

Enhancing Health and Wellbeing for Adults with Learning Disabilities in Nottingham

Region and organisation: Nottingham West PCN, Nottinghamshire ICB

Focused on: Adults with a Learning Disability



Want to know more?

Contact: Clare Watson, Clinical Lead for Health Inequalities

Email: clare.watson21@nhs.net

Addressing the Challenge

People with learning disabilities face severe health disparities, being three times more likely to die from avoidable causes than the general population. Additionally, they often experience poorer physical and mental health. To address this issue, Nottingham West Primary Care Network (PCN) and Leisure Ltd collaborated on bi-monthly health and wellbeing roadshows specifically for individuals with learning disabilities. These events aimed to listen to residents' needs and co-produce meaningful system changes to improve their quality of life.

Project Focus

The roadshows focused on understanding the experiences of people with learning disabilities in accessing health services and participating in physical activities across Broxtowe. The goal was to involve these individuals in decision-making processes that would directly impact their lives, thereby improving their overall experience in the community.

Target Audience

The primary audience for this project was adults with learning disabilities, along with their parents and carers, falling within the Core20PLUS5 health equity framework.

Collaboration and Partners

Nottingham West PCN partnered with Leisure Ltd and a diverse group of local organisations, including Broxtowe Day Service, Broxtowe Borough Council, Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust, Rumbletums Café, Pulp Fiction CIC, Inspire Libraries, and several others. Volunteers with lived experience of learning disabilities also played a crucial role in shaping the initiative.

Intervention and Activities

Throughout 2023, the team organised roadshows in each of the three neighbourhoods within the PCN's footprint. These events were held in familiar local venues and featured engaging activities such as Boccia sessions, smoothie bike workshops, assisted bicycle rides, community singing, and health stalls. The roadshows also included facilitated discussions at tea and coffee stations, where participants shared their experiences of the healthcare system and their opportunities for physical activities. These conversations provided valuable insights into areas where the system was working well and where improvements were needed.

Outcomes and Impact

The roadshows led to several positive changes, including:

- **Training for Trainee Nursing Associates (TNAs):** Through a partnership with Broxtowe Day Service, TNAs received three weeks of intensive training focused on communicating and building relationships with people with additional needs. This initiative was so successful that it has been expanded to five other PCNs, with plans to scale it across the Integrated Care System (ICS).
- **Sensory Flu Clinics:** In response to feedback, sensory flu clinics were established within familiar community settings for individuals with learning disabilities, providing an additional vaccination option during the winter months.
- **Boccia Sessions:** Funding was secured to train 10 new Boccia leaders, enabling the establishment of multiple new Boccia sessions across Broxtowe. Boccia, a fully accessible sport, was a highlight of the roadshows.
- **Charlottes Tandems:** Nottinghamshire's first "Charlottes Tandems" connector site was established, offering adapted bikes for people with additional needs to enjoy cycling.

Lessons Learned

Key lessons included the importance of building relationships, effective communication, and understanding the role of gatekeepers like receptionists. The team also recognised the need for personalised experiences, better access to information about local services, and addressing fears associated with healthcare environments.

Top 3 Recommendations

1. **Partner with Trusted Local Groups:** Collaborating with organisations like Broxtowe Day Service, Pulp Fiction, and Rumbletums Café was vital for gaining trust quickly and reaching the target audience, ensuring the success of events.
2. **Consistent Questioning:** Using the same questions across all events helped identify common themes and trends, providing a clear direction for future improvements.
3. **Effective Promotion:** Direct text message invitations from GP surgeries to patients with learning disabilities was an effective strategy to increase event attendance.