

## Plain English Summary

Last year the National Development Team for Inclusion worked with learning disability teams in England, Scotland and Wales to develop and share good practice around supporting people with learning disabilities and complex needs to live their lives in their communities.

During the development, the group identified important differences in the work they did compared to other community support staff teams.

## Main Findings

In 2017-2018 we tested the first iteration of the *Community is for All* programme with a number of specialist learning disability teams in England and Scotland, where the local authority was a member of the Community Led Support Programme. We also explored the approach with some specialist mental health support teams.

What we found was that as specialist staff worked to deliver a Community Led and asset-based approach they identified common challenges and ingredients for success.

**Specialist staff provide a long-term nurturing relationship that someone with multiple impairments and a history of institutionalisation requires.**

The staff in learning disability services said that there are important differences in what they do to support people and families which often lasts over a person's whole life-time from the point that they become an adult through to old age.

This contrasts to the work of colleagues whose main focus is more immediate needs, such as helping someone get home from hospital or to recover from a fall or to cope with a new diagnosis of dementia.

## Who should read this?

Specialist Support Staff

Managers of Support Services

Commissioners in Local Authorities

Commissioners in Health Services

Specialist services in Health & Care Partnerships

## Background

*Community is for All* was developed as a strand of NDTi's Community Led Support programme in response to comments from staff in learning disability services who said that they needed additional guidance and assistance in order to fully embrace a community led approach.

## Purpose of Report

To communicate the learning from our first Community is For All programme where specialist staff in learning disability services explored the important differences and challenges in what they do to support people and families and how this fits with asset-based and community focussed work.

## Other Important differences

Programme participants identified differences in:

- The provider market, its role and remit
- The key clinicians and professionals they work alongside
- What people, who were supported, and their families told staff they want and need

This means that the skills staff require are subtly different:

- They frequently need to work alongside families, through providers and health specialists
- They need to win and keep the trust of all these people, whilst having the confidence to challenge them where necessary

In short, they need to find ways to make use of what is often a complex web of support to help the person at the centre get the best possible life.

## Essential ingredients for success

During the programme the following principles were all identified as needing to be present to achieve success:

- Put the person at the absolute centre of the process
- Find out what matters to the person and build on this
- Look first to the person's family and friends, then to the wider community around them, and only last to paid support

## Learning from this approach

In September 2018 we are launching a second version of this programme, which will be open to any local authority or health and care trust in the UK. We believe that the principles we are promoting here apply to all specialist staff working with local communities.

This second version of the programme incorporates learning from the testing: there is more emphasis on getting the basics right and less on the mechanics of managing work flow.

There is a clearer message that every service has a different history, different personalities and works with different communities – so there is a need for a flexible and open-minded approach which is genuinely responsive, whilst holding steadfastly to a clear value set.

## Further Reading

We are now offering ***Community is for All*** to any specialist staff groups, regardless of whether they are involved in the Community Led Support Programme because **the values and approaches we describe are at the heart of the transformation of health and social care across the whole of the UK**, and are not confined to particular areas or organisations.

<https://www.ndti.org.uk/our-work/our-projects/community-led-support/community-is-for-all-supporting-specialist-staff/>

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