



What adults with learning disabilities say about health research





A summary report of REN2 consultation workshops carried out during January - March 2024

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The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of NHS England or the Department of Health and Social Care.



What is in this report

| Topic | Page number |
|--|----------------|
| Why this matters so much | 3 |
| Key messages to remember in future | 4 |
| What we did | 5 – 8 |
| All about the people we spoke to | 9 – 12 |
| What we found out | |
| Where people would go to take part in research | 13 - 14 |
| How people would like to have their say about research | 15 - 16 |
| Reasons why people would take part in research | 17 |
| How people feel about research done in-person | 18 |
| What would stop people taking part in research | 19 - 20 |
| What is important to people about their health | 21 - 26 |
| What health research people want a say about | 27 – 32 |
| Appendices | |
| Appendix 1 – The accessible presentation we used | 33 |
| Appendix 2 – Accessible personal information form | 34 |
| Appendix 3 – Accessible workshop materials | 35 – 39 |
| Back cover – contact details | 40 |



Why this matters so much

Health inequalities and people with learning disabilities *1



People with learning disabilities die younger.

On average women die **23 years younger**, men die **20 years younger** than people without learning disabilities in the general population (LeDeR, 2023*2)



People with learning disabilities are at risk of diagnostic overshadowing where medical staff assume how someone is behaving is because of their learning disability, They do not check properly for things like pain, illness, infection.



Any group 'left out' of health research is at risk of unintended side effects of treatments. Frequently the groups who are excluded are those who have the poorest health outcomes.

- *1 https://www.ndti.org.uk/assets/files/IHaL 2011 healthinequalities socialcare guidance final.pdf
- *2 https://improvinglivesnw.org.uk/our-work/healthier-communities/mental-health/learning-disabilities-and-autism/



Key messages to remember in future



People may need support to make the arrangements to take part

Planning and arranging transport, having a packed lunch to bring, managing your support timetable - all these are tricky



No-one is talking to people with learning disabilities about research

People will not know about health research they could take part in unless they are told about it (in an accessible way)



Remember about being fair and equal

If you design something online you have to be honest about how this stops a lot of people taking part.

The 'whole world' is not actually online yet!



Do no harm – coproduce your research so this works at every level

A topic which does not seem scary can be really difficult for some groups, work with experts by experience as much as possible

What we did



We bid for some money so we could run workshops about health research for people with learning disabilities.



Two Opening Doors Advisers had 'Research Ready' training from Ren2 Workers.



A planning group made up of people with learning disabilities worked with two Advisers to understand the project questions.



Some of our sessional workers and our Senior Adviser did training about how to put the results into the computer at the end.



From the training workers said they needed to know what each individual person said.

The planning group decided to give each person a 'stamp' so we knew which ones were their answer sheets.



The planning group designed an accessible workshop to give people with learning disabilities a space to share their views about health research.

*please contact us to talk about making your research materials accessible ♥



The Planning group tried out lots of different resources for people to give their views.



An easy read worker coproduced the workshop resources – working with an Opening Doors expert by lived experience.



We tested out our ideas with a self advocate who said what bits they could understand and what was too hard.



We visited groups across Norfolk and ran the workshops there.

Each workshop was led by a person with a learning disability.



Each expert by experience trainer was paid for their time at the Real Living Wage.



Having peer trainers lead the workshops was very important so that people with learning disabilities felt safe to have their say.



We made certificates for each person who took part in a workshop.

It is important to value peoples' time and effort.



We told each group we would come back with an accessible presentation so they could see the results of the consultation.

These sessions would be led by peer trainers.



In total **44 people with learning disabilities** took part in the consultation workshops.

| Cromer | Norwich | |
|----------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 8 people | 16 people | |
| Diss | Great Yarmouth | People from secure services |
| | | secure services |

These colours are used as a key throughout this report



Once we had finished the workshops all the papers went to our sessional workers.

They put them into the Integrated Care Board 'Community Voices' computer system.



We began adding up all the answers so that we could do the report to show groups the result of their work.



Our Advisers helped us think how to put the report together.

We coproduced it ready to go back to the ICB so they can see the result.



We made a presentation to take to the groups about the health research work. We made sure it is simple.

People could also have a copy of this report as well if they want to.



All the way through the project we talked with one of the ICB Officers as we knew we were doing things differently from the others.

We wanted to check the ICB would be happy with the way we were running things and they would get the data they needed.



About the people we spoke to

| Age range - no | ot everyo | one told (| us their a | ge | | | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-----|---|
| | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | |
| | 5 | 8 | 6 | 15 | 8 | 1 | |
| 19.24 | 0 0 | 2 2 | 25 | 3/ 1 | 2 0 | - F | _ |

| 18-24 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 25-34 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
|-------|---|----------|---|---|---|-------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35-44 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 45-54 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| 55 61 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | _ | 45 ± | 0 | 1 | 0 | n | n |

Gender – not everyone told us their gender

| M | F | | Male | Female | Transgender |
|---|---|---|------|--------|-------------|
| N | T | T | 23 | 21 | 0 |

| Male 4 7 5 8 3 Female 4 7 5 8 3 | Male | 4 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 3 | Female | 4 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 3 | |
|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|---|---|---|---|---|--|
|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|---|---|---|---|---|--|

Number of health conditions

| 18-24 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 25-34 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 12 | 0 |
|--------------|---|----|---|---|---|-------|----|----|---|----|----|
| 35-44 | 5 | 1/ | 5 | Λ | _ | 45-54 | 12 | 20 | 5 | 2 | 22 |
| 33-44 | 5 | 14 | 5 | 4 | U | 43-34 | 13 | 20 | 5 | 3 | |

Number of people with no health condition

| 0 1 0 0 0 |
|-----------|
|-----------|

KEY Cromer Norwich Diss Great Yarmouth Secure Services



About the people we spoke to

About people's health conditions





About the people we spoke to

Where people live - and where they travelled to take part

| Where people live | No. of people | Miles to event |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Sheringham | 2 | 8 |
| Cromer | 6 | 1-3 |
| Shelfhanger | 1 | 4 |
| Harleston | 2 | 10 |
| Secure Services setting | 5 | 0 |
| Gorleston, Bradwell | 2 | 3-6 |
| Great Yarmouth | 3 | 1-3 |
| Kings Lynn | 1 | 45 |
| NR5 - Costessey, Bowthorpe | 3 | 5 |
| NR7 - Sprowston, Thorpe St Andrew | 5 | 3 |
| NR10 – Reepham, Spixworth, Buxton | 1 | 9 |
| NR3 – Hellesdon, North Norwich area | 3 | 1 |
| NR9 – Hethersett, Hingham area | 1 | 10 |
| NR13 – Reedham, Acle, Rackhealth | 1 | 12 |
| NR1 – Lakenham, Thorpe Hamlet | 1 | 2 |
| No postcode given | 6 | Cannot tell |

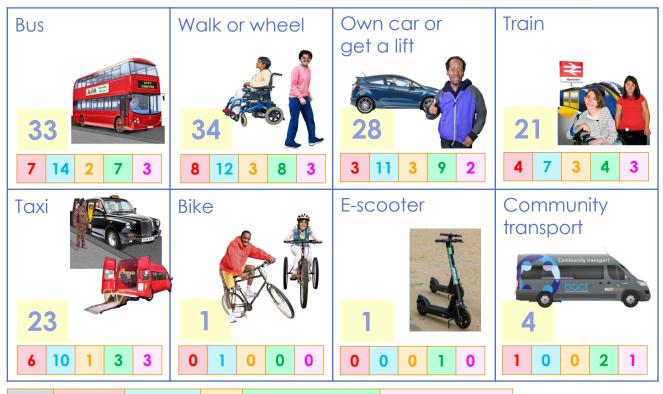


People in rural areas where there is worse transport often have the longest way to travel to take part People with 0 miles lived in secure service settings ... if you do not travel to them they cannot take part



About the people we spoke to

How people get to places Total number who said this



Cromer Norwich Diss Great Yarmouth Secure Services

Some people cannot use public transport – there can be different reasons for this (anxiety, being able to travel alone safely, not being taught are some examples)

Most people said walking/wheeling so they are more likely to go to places nearby



If people have to get a taxi to take part this may put them off as it is expensive and can be hard to book

For public transport people need clear directions and a good route to take part



Where people would go to take part in research

Total number who gave each answer





Where people would go to take part in research

Other ideas on where people would go to take part in research with the number of people who gave that suggestion

| Holt Country Park | 1 | PHAB Club*1 | 1 | Church | 2 |
|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------|------|-------------------------|---|
| Self Advocacy Organisation | 1 | British Sign Language | 1 | Costa/Greggs | 1 |
| Public Transport | 1 | Salvation Army | 1 | Senior Citizens Club | 1 |
| Garden Centre | 1 | Park | 1 | Waterloo Park Café | 1 |
| Private Pool | 1 | *1 https://www.phab.o | rg.u | uk/clubs/ | |

Lots of people have different ideas about where they would feel comfortable taking part in research People felt they would like to have choice about where to take part and be involved



Some of the places are not "traditional" settings for research the thing is to think outside the box

For many people the place needed to be somewhere they know already



How people would like to have their say about health research

Total number who gave each answer



| KEY | Cromer | Norwich | Diss | Great Yarmouth | Secure Services |
|-----|--------|---------|------|----------------|-----------------|
|-----|--------|---------|------|----------------|-----------------|

| Comments – with the number of people who said this | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Need support to fill all these in | 1 | Speak on phone | 1 | | | | | | |
| Phone call could be scam | 1 | Getting together as one group | 1 | | | | | | |
| Questionnaire by post | 1 | Letter | 2 | | | | | | |
| Need to ask for help with these | 1 | Face to face on paper | 2 | | | | | | |
| I need to know the person | 2 | | | | | | | | |

"I am feeling a bit overwhelmed with this many questions"

"I don't feel comfortable with too many questions makes me feel stressed out. I am not very good with new people"

"It takes me time to come up with an answer – I need lots of time and some questions can confuse me"



How people would like to have their say about health research

"There was too many questions and I felt overwhelmed"

"I like my group and I like doing things in the morning and the afternoon but this felt a lot to do"

"Venues need to be quiet and less people around because of my anxiety. The Library is quiet. I cannot queue to get into places" "Being asked questions in a place I am familiar with is ok but in a situation where I don't know I get stressed"

"If there are too many pictures and words then it is muddling and confusing. If a page had 2 to 3 pictures with easy words that is better"

People have the right to **reasonable adjustments** that they need to be able to take part – this may be information that is accessible to them, the chance to work with someone they know there to support or extra time and/or extra sessions



Some people can take part better at certain times of day because of side effects of medication they take

Ask people what they need to be able to take part and feel safe



Reasons people **would** take part in research

Total number who gave each answer



Comments – other things people said

I need pictures, if it is all words then I'm gone

It is important to hear peoples views

Things need to be interactive



How people feel about research that is done in person

Total number who gave each answer

Reasons people would take part



Reasons people would not take part



KEY Cromer Norwich Diss Great Yarmouth Secure Services



What would stop people taking part in research generally

Total number who gave each answer







People often need to be given the chance to take part in research by someone they trust Researchers need to work with organisations who **see** people with learning disabilities regularly



What would stop people taking part in **online research**

Total number who gave each answer



KEY Cromer Norwich Diss Great Yarmouth Secure Services

Online research suits some but it can add to people with learning disabilities being left out

Researchers sometimes do easy read outlines of a research project but then direct people with learning disabilities to online questionnaires that they cannot understand



Digital exclusion is a big issue for people with learning disabilities. 15% of this population have never been online and 35% lack basic digital skills to navigate online resources (Good Things Foundation, 2022).



A summary of what matters to people with learning disabilities about health

these are displayed by area on the following pages

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Healthy living including healthy foods, healthy drinks and exercise

Diabetes



Health checks and regular check-ups



GP / doctors issues – getting appointments and seeing the same person





Mental health including anxiety + wellbeing





What is important to people with learning disabilities about health

Cromer self advocates' views

Healthy eating Healthy Foods Heathy drinks

Taking medication

Exercise

Hobbies

Looking after my feet

Seeing the doctor regularly



What is important to people with learning disabilities about health

Norwich self advocates' views

Iron levels

Managing diabetes

Eating sensibly -5 fruit + veg a day

Good mental health and wellbeing

Medication

Regular check-ups

Being able to understand

Weekly support to go to a social worker

Regular contact with Opening Doors what I need

Walking and keeping fit

My GP and my family

Support with the right information Reasonable adjustments for prescriptions and **appointments**

Advocacy

Support for hearing and health appointments

Health checks

Keeping clean



What is important to people with learning disabilities about health Diss self advocates' views

Healthy Food

Fresh air

Being independent

I want health checks

Seeing GP regularly

Medication

It is expensive to go to the hospital - £12.50 to get home as no hospital transport

Stress and anxiety



What is important to people with learning disabilities about health

Great Yarmouth self advocates' views

Healthy lifestyle Seeing the same doctor with support

Reducing sugar

Mental health help quickly

Seeing the physio for leg problems

Keeping fit and exercise

Taking my meds

Diabetes

Wearing my special boots as I cannot walk without them

Seeing my doctor

Healthy eating

Understanding Slimming World



What is important to people with learning disabilities about health Secure Services self advocates' views

Being independent

Keeping fit and exercise

Eat healthy

Lose weight

Heart Conditions

Do more exercise



A summary of what health research people want to have their say about

these are displayed by area on the following pages ->





Specific conditions like hydrocephalus, epilepsy, asthma

Diabetes



Mental health issues







Ways to improve health like stopping smoking, exercise and losing weight



Bloods tests and blood pressure



Sexual health and parenting



Heart conditions



What health research did people want to have their say about

Cromer self advocates' views

Diabetes

Stopping infections

Schizophrenia

Asthma

Water on the brain

How scientist stop illnesses by inventing cures

Anaemia

Clearer food labels to choose healthy foods and drinks

Epilepsy

Lymphoedema



What health research did people want to have their say about

Norwich self advocates' views

Mental health for people with learning disabilities

Portion sizes

How to improve health

End of life care

Diabetes

Men's Health

Health benefits of being outside

Parenting

Hydrocephalus

Health services

Medication

Health books

Sexual health

Health checks

Personal hygiene

Memory

Hearing

Family planning for people with learning disabilities

Secure services

Healthy eating



What health research did people want to have their say about

Diss self advocates' views

Weight programmes

Blood tests

Mental health

Diabetes

Heart disease



What health research did people want to have their say about

Great Yarmouth self advocates' views

No dentists taking people on

Healthy relationships

Diabetes

Mental health

Wheelchairs

Keeping fit

Learning disabilities

Eating less junk food

Stopping smoking

Health checks



What health research did people want to have their say about

Secure services self advocates' views

Diabetes

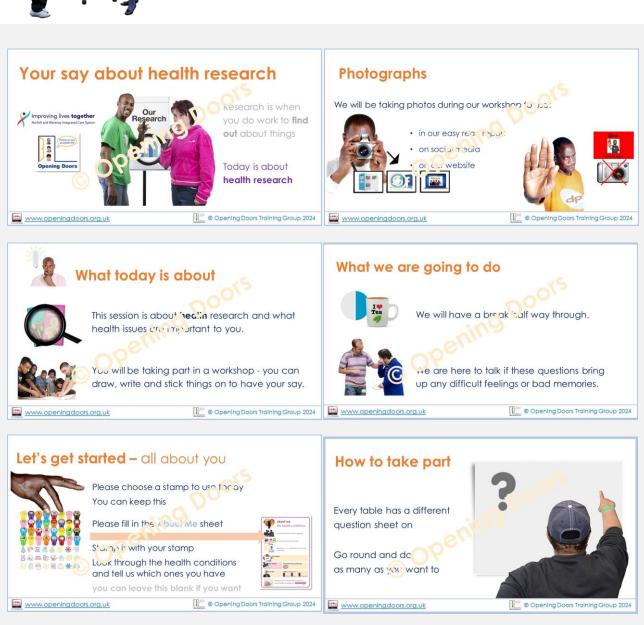
Mental health

Heart conditions

Blood pressure



The accessible Presentation we used









Accessible personal information, consent and health conditions form



























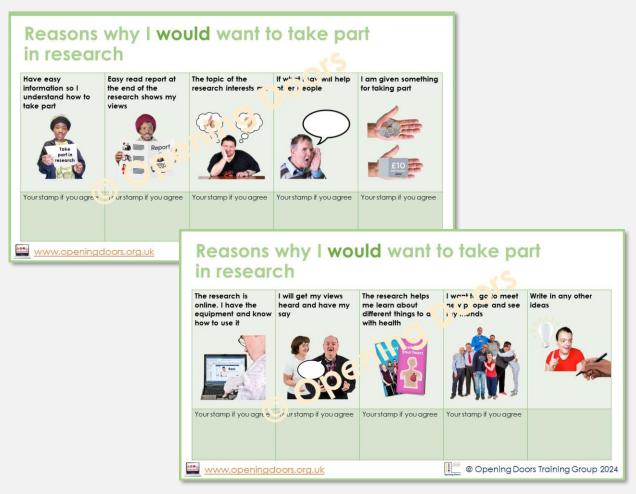














Report written by Opening Doors

with support from





Please get in touch for information, advocacy support or to discuss advice on making your research design and materials accessible



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