

Brighton & Hove Speak Out

Giving people with learning disabilities a voice



Last year **384** people with learning disabilities living in Brighton & Hove were supported to speak up about things that matter to them, address problems and improve their lives.

KEY AREAS OF SUPPORT

Key issues addressed in 1-1 advocacy:

-  **1. Accessing Social Care**
-  **2. Health & Mental Health**
-  **3. Housing & Finance problems**
-  **4. Isolation and community links**
-  **5. Transitions for young people**
-  **6. Rights of parents with learning disabilities**

VOLUNTEERS

18
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18 volunteers helped deliver our work

1,385
HOURS

In 2021-22 **Volunteers** gave **1,385 hours** of their time to Speak Out Projects

OUR SERVICES IN 2021-2022

210

ADVOCACY CASES delivered, supporting people with learning disabilities to deal with problems and access their rights

119

people attended DROP-IN WEEKLY SESSIONS, on-line or at venues across the city

138

people took part in CONSULTATION events to have their say about health, social care and other services they use

41

members took part in SELF-ADVOCACY GROUPS gaining peer support, skills and confidence, including groups for young people and parents with learning disabilities

OVER **100**

people took part in ACTIVITIES run by the Learning Disability Voices Network that gives local people with learning disabilities a stronger voice



Speak Out continued to provide flexible support to people with learning disabilities throughout the pandemic

WHY IS OUR WORK NEEDED?

People with learning disabilities continue to face extreme health inequalities and discrimination in many areas of their lives



People with learning disabilities were disproportionately affected by Covid-19



Mental health problems amongst adults with a learning disability are more than double the rate in the general population



Over half of disabled people have been victims of hate crime



Many people with learning disabilities experience extreme social isolation and face barriers to participating in community life



People with learning disabilities often lack information they can understand about services, options and rights

It is estimated that almost 6000 adults (aged 18+) with a learning disability live in Brighton and Hove. The demand for advocacy increased during Covid-19

Key statistics reported by Mencap, Public Health England, NHS Digital, NICE, Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities. For more info and references contact Speak Out.

HOW DOES OUR WORK MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

People with learning disabilities have been supported to:



Have their voices heard and bring about positive change in their life



Challenge discrimination and access their rights



Access the support and services needed and participate in the community

78%

Of people reported that groups and drop-ins helped to combat isolation felt during the pandemic

80%

Of young people accessing 1:1 advocacy reported reduced anxiety and stress

90%

Advocacy group members said that they feel more confident to speak up for themselves in situations in their life

KAREN'S STORY

Karen lives independently in her own in a flat with support. She has a learning disability and suffers from high anxiety, autism and diabetes. Prior to the pandemic she lived an active life, involved in community activities and doing a regular volunteering job. She was receiving 7 hours a week support to help manage her mental health, appointments and correspondence.

During lockdown, Karen's face to face support was replaced by a daily phone call. She became increasingly distressed by this change and her mental health deteriorated. As lockdown eased Karen felt too anxious to go out in the community on her own.

"The support workers assumed that I'm coping when I'm struggling."

She called Speak Out's helpline and reported feeling abandoned and very isolated. She was invited to join a Speak Out drop-in as face-to-face meetings were started up again. At the drop-in Karen meet others and talked about her experiences.

An advocate worked with her to map the things she enjoyed doing before lockdown and how she could re-engage with these activities. She was supported to make links with other community groups and talk to her support agency about helping her try these out.

Karen said that coming to the drop-in was a really positive experience that helped her mental health and helped her get back to her life.

QUALITY SERVICES



Speak Out has again been awarded the **National Advocacy Quality Performance Mark (QPM)**

"The enthusiasm and energy of staff in Speak Out to continually develop the services they are involved with is astonishing; and despite the stresses of the last two years, demonstrates that there is a strong and committed team."

QPM assessment May 2022



BEING HEARD IN GOVERNMENT

Speak Out's **'Being Heard in Government'** group won the Dimension's Learning Disability and Autism leaders Award 2021 for their work promoting democratic rights for people with learning disabilities.

DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Over the past year we continued to provide vital support to local people with learning disabilities over the phone, online and face to face.

Our helpline provided:

- Accessible information about changing Government guidelines and Vaccinations
- A safe place to talk through anxiety about coming out of lockdown
- A front door for advocacy and peer support

WHAT OUR SERVICE USERS SAY...

"Speak Out has helped me stay connected, it helps when I am feeling low"

"It's still important that we get our voices heard and feel part of something"

"I found it really helpful to have someone else to talk to about what's happening and to help me know my options. It's difficult to talk to social services, so it was really helpful to have my advocate helping me to get my views across."



For more info see our website www.bhspeakout.org.uk or call **01273 421921**

Charity number: 1076995

