



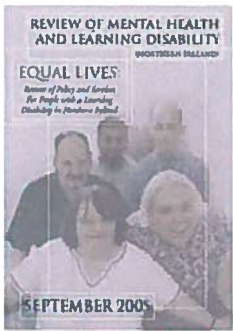
# Regional Learning Disability Day Opportunities Model



# What's in this Paper?

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# 1. Introduction



In 2002, the Equal Lives review said that the government needed:

*“To enable people with a learning disability to lead full and meaningful lives in their neighbourhoods, have access to a wide range of social, work and leisure opportunities and form and maintain friendships and relationships” (Equal Lives)*

The Northern Ireland government agreed with what the Bamford Review said and made lots of changes.








How people with learning disabilities spend their days in Northern Ireland is very different to how it was 10-15 years ago.



Today people with learning disabilities and their families have much greater expectations for their future.

People want a ‘menu’ of opportunities that they can choose from both for now and for the future.

For example:

Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
						
College	Home	Work	Base/ Clubhouse	Base/ Clubhouse	Work	Home

Instead of going to a Day Centre, lots of people are now taking part in things in their local community. For example, people are now:

- In Training (at College or in a Social Enterprise);
- In Supported Employment;
- In a job;
- Volunteering;
- At a 'Base/Clubhouse' getting together with their friends in their local community.



## Report

In 2012 the government asked for a report on how people with a learning disability in Northern Ireland are spending their days now and will spend their days in the future.

To do this, they had to look at:

- What's happening now;
- What's good about what's happening now; and
- How we could make sure ALL areas in Northern Ireland have good local services for people with learning disabilities in their own communities.



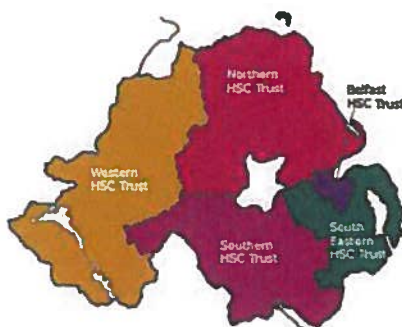
**So...we would like you to**

- 1. Read this paper;**
- 2. Tell us what services are needed in your area;**
- 3. Tell us what they should be?**

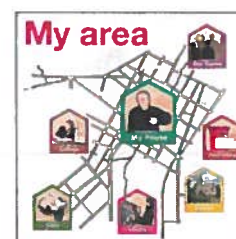


## 2. What's Happening Now?

There are 5 Health & Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland, providing health and social care services locally to the Northern Ireland public.



Each of the Trusts in Northern Ireland provide different types of day services so Day Opportunities looks different depending on where you live.



In some areas nearly half of the people who used to be at day centres are now taking part in activities in their own local community.

Instead of being run by Trust Staff, some of these Day Opportunities are being run in partnership with charities, social enterprises and colleges, amongst others.

Most people make their own way to their Day Opportunity and pay for their lunch and any activities they take part in.



### Examples of Day Opportunities:

#### Training for Work

Some people have been able to get a job, others are working towards getting a job and others are getting qualifications. Lots of organisations, including Social Enterprises (usually run by charities) offer 'on the job' training and qualifications for people with learning disabilities.



## Social and Leisure

A 'Drop in Centre' or 'Base/Clubhouse' is a place in a town where people can go to meet their friends and take part in activities which they choose. Some are on the main street of a town in a leisure or community centre, or in a hired room in a college or church.



The Drop In can be open on certain days or at certain times, including evenings and weekends. There is normally a Co-Ordinator at each 'Drop In' to act as support and help with activities.

People who attend usually pick what activities they want to do and pay for these themselves.



For example, activities include:

- Reading and visiting the library;
- Swimming;
- Being part of a walking group;
- Dancing and yoga;
- Circus skills/drumming workshops;
- Going to the cinema;
- Snooker/pool, bowls or golf;
- Listening to music;
- Shopping;
- Gardening;
- Eating out;
- Arts & Crafts.



## Supported Employment

Having a job can make a real difference to a person's life.

It can help someone become more independent. It can build confidence and start new friendships.

Supported Employment is where a person has a Job Coach or someone who

- helps them find a job;
- helps to train them to do the job at the start; and
- helps them to keep the job.



### Meet John Mullan

*John is from Bangor and has been involved with Positive Futures for many years. After trying different placements and job roles, John got offered a placement with a local farmer helping out on the farm two days a week. This is John's dream job, as he loves working outside, even when it is cold. John also helps out at the local Bangor market on a Wednesday and volunteers to look after grey hound dogs on a Thursday.*



*John is a TILII Member; TILII stands for Tell It Like It Is. John is an advocate and speaks up for himself and other people with a learning disability. With TILII John trains staff members on how to treat people with a learning disability and talks about respect, choice, rights and person centred planning.*

*John has a very busy life, which he loves- but he still has to do his housework on a Tuesday morning - his boring day as he calls it. John likes his life because he gets out and about in Bangor every day and everyone knows him.*

## Going to College

Lots of our colleges run training programmes especially for people with learning disabilities in, for example, catering and preparing food, retail (working in a shop and selling).



## Volunteering

Lots of people volunteer in charities helping with variety of things from working in a charity shop to helping answer the phones and doing collections for the charity.



### Meet Lee Robinson

*Lee is from Garvagh and used to be a Trainee at CAN Can Recycling in Ballymoney but he finished his 2 years training and got a job at the Recycling Site in his hometown.*

*Lee did a "Wider Choices" course at the Northern Regional College and now attends the Base in Ballymoney. Recently he has taken part in Circus School training, a Computer Course and likes going on shopping trips with his mates.*

*Lee is a self-advocate but is also a Shadow Councillor with CAN, speaking up for others and helping to make changes to the way people with learning disabilities are treated. As a Shadow Councillor, he attends many key meetings where decisions are made about the lives of people with learning disabilities. Lee wants to help others get as much enjoyment out of life as he does.*

*Lee enjoys life to the full, loves lorries and likes going to his local pub in what little spare time he has.*

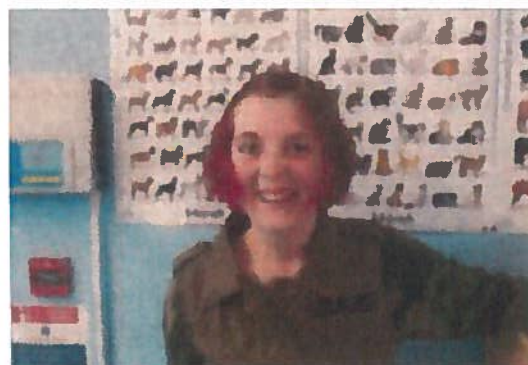


## Building-Based Services

Some people still attend Day Centres, Resource Centres or smaller buildings (sometimes called satellite units). This is usually because they need extra help because of their health or they find it hard to tell people what they need.

### Meet Rachel Mawhinney

*Rachel is from Bangor, County Down and attends Ravara Training & Resource Centre 4 days a week. Rachel left school 2 years ago and has settled well into the centre. Because of her health, Rachel needs to be with staff, needs some help with tasks and support when out and about in the community. Her hobbies include listening to music, watching soaps and doing puzzles.*



*Rachel enjoys going to Special Olympics and recently, took part in a football tournament with her friends and others. Rachel thoroughly enjoyed making new friends while showing how good she is at football. Rachel has been invited to be part of Ravara's Self Advocacy Group as she is happy to speak up and can tell people what she needs. She is a very kind and caring person and likes to help and involve others around her.*



### 3. What Needs to Happen in the Future?

In writing this paper, we learnt that not everyone in Northern Ireland can have the same services but we must offer Day Opportunities in line with this model.

However, we do need to learn from each other and share what is good.

To do this, we need to do the following...



#### **Work Together:**

- Professionals need to work together BEFORE young people leave school to plan for their futures;
- We need to make sure people have choices;
- We need to take a person-centered approach. This means making sure the person with the learning disability is at the centre of our planning;



#### **Involve Parents and Carers where appropriate:**

- Parents and carers need to be involved (if appropriate) when the person with learning disabilities is making decisions;
- Parents and carers need to get the same support and know that Day Centres will still be there for those who need them.



## Provide a Range of Opportunities

- A wide range of Day Opportunities should be offered to people with learning disabilities;
- All Day Opportunities should aim to support people to access and participate in activities independently;
- We need to make sure that Day Opportunities should not simply be available from 9 am to 3 pm, but be flexible and include evenings and weekends;



## Make sure there are Day Services for People with Additional needs:

- We have to look at how we support people who have more support needs, medical problems or have difficulty speaking.
- Anyone who needs a building-Base/Clubhoused service or a Day Centre will still be able to go to one.
- But as many day centres are outside or on the outskirts of towns, the Trusts will need to make sure people with additional support needs can get Day Opportunities in their local community.



## Provide Money to Pay for Changes:

- There needs to be a recognition that these services are not just the responsibility of Health & Social Care but all government departments including those in charge of training, employment, transport and benefits.
- ALL of these departments should be working together to support people with learning disabilities.
- More people should be able to take charge of their Day Opportunities package and access Self Directed Support and Individualised Budgets.



- We need to make sure that Day Centres are improved to better meet the needs of those who use them.



### **Work Together:**

- The politicians need to support this;
- Lots of different parts of the government will have to work together;
- Government (including Trusts) needs to provide work placements for people with learning disabilities too.



### **Create New Opportunities Where Few Exist:**

- Where there aren't as many services in an area, the Trusts should try and provide more;
- The Trusts should work with Voluntary agencies (like charities) and make sure partnerships benefit everyone (both the individual and their family) within their community.



### **Make Sure Services are Good:**

- A set of standards of best practice/quality mark should be developed to make sure the quality of Day Opportunities is the best it can be regardless of type/location;
- Day Opportunities partners should be encouraged to regularly check if their services are the best they can be by talking to the people with learning disabilities who use them and learn from them.



### **Keep Looking at New Ways of Working:**

- Use technology to support people in their community.



## 4. Next Steps

There will be two stages in planning services to move from a Northern Ireland-wide approach to a local approach. People with learning disabilities will be involved in the design of the new services and buildings and in deciding what the new services will provide.



Because different areas have different Day Opportunities, the time needed to do this will vary from area to area.

Everyone will have the chance to have their say through a 'Consultation' process.



### 1<sup>st</sup> Stage

A group of people from throughout Northern Ireland will get together to look at:

- Why we are doing this?
- What a Regional Day Opportunities model should look like?
- How we will make sure it works?
- Who will run/staff the Day Opportunities?
- How we will pay for it?



### 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage

The second stage will look at how we get this going on a local level.

At both stages, people with learning disabilities will be involved.



## 5. Conclusion

This 'vision' for changing the way people with learning disabilities spend their days will only succeed if:

- Everyone works together to make it happen;
- People with learning disabilities are involved;
- The politicians support the changes and all work together to pay for the changes.



We want people with learning disabilities and their families to have choices and opportunities in their own community.

Providing opportunities for people with learning disabilities to become true citizens in their own communities is the responsibility of us all.



## 6. Contact Us

### By Post:



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Or look us up: [www.hscboard.hscni.net](http://www.hscboard.hscni.net)



This Easy Read document was created by CAN. We are a user-led organisation of adults with learning disabilities, based in Ballymoney.

For more information, call us on **028 2766 9030**  
or visit our website at [www.compasspeople.org](http://www.compasspeople.org).

