What Did We Find Out?

In Sections 3 to 10 of the report we tell you what we found out. Each of these sections contains a lot of information. We have summarised some of the main points below.

*People with Learning Difficulties are Often Socially Excluded*

Being socially excluded means that you do not get to do many of the things that are important to other people.

- People living in private households and people supported under *Supporting People* were more likely to live in poor and deprived areas.
- Only one in six people with learning difficulties who were of ‘working age’ (17%) had a paid job. Generally in the UK, 67% of men and 53% of women of ‘working age’ have paid jobs.
- Many people worked part time. Over one in four men (28%) and nearly half of women (47%) who had a paid job worked for less than 16 hours a week.
- Nearly two out of three people (65%) who were unemployed (and said they were able to work) said they would like a job.
- Nearly three in four people (72%) went to a special school. One in ten (10%) went to a special unit in a
mainstream school. Less than one in five (18%) went to ordinary classes in mainstream school.

- We asked people who were not living with their parents or another relative how often they saw members of their family. Nearly half (44%) saw them at least every week or nearly every week. Just under one in five (19%) never saw members of their family. People who had learning difficulties were much more likely not to see members of their family than people who do not have learning difficulties.

- Just over two out of three people (69%) had contact with friends at least once a year. Nearly one in three (31%) said they did not have any contact with friends. People who had learning difficulties were much more likely not to see friends than people who do not have learning difficulties.

- Over two out of three people (69%) had friends who also had learning difficulties. One in four people (25%) had friends who did not have learning difficulties.

- One in twenty people (5%) had no friends and did not see anyone from their family.

- One in fifteen of the people we interviewed (7%) had children. Of the people who had children, just over half (52%) looked after their children.

- Less than one in three people (31%) said that they voted in the 2001 general election. In surveys of the general population nearly four out of five people (73%) said that they voted in the 2001 general election.
People who are socially excluded are also likely to have bad things happen in their lives.

- Nearly half of the people we talked to (43%) said they had been bullied at school.
- We had a list of things that most people in England think others should be able to have. These were things like being able to buy new clothes. We asked people whether they had enough money to buy these things. People with learning difficulties were less likely to have enough money to buy these things than people who do not have learning difficulties.
- One in three people (32%) said they did not feel safe either in their homes, their local area or using public transport.
- Nearly one in three people (32%) said someone had been rude or offensive to them in the last year because they have learning difficulties.
- Nearly one in ten people (9%) said they had been the victim of crime in the last year. People with learning difficulties were less likely to be a victim of crime than other people, but they were slightly more likely to be attacked.
- One in six (15%) said that their general health was ‘not good’.
- We asked people how happy they felt about their life at the moment. Nearly half (47%) said they were very happy. But one in twenty (4%) said they were mostly unhappy.
- One in ten people (9-11%) said they felt sad or worried ‘a lot’, felt left out ‘a lot’, and felt helpless ‘a
lot’. Over one in ten people (13%) said they ‘never’ felt confident.

People with Learning Difficulties Often Have Little Control Over Their Lives

- Two out of three people in supported accommodation (64%) had no choice over either who they lived with or where they lived.
- One in three people (39%) did not have enough privacy.
- Over one in three of people (38%) said they had heard about Direct Payments. Just under one in five people (19%) were receiving them.
- Just over half of the people we asked (54%) said someone else decided how much money they could spend each week.
- Just over one in ten (12%) said that someone else decided what they could spend their money on.
- About half of the people we talked to (54%) had an independent advocate.
- One in five people (20%) were aware of a self-advocacy group in their area. About one in thirty of all people we talked to (3%) regularly attended self-advocacy groups.

People with Learning Difficulties have Few Opportunities to be Independent

- Half of all adults with learning difficulties (50%) were still living with their parent(s). Another one in
ten (12%) were living with other relatives. Only about one in fifteen (7%) were living either on their own or with a partner. Few adults who do not have learning difficulties live with their parents or with other relatives.

- One in ten people (10%) with learning difficulties living in private households helped care for another adult who was elderly, ill or had a disability.
- One in twenty people (6%) said they had an unmet need for support.
- Nearly two out of three people (63%) said they were very happy with the support they received. A few people (7%) said they were not happy.
- One in ten people (10%) said they had wanted to complain about the support they received.

Some People with Learning Difficulties are More Likely Than Others to Have Bad Things Happening in Their Lives

The survey showed that some good things and some bad things were happening in the lives of people with learning difficulties. We wanted to find out whether some people were more likely to have good or bad things happening to them.

Some people were much more likely to have bad things happen to them than other people.

- **Being poor or living in a poor area** had an impact on just about every aspect of peoples’ lives. This is important because people with learning difficulties
are much more likely to be poor than people who do not have learning difficulties. People who were poor or lived in poor areas were more likely to live in unsuitable accommodation and to have less privacy at home. They were also more likely to be unemployed, not have a voluntary job, not have enjoyed school, be bullied at school, not be taking a course and not attend a day centre. They were also more likely to not have control over their money. They were also more likely to see members of their family less often, be an unpaid carer, see their friends less often, do a smaller range of community activities, not have voted and not know about local advocacy groups. They were more likely to not feel safe, be bullied and be a victim of crime. Finally, they were more likely to have poor health, have a long-standing illness or disability, smoke, not be happy, be sad or worried, feel left out, feel helpless, not feel confident, have unmet need and to have wanted to complain about the support they receive.

- **People who described themselves as Black or Asian** were more likely to be unemployed, poor, see their friends less often, have poor health and be sad or worried a lot. In addition, people from Asian communities were more likely to have less privacy, feel left out and not feel confident.
- **People with higher support needs** were more likely to be living in supported accommodation, to have less privacy, to have less choice, to be unemployed and not to have a voluntary job. They were more likely to not to have gone to a mainstream school, not to be taking a course, not to
receive Direct Payments, not to have control over their money. Finally, they were more likely to see friends who do not have learning difficulties less often, not to feel safe, feel helpless and not feel confident.

- **People with lower support needs** were more likely to be poor, a victim of crime, be unhappy, have poor general health and to have been bullied at school.

- **People who had poor general health** were more likely to live in unsuitable accommodation, be poor, see friends who have learning difficulties less often and do fewer community-based activities. They were also more likely to not feel safe, have been bullied, be a victim of crime, not be happy, feel sad or worried, left out and helpless and not feel confident.

- **Men** were more likely to have less privacy in their home, see friends who have learning difficulties less often, be a victim of crime and smoke.

- **Women** were more likely to be unemployed, have been bullied at school, attend a day centre, not exercise, feel sad or worried.

- **Younger people** were more likely to live in unsuitable accommodation, have less privacy at home, not have a voluntary job, have been bullied at school, be poor, not have voted, not know about local self-advocacy groups. They were also more likely to not feel safe, be bullied, be a victim of crime, smoke, be unhappy, feel sad or worried, left out and helpless and not feel confident.
• Older people were more likely to not be taking a course, have no control over their money, see friends who do not have learning difficulties less often, do fewer community-based activities, have poor health and to not exercise.