



Making Social Care
Better for People

Commission for Social Care Inspection



Inspection of services for people with learning disabilities

Herefordshire Council



Easy-Read Version

January/February 2007

Commission for Social Care Inspection



The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is the organisation that checks all social care for adults given to people in England.



CSCI's jobs are to:

- support social care to get better



- check all social care for adults



- write a report each year for Parliament about how well adult social care is working



- check council adult social services and the way they spend their money



- hold information on how well social care is working



- give councils star-ratings



- register and inspect services against the rules about the least you can expect from a service.



Inspection of services for people with learning disabilities

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Service Inspection Team



Lead Inspector: Silu Pascoe
Team Inspector: Sue Talbot

Expert by Experience:
Jeff Osborne supported by Gemma
Brown, from Bristol and South
Gloucestershire. People First

Project Assistants: Christine Page
and Vanessa Honeyghan

What the team did



The team went to inspect services for people with learning disabilities at Herefordshire Council.



We wanted to see what things were like for people with learning disabilities and their carers.

We also wanted to see how well the council was doing with 'Valuing People'- the national plan for learning disability services.



There were 2 inspectors on the team, and for part of the time an Expert by Experience, a person with learning disabilities who has experience of services, and his supporter.



We asked people who used services and carers what they thought about services for people with learning disabilities in Herefordshire.

We also spoke to managers and staff from the council and organisations it works with.



We visited different projects and went to a Partnership Board meeting. We also met with advocacy groups, Councillors and the Chief Executive of the Council.



We looked at case files and papers from the council. We also sent a survey to carers. Another survey was filled in by staff who looked at the support that people needed and planned their care.



We would like to thank all the staff, people who use services, carers and everyone else who took part in the inspection.



Overall, the inspection team thought that Herefordshire Council was not serving people with learning disabilities well and that it was not certain the council had enough things in place to be able to make sure that learning disability services got better in the future.



There is more information below about what the inspection team found the council was doing well and what it could do better.

Getting through to services

What the inspection team found

Information

The council had not written and given out much information about services to people with learning disabilities and their carers.



People could get information in different languages and formats if they asked the council for it. The new Public Contact Team was working to make information more accessible for all local people.



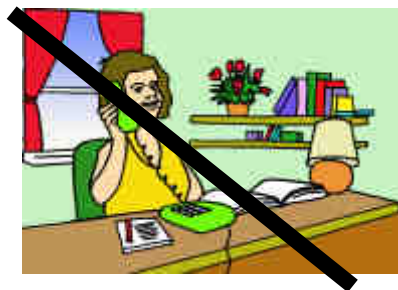
The 'News and Views' Team gave out good information and ran the Partnership Board website.



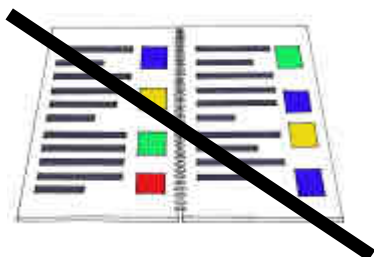
People who use services and carers said that ECHO, a local voluntary organisation, was good at giving out information and advice.



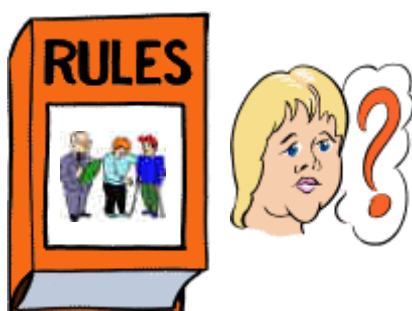
Some people who used services said that they wanted information in different formats like videos and CDs.



People did not have information about how to get support out of office hours. Some people said that they found it difficult to get in touch with social workers even during office hours.

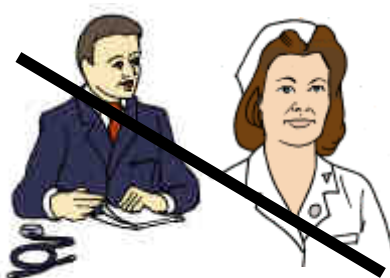


There was no accessible information for people about keeping things private or about how to ask to see information kept about them.



Access to services

People with learning disabilities and their carers did not find the rules about how they could get services easy to understand.



People with learning disabilities were finding it hard to get through to the health care services which they needed. The council and Primary Care Trust were doing some work on this to make things better.



What needs to be done



The council should make sure that people with learning disabilities get good accessible information. It should tell them about different services and how to get them.



The council should make sure that the rules about who can get a service are clear for people with learning disabilities and their carers.



The council should work with the Primary Care Trust to make sure that people with learning disabilities get the health care that they need.

Assessment, care planning and review

What the inspection team found



People with learning disabilities and carers were often kept waiting to have their needs looked at.



Many of the care plans which the inspectors read only listed what services there were and not what the person needed.



A very large number of people had not had a review of their needs done for some time. Some people had been waiting many years to have their needs looked at again.



It was not clear that people were always given copies of their assessments, care plans and reviews. These plans were not written in ways that were easy for people who use services to understand.



The council was trying out a new form which had been written to help people have their say about their support needs.



Some people said that they wanted support with their religious needs, which were not being looked at.



Few people had either Person-Centred Plans or Health Action Plans.



Young people with learning disabilities were not being well supported to move from Children's Services to Adult Services. 2 new workers had just been taken on to help with making this move better.



14 people who lived outside Herefordshire for their services had had their needs reviewed in the past year.



Not many carers had had their needs looked at. The council had just taken on a Carers' Support Worker to make things better for carers.



The council had started to plan how to meet the needs of people living with older carers.



What needs to be done



The council should make sure that it catches up with all the reviews that have not been done to make sure that people's needs are being met.



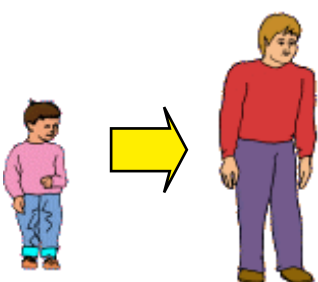
The council should make sure that the Assessment and Care Management Service works better to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities.



The council should make sure that more people have Person-Centred Plans.



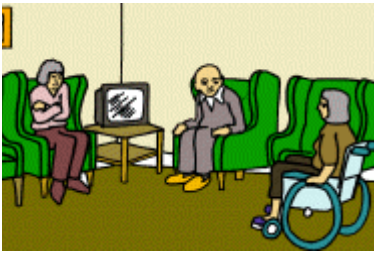
The council should work with the Primary Care Trust to make sure more people have Health Action Plans.



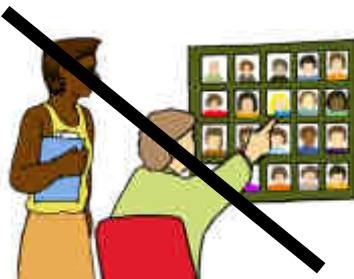
The council and the organisations it works with should make sure that young people with learning disabilities have the support they need when moving from Children's Services to Adult Services.

Services

What the inspection team found



The council had been slow to develop up to date services for people with learning disabilities. Many people were living in care homes and many people who lived with their family carers went to day centres.



There were not enough different services and types of support to give people choice and control in their lives.



Not all parts of the council knew the needs of people with learning disabilities and supported them to be included in their local communities.



People who lived in country areas could not always get the services they needed close by to where they lived.

The council and organisations it worked with were planning to make day services more local to where people lived.

Jobs and learning



Not enough work had been done to help people with learning disabilities get work-based training or jobs, including paid jobs.



No-one with a learning disability was working for the council.



The Pavilion Café was a new organisation which gave both jobs and work-based training to a small number of people. People liked working there.

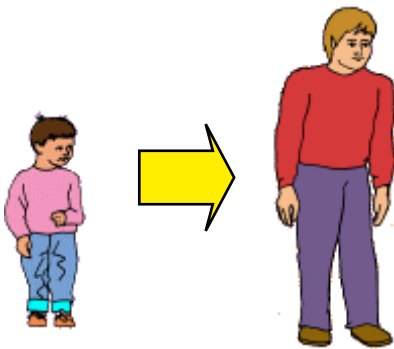


There were chances for people to go to college but more needed to be done for people with high support needs to have such chances.

Direct Payments and Individual Budgets



Only 1 family carer and 13 people with learning disabilities were getting Direct Payments.



Children's Services had helped more parents of disabled children and young people to get Direct Payments.

Plans needed to be made about what would happen in the future when young people moved to Adult Services.



There was a Direct Payments Support Scheme to help people with their Direct Payments.



The council was also working to develop Individual Budgets as part of the national 'In Control' project. 5 people had some kind of individual budget and 1 person had a fully working individual budget.

Advocacy



There was good group advocacy but some people needed an advocate to speak up just for them when, for example, they wanted to make a complaint.

Day services



Many people were going to day centres. The council had started to make some day services more modern by supporting people to use their local communities.



ECHO and other small voluntary organisations were supporting people to do things in their local community but were always having to look for money to carry on.



The Community Learning Disability team said that there were not enough things for people with complex needs and high support needs to do during the day.

The team also said that there were not enough places in care homes for people with behaviour which was difficult to manage.

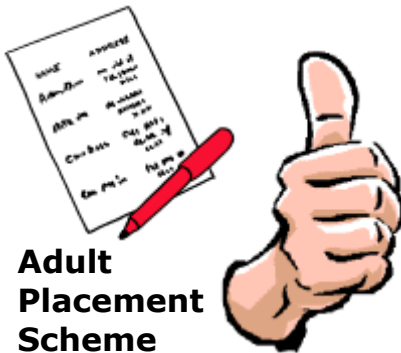


Other services

Some people had short break stays in residential centres run by the council. The council's residential short break service had places which people could use in emergencies.



There were not many examples of people getting services at home.



People who used the Adult Placement Scheme said that it was a good service. There was a waiting list for this service.



Some people with learning disabilities had got help from the Supporting People team to get houses to live in.

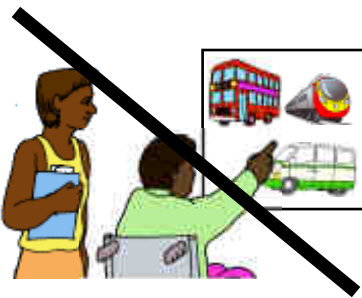
12 people had been supported to get a home of their own by joining a shared-ownership housing scheme.



People told the inspection team that they liked having a place of their own to live in, as they had more control in their lives.



It was very hard for people to get some health services they needed, like speech and language therapy and physiotherapy.



Transport was not set up in a way that gave people choice and control. Some people had to spend a long time travelling to a service.



Public transport was not good in some of the country areas.



Training was being set up to help some people living in Supporting People Housing to use public transport.

Carers



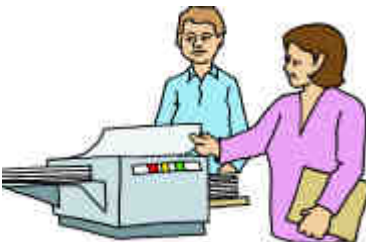
Many carers said that they were not getting the information, advice or support services that they needed. Carers were worried about what would happen in an emergency.



What needs to be done



The council should make sure that people have more choice and control by offering more services of different types which meet their needs.



The council should be an example to other organisations by taking on people with learning disabilities to work in the council.



The council should help more people onto Direct Payments or Individual Budgets.



All parts of the council need to know about the needs of people with learning disabilities and support them to be included in their local communities.



The council should make sure that people can get an advocate when they need one, who is not linked to the service they use.



The council should work with carers to make sure they get the support services they need.

Planning and Buying Services to Meet Needs

What the inspection team found

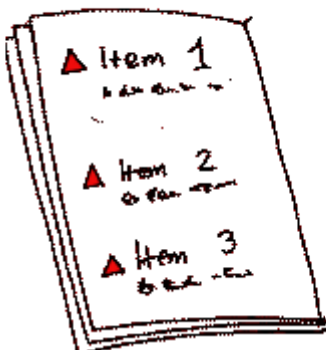
The council and the Primary Care Trust worked together to plan services and both put money into the same pot to buy services.



In November 2006, the council and the Primary Care Trust had written a plan about what they were planning.



The plan said what services they were going to buy to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities in the future.



The plan said that there were 3 important services which needed to be developed more in future – Day Services, Housing with Support Services and the Assessment and Care Management Service.



The council had started work with other councils nearby to plan and buy services for people with high support needs.



The council was good at planning and working with voluntary organisations.



The council, Primary Care Trust and voluntary services had agreed on some rules for choosing and paying for services in the future.

They did this so people could have a bigger choice of services.



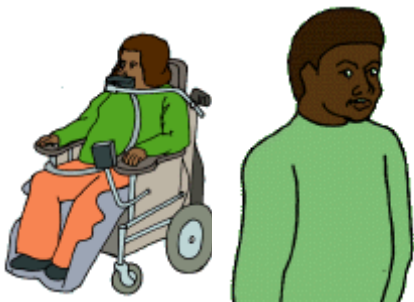
The council was not so good at planning and working with other outside organisations like the Independent Sector. These organisations said that they were not clear what the council wanted from their services.



Adult Services and Children's Services were starting to work together more closely to make better plans for young people with learning disabilities and for parents with learning disabilities.



The council had not involved people who use services and carers enough in planning, running and checking services from the start.



Nobody with high support needs or from a black and minority ethnic group was involved in planning services.



The Valuing People Partnership Board was not working well to plan and check how well services were meeting people's needs.

Not all of its sub-groups were working on the issues which they had been set up to look at.



Not enough people who use services or carers were on the Partnership Board and its sub-groups.



Some people who were on the Partnership Board felt that they were not always being listened to and that meetings were difficult to follow.



The Learning Disability Development Fund money that the council and Primary Care Trust had been given by the government had been used to buy services.

Some people on the Partnership Board were worried that not enough of this money was used to buy new services.



What needs to be done



The council needs to make sure when buying services that it is clear what is expected so that services can get better at meeting people's needs.



The council needs to make sure that people who use services and carers are involved in planning, running and checking services so that services meet people's needs.



The council needs to make sure that the Valuing People Partnership Board and its sub-groups work better and involve people well.

Checking how well services are doing

What the inspection team found



The council did not often ask people with learning disabilities and their carers what they thought about the services they were getting.



In the last year they had started to ask people about housing and support services and day services.



A self-advocacy group called the People's Union was good at finding out what people who use services thought about the services they got.



Some people said they knew how to complain if they were not happy about services. The council was just updating its leaflet which told the public how to complain when things went wrong.



It was not always clear how people's views and complaints had been used to make services better.



The council did not have a plan for checking how well all learning disability services were doing to meet people's needs.



Some of the recording in the files which inspectors read was not very good. Managers were not always checking the work that was being done by their staff.



The council could not show how their plans and services were making things more equal for different groups of people with learning disabilities.



What needs to be done



The council should ask people with learning disabilities and carers what they think about the services they get and use this information to make services better.



The council should write a plan about how it will check all learning disability services to make sure that they are doing what they say they are doing to meet people's needs.



The council needs to look at all learning disability plans and services to see how they affect different groups of people, so they can make sure that people are being treated fairly and equally.

Keeping safe

What the inspection team found



There was a worker called an Adult Protection Coordinator who worked very hard with lots of organisations to keep people safe.



Training to keep people safe from harm was mainly done or arranged by the Adult Protection Coordinator and not by the council's training department.

There were not enough resources given to support different types of training needed to keep people safe.



The Adult Protection Coordinator was spending so much time supporting staff to deal with individual cases where people were at risk that she did not always have enough time to work on all of the other parts of her job.



Not many people knew about the special committee working to keep people safe.

Some important organisations, like colleges, were not members of this committee.



People who use services and carers were not always asked their views about how to develop better ways of working to keep people safe.



When bad things happened to people in the past, the information had not always been written down well and reported in good time to be looked into.



Work to protect people from harm had got better in recent months but there were still a lot to do so that things got even better.



There were rules to follow to protect people from harm. However, there were not enough checks in place to make sure that the council and organisations it worked with were always following them.



Staff did not have enough time to work on preventing people from being at risk in the first place.



The council did not produce any accessible information for people with learning disabilities to support themselves to keep safe.



The People's Union had started to do some work with self-advocates about keeping safe.



They were also planning to do some training to help people deal with bullying. People who use services had said that they were very worried about the bullying which was going on.

Keep People Safe



What needs to be done

The council and organisations it works with should make sure that their ways of working to keep people safe are managed better throughout all levels of their organisations.

Resources – Money and staff

What the inspection team found

Money



For some years learning disability services had spent more money than they had been given to spend by the council.



A lot of money was used for people to live in care homes. Not many people lived in a home of their own.



The council and Primary Care Trust had done some work to find out how they could spend the money for learning disability services in a better way.



The council agreed new plans for learning disability services in December 2006 and to give some extra money from 2007 to 2008.



This extra money was to help with some of the changes planned to bring learning disability services up to date.



Not enough work had been done to find money for learning disability services from outside Adult Social Care. The council was going to take on a worker to look into this.



Staff

The council said that it had had some problems finding new staff to work in learning disability services.



The Community Learning Disability Team had found it very hard to get all their work done.



In the past year things had got better as new managers and staff had been taken on.



People with learning disabilities were not always involved in taking on new staff.



The council and Primary Care Trust did not have a plan to make sure that the right staff with the right skills were working in learning disability services.



There was no plan to make sure that staff were getting the right training to do their work.



People with learning disabilities were going to take part in training staff in 2007.



What needs to be done



The council and the Primary Care Trust should make sure money is spent in the best way it can be to make learning disability services better.



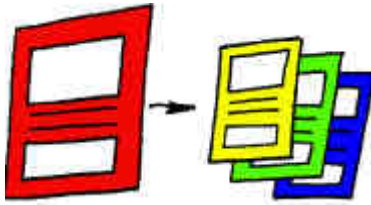
The council and the organisations it works with should find ways to bring in money from outside Adult Social Care.



The council and the Primary Care Trust need to make sure that there are enough managers and staff in learning disability services.



Managers and staff must also have the right skills and the right training to work in learning disability services.



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