different and personal to them. Councils are required to consider how to meet each person’s specific needs rather than simply considering what service they will fit into. With this comes recognition that modern care and support can be provided in any number of ways, including through the development of new models, rather than existing traditional models.

**Greater choice and control:** There is a clear focus on the person and their needs, their choices and what they want to achieve. The aim is to put people in control of their lives and the care and support they receive. People who use services, and their carers, have clear legal rights to a care and support plan and a personal budget.

### 3 A Vision for Adult Social Care:

In preparation for the Care Act, the Council produced a vision for adult social care in April 2014. The aim of the vision statement is to help people understand how we will work with them when they come into contact with adult social care. It endorses an approach that promotes independence, choice and control, while seeking to safeguard people at risk from harm.

### 4 ASC Market Position Statement (August 2015):

Under the Care Act, the government introduced a duty upon all local authorities to promote diversity and quality in the provision of services. To help meet this duty, we have published a statement about the type of services we wish to see in Bexley in the future. Our aim is to help shape the market by encouraging service providers to develop care and support options that are rooted in the community and support people to achieve their goals and aspirations.

## 5 Learning Disability Strategy:

The Council and partners are working together on a new learning disability strategy. The strategy is about making sure we have good support in the community for people with a learning disability. Our approach to developing the strategy has been guided by the following:

**The right strategy for Bexley and our residents:** We want people of all ages, including people with a learning disability, to have a good life and be part of their community. We want the strategy to reflect the needs and aspirations of people with a learning disability and, through its delivery, enable each person to stay healthy, live their life and keep safe.

**Informed by evidenced best practice:** We have developed our strategy based on best practice from other councils and organisations, such as the Social Care Institute for Excellence. Nationally, many of the best examples of people being supported to lead community-based daily lives come from support services that take a whole-life approach based on good person-centred planning. We want to learn from best practice like this and offer the same opportunities to people in Bexley. We also seek to build upon what is already working well in Bexley, such as Local College First and Bexley Twofold.

**Living within our means – greater demand, relatively less money:** We need to respond to an overall increase in demand for social care and health services as a result of people living longer and more people with complex needs surviving into adulthood. As more young people with a learning disability come through transition into adult services, we expect to see greater demand for a wider choice of care and support options. Increased demand with relatively less money means that we need to work together more effectively to co-produce solutions. We need to ensure services are of the highest possible quality, whilst offering best value from available resources.

**Need to transform services – fit for the future:** In Bexley, the offer for adults with a learning disability has previously been based on a traditional provision of services. We want to co-produce a broader, more imaginative offer, allowing choice and a modernisation of current provision. A modern approach involves:

- people in charge with choice and control over their lives, supported by family and friends.
- inclusion and independence in the community with opportunities to work, learn, get about and meet people, be part of social networks and access goods and services.
- the right care in the right place with a focus on supporting people in their local communities so that people do not have to go to hospitals and care homes unless they really need to.

Achieving this aspiration is not easy and some change will be needed, including significant investment to ensure that the community infrastructure is accessible to disabled people. We also need to do much more to promote personal budgets. The percentage of people in receipt of a personal budget in Bexley is about 20% lower than the London and England average. We are accountable to government, our partners and residents for this performance. In response, we need to make it easier for people to manage their personal budget, encourage take-up of direct payments, and shape the market to offer more personalised care and support.

**Big contracts coming to an end – an opportunity to make changes:** London Borough of Bexley is committed to modernising our learning disability services, which have previously been provided as part of a block contract with a single provider. In 2014/15, the Council re-tendered contracts covering a significant part of its community-based services for people with a learning disability. This gave us the opportunity to develop new arrangements that enabled service users and carers to choose from a range of providers. The framework comprised six contracts with a total value in the region of £7.5m per annum. As these and

other contracts come to an end, we have the option to extend existing contracts for a further period or to re-tender and make changes.

The Learning Disability Strategy will help us to shape the kind of services we wish to see in the future. We remain committed to co-producing service specifications and involving service users and carers in evaluating tenders so that arrangements reflect their needs.

**A strategy led by the Learning Disability Partnership Board (LDPB):** We have sought to co-produce the Learning Disability Strategy with the LDPB, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and other stakeholders so that this is widely owned. The LDPB brings together people from across key agencies - including providers, service users and carers - who are all working to improve the lives of people with a learning disability in Bexley. The Board has a key role to play in ensuring that people with a learning disability have a voice and are involved in the planning of services.

The draft Learning Disability Strategy has been subject to consultation between November 2016 and March 2017. We have sought views as widely as possible from people who have a learning disability - whether in receipt of services or not - and their carers. The LDPB is considering the consultation feedback and this is being used to inform an action plan setting out the priorities of the Board over the next three years.

## **6 Day Services:**

As part of the agreed budget setting for 2016/17, the Council published a business case to review and modernise the adults' day care service. The business case included a proposal to close Ken Boyce Centre with a focus on integrating the activities into the community and maximising the use of universal services. Authority to implement agreed savings was given, taking account of any further consultations required. This position was communicated to stakeholders.

Following approval of the business case, Council officers attended meetings at the Ken Boyce Centre to discuss the proposal. Further investigation to date has established that the anticipated savings could not be delivered. The savings in the original business case have now been removed from the 2017/18 budget.

In March 2017, parents and carers visited Sutton, as an example of best practice, to see how day opportunities are being delivered in the community. We have received some positive feedback from the visit but we recognise that parents and carers may still have some questions about how such a model would work in practice in Bexley. There is no current decision to close day centres, however consultation will continue to consider developing options for day opportunities.

## **7 What Next:**

Meetings of the LDPB took place in April and May 2017 at which consultation feedback on the draft Learning Disability Strategy was shared. The survey results have also been published on our website at: [www.bexley.gov.uk/ldtransformation](http://www.bexley.gov.uk/ldtransformation).

A further meeting of the LDPB is scheduled in June 2017. The LDPB will finalise the strategy and recommend it to the Cabinet Member for Adults' Services for approval. The CCG Governing Body will also be asked to sign-off the strategy.

Once agreed, the implementation of the strategy will be overseen by the LDPB, who will have a crucial role in evaluating progress made and providing feedback about whether our work is making a difference to people in Bexley. Whilst we need to recognise that accountability and authority to take certain decisions must rest with the Council and/or the CCG, co-production will continue to influence the development of our local offer to adults with learning disabilities and their carers.