

Looking at services for adults with a learning disability in the community



This report is from The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA)

Easy read summary

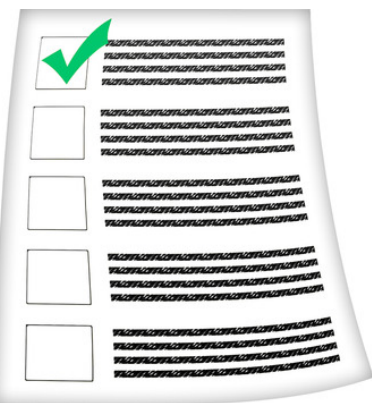


Who we are

We are **The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, RQIA** for short.

We check up on health and social care services in Northern Ireland. We check:

- how good the services are at looking after people
- how easy it is for people to get the services they need



This report is about what we found out when we checked on health and social services for people with a learning disability living in the community.

We checked on services in **5 Health and Social Care Trusts.**



What services should be like

People with a learning disability should be able to get **person centred services**.

Person centred services are services that look at who you are and what you need. The services should:

- be easy for you to use
- listen to what you want and need
- listen to what your carers and family have to say

What we found out

People are moving out of hospitals to live in a home of their own or with other people the **community**. Your **community** means where you live and the people you know.

It is taking a long time to move people out of hospital where they have lived for many years, because of problems with money.



It was hard for us to work out how much money is being spent on services for adults.

This is because staff often work in children's services as well as adult services.

We cannot always tell how money is being spent in community services.

What we found out

Staff

Each Trust has a different way of organising its staff.

Most community services for adults are run by social workers and community learning disability nurses.

Other people that work in community services are:

- clinical psychology staff that can help you with your thoughts, feelings and behaviour
- speech and language therapists that can help you with your speech and other issues.



What we found out

Services



Adults with a learning disability often have the same staff looking after them as they had when they were children. Most other services have stopped doing this.

There needs to be clearer ways of working together.



Some services had ways to check if what they do helps people, but most services have no way of checking.



People with learning disabilities can be left out of services for people with mental health problems and older people.

They have to go to learning disability hospitals to get care instead of being able to get care near where they live.

What we found out

Things that are working well



In the Belfast and South Eastern Trusts, some people with a learning disability have **communication passports**.

The passports help staff in hospital understand the person better. This means they can get better care.



Communications passports have information about the person, their health, what they like and what they **don't** like.

The passports also have information about their medication and if they need help with things like eating, washing and getting dressed.



Trusts share information about good ways of setting up supported housing for people with a learning disability. We think it would be a good idea for Trusts to share information about good ways of looking after people in the community.

What we found out

People with a learning disability and their families



The adult learning disability teams keep information about what they have done for people.



But, they are not so good at asking people and their families what they think about things.

All 5 Trusts have ways of finding out what people think.



Some carers told us that it was hard to get good information.

People with a learning disability found they had to wait for **respite care** and somewhere to go during the day. **Respite care** is when families can get a break from caring for someone

Direct payments

Direct Payments is money you can get so you can choose the help and support you want. You can choose what activities you want to do. Not many adults with a learning disability use **direct payments**.



What should happen next?

There needs to be better information about what people want and need.

Decisions about services should be based on what people want and need.

All the Trusts said there are services people needed that they did not have.

For example:

- **Respite services** – this is when families can get a break from caring for someone
- **Dementia services** – these are for people who have problems with how their mind works as they get older
- **Getting treatment at home** - so people don't have to go into hospital
- **Crisis response teams** – these are people that can help people when something goes wrong like a carer getting ill
- **Advocacy services** – these services can help people speak up



What should happen next?



We think that some of the money should be used to set up new services like these.

It is important that there is good, up to date information about the health and social care needs of people with a learning disability.

Each Trust should do the same.



There should be information about each Trust that shows how well they are doing for people with a learning disability.

There should be information about what staff do and how teams work together.



The way services are run and how staff work have stayed the same for a long time and need to be looked at by the people who pay for the services.

We think the Trusts should work together on making changes.

We think the Trusts will need to lead the way to show staff how to work in new ways.



Services have got better for people with a learning disability since the **Bamford Review**.

The **Bamford Review** is an Independent Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability in Northern Ireland (2008).



But, there are more changes to be made.

This report has been shared with the people who pay for the services.



Thank you to the people with a learning disability
who spoke to us

Thank you to Raincharm for the words

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