



## Introduction

Equal People is an involvement group. South Tyneside Learning Disabilities Partnership Board asked the group to: -

- gather the views of adults with learning disabilities living in South Tyneside around leisure and culture
- identify the barriers to accessing leisure and culture for this sample group
- use this information to make recommendations that would improve access to leisure and culture for all adults with learning disabilities living in South Tyneside

Four group members (Paula Lowson, Peter Gardiner, David Taylor and Rochelle Stewart) supported by Carole Watson (Involvement Worker), designed a short questionnaire. This questionnaire was completed by 100 adults with learning disabilities from: -

South Shields Central Library (Day Opportunities) and PRS

Redesign 4 you

Activities Group

Arts 4 Wellbeing

Young mothers with learning disabilities

Harton Action Stations and Remploy

MISTAS (Men in South Tyneside) - Self Advocacy Group

Equal People, Talk 2 Us and Ladybirds members

Tenants at Simonside Court

Jarrow Community Association

Ocean Road Community Association

Low Simonside Community Association (Day Opportunities)

People attending the Thursday evening group at Jarrow Community Centre



Pictures were used to promote discussion.

### What did we find out?

- Most people stayed home in the evening ; 12 out of 100 said they **NEVER** went out after 6pm. One person said she only went out after 6pm “on special occasions”.
- Only 31 out of 100 said they could travel independently. People said they needed staff or family support to go out; some thought travel training was a good idea.
- People said they didn’t go out in the evening because: -
  - they were frightened of the dark
  - they were scared people of name calling in the street/on buses
  - they needed staff support to go out
  - they didn’t have enough money
- Most people said they spent weekends at home, too. Only 28 out of 100 met up with friends at weekends. One woman said “These people (at Arts 4 Wellbeing) are my friends .... I don’t see anyone when this building is closed” Most people did housework, shopping with staff or spent time with family at weekends. Results showed 20 out of 100 went to church or other religious groups with family at the weekends. One woman said “On Saturday, I have a pyjama day – laze around watching “Come Dine with Me” because I’ve got nothing else to do ...” One young mother with learning disabilities said “I think about the children who are

no longer with me .... it's hard. Weekends seem very long. There's only the duty team on a Friday if you need support."



- People rely heavily on family and staff to tell them what is available at cinemas and theatres. 39 out of 100 said that they would ask staff and family members for support with this. Some people used newspapers - and 10 out of 100 used the internet. One person said "I just go to the cinema and see what's on .... then go in when the film is ready to start. I can't understand the timetables."
- Most people only use sports centres and swimming pools if they attend day opportunities. People said day opportunities is now doing more to help people get fit. Only 24 out of 100 people used a sports centre without day opportunities staff and only 28 out of 100 used a swimming pool without day opportunities staff.
- Few people attend a club eg walking group, cycling group, local history, art or photography club. Only 12 out of 100 said they were members of this kind of group. Most said they didn't know how to join them .... but they would be interested if they had more information.
- Most people said they preferred joining a group for people with learning disabilities rather than a group open to the general public. Only 35 out of 100 said they would join a group that was open to the general public. People said "I like to be with my friends ... they understand me." "I feel safer with people I know .... and staff who know me."

## What would you LIKE to do at evenings and weekends?



“Go out MORE!” 72 out of 100 people said this.

“Go on organised trips .... but it’s not easy without support”

“Have a Saturday Club for everyone ..... Your Voice Counts has set one up but the council should help MORE people get out!”

“I’d like to make new friends ....”

“Go bowling”

“Go to the pub with friends”

“I’d like to go horse riding ... or cycling”

“We should have karate or self defence groups at a weekend”

“Go to football matches” 8 out of 100 said this (a support worker suggested approaching football clubs about free tickets for support staff; - she felt support staff would be happy to organise a mini bus, etc to make this happen).

“I’d like to take my children out for a meal but I never have the money .... I wish there were more free things you could do.”

“I’d like to do ANYTHING but discos ..... there’s a lot of discos through the week but not much else. Why isn’t there an arts and crafts session on at the weekend?”



**How could we help you get more involved in leisure and culture?**

“Why does it cost so much to go to the cinema? It puts me off. Could there be a discount system?”

“It would be good to find out more about swimming ..... try it out, maybe. Just to see what it’s like ..... my friend talks about it all the time.”

“The buses sometimes have drunk people on them .... I don’t like going out at night in case something happens on the bus, like a fight”

“Leaflets should be in “easy read”. I don’t understand timetables”

“You can’t join groups if you don’t know where they are ..... we need more information.”

## Key Messages

- People would like the opportunity to get out in the evening and at weekends
- People want more staff support to do this
- People would like clear information –especially around timetables
- People want parents and carers to be involved
- People want to feel safer on the street
- People feel travel training should be built into any action plan around leisure and culture



## Recommendations

### 1) Set up a leisure and culture group

This group would be responsible for writing an action plan. It would be attended by: -

Council staff

Day Opportunities

South Tyneside College

Schools

Sport and Leisure staff

Staff from the Custom's House and Boldon Cinema

Police and bus companies

Involvement Worker – supporting the 4 self advocates involved in this research.

**2) Ask Northumbria Police and bus companies to be represented at this sub group**

People with learning disabilities need to feel more confident when out on the street and travelling on the bus. The police need to work closely with Your Voice Counts to increase this confidence within the groups and throughout the wider learning disability community.

**3) Make sure people with learning disabilities have a health target on their annual review – and on their day opportunities programme**

This would improve the health and well-being of everyone with a learning disability in South Tyneside.

Paula Lowson, Peter Gardiner, David Taylor and Rochelle Stewart  
(with support from Carole Watson)

May 28<sup>th</sup> 2015

## Update (December 2015)

- 1) Following “100 Voices on Leisure and Culture” there was a Leisure and Culture event on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2015 during Learning Disabilities Week. There were 87 people at the event (including self advocates, carers, council staff, health and leisure /culture staff). There was an opportunity to discuss the barriers in accessing leisure and culture opportunities and consider the next steps.
- 2) A Leisure and Culture Sub Group will begin on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016. It will be chaired by Andrew Forster from Autism Able. The group will be working to an action plan which will include all the points raised at the Leisure and Culture event.
- 3) Early discussions have highlighted the need for aps and updating the FANE website (Friends Action North East) – which will make self advocates and carers more aware of leisure opportunities in South Tyneside.
- 4) It will also be important to link this group with health initiatives eg Change 4 Life and A Better You.
- 5) There will be a “Celebration” event in June 2016 (during Learning Disabilities Week). This will be an opportunity for all sub groups , including Leisure and Culture, to showcase their progress to date.
- 6) For more information, contact; - [carole.watson@yvc.org.uk](mailto:carole.watson@yvc.org.uk)