Being Part of the Community

We think that it is good that people do lots of different things. As people with learning difficulties we are often given limited choices over what we do. For example we may be given the choice of going to the cinema or to bowling when we really wanted to go and see our friends. Sometimes our choices are further limited. For example when many people with learning difficulties go to the cinema they go in a large groups which means they don’t get to choose which film they watch.

For us and our friends transport is one of the most important things in our lives. Without it we can’t do what we want. Most people use public transport and find it difficult to use. We are not surprised that the survey says that so many people had trouble using it and that they don’t feel safe. However, it is also expensive for many people with learning difficulties and information, like timetables, are inaccessible, especially when they change. For all these reasons most people need support to use public transport.

It is important that more people with learning difficulties vote. Many people with learning difficulties don’t vote because they don’t get the support they need to find out about the policies of the different parties and candidates. It is also important to recognise that some people with learning difficulties choose whether to vote or not at different times. Speaking-up, often in a group, is how people with learning difficulties often try to change things. It is also important that people with learning difficulties are involved in all activities which influence our communities.
As people with learning difficulties we know that like everyone else we sometimes don’t feel safe. What is important in the survey is that it shows how some members of the general public are often rude and offensive to us.

Ian Davies & Karen Spencer

We collected information about:

- the areas that people lived in
- what they did in their leisure time
- their use of transport
- whether they voted and took part in meetings
- how safe they felt
- whether they had been the victim of crime or had been bullied.

The Areas People Lived In

We collected information about the kind of areas people lived in. We got this information by using peoples’ postcodes. From this we could work out the kind of areas people lived in (from 2001 ACORN codes)\(^27\) and how deprived the areas were (from the English Indices of Deprivation 2004).\(^28\)

ACORN codes describe 57 different types of areas. These range from ‘Wealthy executives’ to ‘Multi-ethnic crowded flats’. These 57 types are grouped into five main kinds of area: ‘wealthy achievers’, ‘urban prosperity’, ‘comfortably off’, ‘moderate means’ and ‘hard pressed’.

We know that different numbers of people live in these different kinds of areas. So we worked out how many people took part in the survey for each 100,000 people who lived in
that kind of area. This tells us whether people with learning difficulties are more or less likely to live in these different kinds of areas. The figure below shows what we found for people with learning difficulties living in general households and in supported accommodation.

![Chart showing rate of people with learning disabilities per 100,000 of general population living in different types of areas]

**Figure 19: Rate of People with Learning Disabilities we Interviewed per 100,000 of General Population Living in Different Types of Areas**

What it shows is that people living in private households are much more likely to live in hard pressed communities than more affluent communities. It also shows that people in supported accommodation were more likely to live in prosperous urban communities than other types of communities.

The English Indices of Deprivation tell us how deprived an area is. We split all the areas in England into 10 groups from the most deprived (number 1) to the richest (number 10). Similar numbers of people live in each of these 10 types.
of areas. Figure 20 shows where people who participated in the project lived. It shows this separately for

- people living in private households
- people supported under the ‘Supporting People’ programme
- people living in Registered Residential Care Homes.

There were too few people living in NHS accommodation for us to work out how deprived an area they were living in.

What the figure shows is that people living in private households and people supported under the *Supporting People* programme were more likely to live in more deprived areas (the columns are above the expected 10% line) and much less likely to live in richer areas (the columns are below the expected 10% line). It also shows that people living in Registered Residential Care Homes were more likely to live in areas that were not too deprived and not too rich.
Leisure & Recreation

We asked people about the kinds of things they did in their spare time. We asked whether they had done nine kinds of different things in the last month. From this list they were most likely to have been

- Shopping (87%)
- To visit friends or family (77%)
- For a meal in a restaurant or pub or café (71%)
- To the pub or a club (62%)
- To a hairdresser (59%)
- To play sport or go swimming (41%)
• To the cinema, or to plays or concerts (40%)
• To the library (22%)
• To watch sport (19%)

A few people (5%) had done none or only one of these things. A few people (6%) had done them all, or all but one.

The UK Time Use Survey 2000 asked similar questions for just under 10,000 adults in the UK. In this survey, in the last month

• 15% of people had been to the cinema
• 16% had been to a concert
• 15% of people had been to watch sport.

This suggests that people with learning difficulties are at least as likely to participate in some types of community based activities as people in general.

We also wanted to find out which people were more likely to have done five or more of these things in the last month. The following list starts with the things that were most important and ends with the things that were least important. People were more likely to have done five or more of these things in the last month if they:

• Saw their friends who also had learning difficulties more often
• Lived in richer areas
• Lived in supported accommodation
• Were younger
• Were not poor
• Did not have a long-standing illness or disability
• Saw their families more often
• Had lower support needs
• Lived with more people
• Had good health
• Saw friends who did not have learning difficulties more often

Over half of the people we talked to (59%) said they had been on holiday in the last year. Three out of four people (75%) said they went out on day trips.

We then asked people whether they liked doing these things. Nearly everyone (at least nine out ten people) said they enjoyed each of these things.

We then asked people whether they would like to do more of these things. The things they said they would most like to do more often were go:

• For a meal in a restaurant or pub or café (56%)
• To the cinema, or to plays or concerts (47%)
• To visit friends or family (42%)
• Shopping (36%)
• To play sport or go swimming (34%)
• To the pub or a club (27%)
• To watch sport (25%)
• To a hairdresser (23%)
• To the library (18%)

We then asked people what they would like to be different about what they did in the daytime. The things they said they would most like to be different were

• Nothing (26%)
• Go out more (8%)
• Get a job or a different job (7%)
• Do sports (6%)
• Visit people (4%)
• Generally have more things to do (4%)
• Have money to do things (1%)
• Move on from college/day centre (1%)
• Go shopping (1%)
• Use a computer (1%)
• Go out to pub/meals (<1%)
• Go to day centre more often (<1%)
• Listen to more music (<1%)
• Do more arts/crafts (<1%)

We then asked people what they would like to be different about what they did in the evening. The things they said they would most like to be different were

• Nothing (35%)
• Go out to pub/club/cinema (7%)
• Visit people (5%)
• Go out more (4%)
• Do sports (3%)
• Watch more TV (1%)
• Have money to do things (<1%)
• Use a computer (<1%)
• Listen to more music (<1%)
• Do more arts/crafts (<1%)

Finally, we asked people what they enjoyed doing most in their free time. The things they most enjoyed doing were

• Watching TV/videos (23%)
• Listening to music/singing (19%)
• Going out to pub/club/cinema/café (15%)
• Playing or watching live sport (13%)
• Socialising (12%)
• Using a computer (10%)
• Painting/drawing/crafts (10%)
• Shopping (4%)
• Reading (4%)
• Dancing (2%)
• Cooking (2%)
• Cleaning/tidying up (1%)
• Helping people (1%)
• Having a bath/shower (<1%)

Just over one in three people (34%) said they would like to do their favourite activity more often.

We also asked people about whether they chose what they did in their spare time.

Most people (86%) said that they chose what to do in their spare time during the day. Most people (91%) also said that they chose what to do in their spare time during the evening.

Because it is often difficult for people to know whether someone else is really choosing something, we looked at what support people told us and what people with learning difficulties told us themselves.

People with learning difficulties were much more likely to say that they chose what to do in their spare time during the day than support people (95% compared with 68%). People with learning difficulties were also much more likely to say that they chose what to do in their spare time during the evening than support people (98% compared with 78%). These differences are possibly because people with lower support needs find it easier to make choices.

We also asked people whether they would like more say in what goes on in their everyday life. Just over one in three people (36%) said they would like more say in what goes on in their everyday life. When this question was answered by
people with learning difficulties themselves they were a bit more likely to say they would like more say in what goes on in their everyday life (40% compared with 30% when the question was answered by a support person).

**Mobility & Transport**

First, we asked people whether they needed someone to go with them when they needed to get somewhere.

- Over half the people we asked (57%) said that they did need someone to go with them.
- About one in six (14%) said that it depended on where and how far they were going.
- Nearly one in three (29%) said that they did not need anyone to go with them.

Most people (85%) said that there was usually someone free to go with them when they wanted to go somewhere. About one in six (15%) said that they had to wait.

We asked people how they usually got to places. The most common forms of transport they used were

- Public transport (Bus, tram, train, tube) (54%)
- Taken by family or friends in their car (50%)
- Walking or in a wheelchair (48%)
- Special bus or car with other people with learning difficulties (32%)
- Taxi (26%)
- Bike (7%)
- Own car, motorbike or moped (2%)

Of the people who usually used public transport,
Over one in three (37%) said they had had trouble using public transport
Over one in four (29%) said they did not feel safe using public transport
Over one in three (36%) said they did not find it easy using public transport
Nearly one in six (15%) said they found the staff on public transport unhelpful

Civic & Political Participation

We asked people about whether they went to meetings and took part in politics. We also asked them how they found out about things.

Three out of four people (75%) said it was easy to find out what they want to know. When this question was answered by people with learning difficulties, the number rose to 85%.

Just under one in ten people (9%) had heard of the National Learning Disability Information Centre. Of the people who had heard of it, one in ten (10%) had contacted it. This means that one out of every hundred people we talked to (1%) had contacted the National Learning Disability Information Centre.

Voting

Less than one in three people (31%) said that they voted in the 2001 general election. In the 2003 Home Office Citizenship Survey 72% of people said that they voted in the 2001 general election. In the Millennium Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey, 73% of people said that they voted in the 2001 general election. The actual turnout for this election was 59%.
We wanted to find out which people were more likely to have voted. The following list starts with the things that were most important and ends with the things that were least important. People were more likely to say they voted if they:

- Had lower support needs
- Were older
- Lived with 2-4 other people
- Were not poor
- Were Asian
- Were not Black
- Had a paid job
- Did not live in NHS accommodation
- Lived in more affluent areas

**Valuing People & Partnership Boards**

Not many people had heard of Valuing People (14%) or of the Learning Disability Partnership Boards (8%). Of the people who had heard of Partnership Boards, over one in three (38%) had been involved with the Partnership Board.

**Advocacy**

About half of the people (54%) we talked to had an independent advocate. Most of the advocates (64%) were paid to do their job.

One in five people (20%) were aware of a self-advocacy group in their area.

- Of the people who were aware, over one in four (28%) had attended a self-advocacy meeting.
Of the people who attended, half (56%) attended regularly.

This means that about one in thirty (3%) of all people we talked to regularly attended self-advocacy groups. Nearly all (95%) of the people who regularly attended thought that self-advocacy groups help people with learning difficulties to speak up.

We wanted to find out which people were more likely to know about local self-advocacy groups. The following list starts with the things that were most important and ends with the things that were least important. People were more likely to say they knew of a local group if they:

- Did a wider range of community-based activities
- Lived in supported accommodation
- Were not poor
- Saw friends with learning difficulties more often
- Were older
- Saw friends who did not have learning difficulties more often
- Did not have a long-standing illness or disability

Not many people had heard of the National Forum (11%). Most people (83%) who had heard of the National Forum thought it would help people with learning difficulties to have their say. When this question was answered by people with learning difficulties, the number rose to 90%.
Safety

We asked people about whether they felt safe at home at night and felt safe in the local area.

- A few people living in either supported accommodation (3%) or private households (5%) said they did not feel safe in their home at night.
- A few more people living in either supported accommodation (6%) or private households (14%) said they did not feel safe in the local area.
- Nearly one in three people (29%) said they did not feel safe using public transport.

Altogether, one in three people (32%) said they did not feel safe either in their homes, their local area or using public transport.

We wanted to find out which people were more likely to not feel safe. The following list starts with the things that were most important and ends with the things that were least important. People were more likely to say they did not feel safe if they:

- Were poor
- Had higher support needs
- Lived in a private household
- Were younger
- Lived in a more deprived area
- Had a long-standing illness or disability
- Had poorer general health
Crime & Bullying

We asked people about whether they had been bullied and whether they had been the victims of crime.

Bullying

First we asked people whether in the last year anybody had been rude or offensive to them because they have learning difficulties. Nearly one in three people (32%) said someone had been rude to them.

Overall, the kinds of people who were most likely to be rude or offensive to them because they had learning difficulties were:

- A stranger (63%)
- Someone they knew/a friend (14%)
- Someone at the day centre (9%)
- Someone they worked with (8%)
- Someone they lived with (8%)
- Someone at college (4%)
- Paid support workers (4%)

There were some differences to the answer to this question depending on who answered it. The following figure (Figure 21) shows who people with learning difficulties and who support people thought had been rude.
We wanted to find out which people were more likely to have been bullied. The following list starts with the things that were most important and ends with the things that were least important. People were more likely to say they have been bullied if they:

- Were poor
- Were younger
- Had poorer general health
- Lived alone
- Saw their friends with learning difficulties more often
- Did fewer community-based leisure activities
Next we asked people whether they had been victims of crime in the last year. Overall, nearly one in ten people (9%) said they had been the victim of crime. This is much less than the chances of being a victim of crime reported in 2003/4 in the British Crime Survey (26%).

Of the people who had been the victim of a crime, over one in three (34%) had been a victim more than once.

People told us about different types of crime. The percentage of people with learning difficulties who were victims of these different types of crime are shown in Figure 22. It also shows (where it is possible) how this compares with the information from the British Crime Survey (BCS) for 2003/4.

Figure 22: Percentage of People Who Were Victims of Different Crimes
The Figure shows that people with learning difficulties were less at risk of crime in general, but were slightly more likely to be attacked.

Overall, three out of four people (72%) reported the crimes to the police. People told us that about one in six reports (15%) led to an arrest.

The crimes that we were told resulted in arrests were:

- Being attacked (11)
- Being burgled or having other things stolen (4)
- Having money or a mobile phone stolen (1)
- Having their house/car/bike vandalised (1)

People were more likely to report some crimes than others. The percentage of people with learning difficulties who were victims of these different types of crime and reported them to the police are shown in Figure 23. It also shows (where we can) comparable rates from the British Crime Survey (BCS) for 2003/4.
Figure 23: Percentage of People Who Were Victims of Different Crimes and Reported Them to the Police

The Figure shows that people with learning difficulties were more likely to report crimes to the police than people in general.

We wanted to find out which people were more likely to have been a victim of crime. The following list starts with the things that were most important and ends with the things that were least important. People were more likely to say they had been a victim of crime if they:

- Lived alone
- Were younger
- Had lower support needs
- Were men
- Had poorer general health
- Lived in a more deprived area
- Had a long-standing illness or disability
Were poor

Figure 24 shows the percentage of men and women (aged under 30) with low support needs who were the victims of personal crime in more deprived and less deprived areas. ‘Personal crime’ includes being attacked and mugged.

Figure 24: Percentage of men and women aged under 30 with low support needs who were the victims of personal crime in more deprived (1) to less deprived (5) areas