



During June and July 2014, Swindon Learning Disability Partnership Board asked people some questions about having a good life - with independence and choice. We did the survey to help the council and NHS commissioners decide, with us, what services they will commission (buy) in the future to help people with learning disabilities live with as much choice and independence as possible.

We gave the survey to people with learning disabilities and organisations providing accommodation and services for them. 58 people filled in our survey. Some people did not answer all the questions (they skipped the question).

We have put the answers people gave us in the survey into some charts on the following pages. We have put the survey at the end of this report in appendix 1.

In appendix 2 we have added the comments we got from people at the Learning Disability Forum on 1 July. Some people attended the forum and also completed the questionnaire.

Because people could tell us whatever they wanted to, it is quite difficult to group all the answers together into the charts. Some people made general comments like “people talking to me about my mum”. We have put these into the column called “other”.

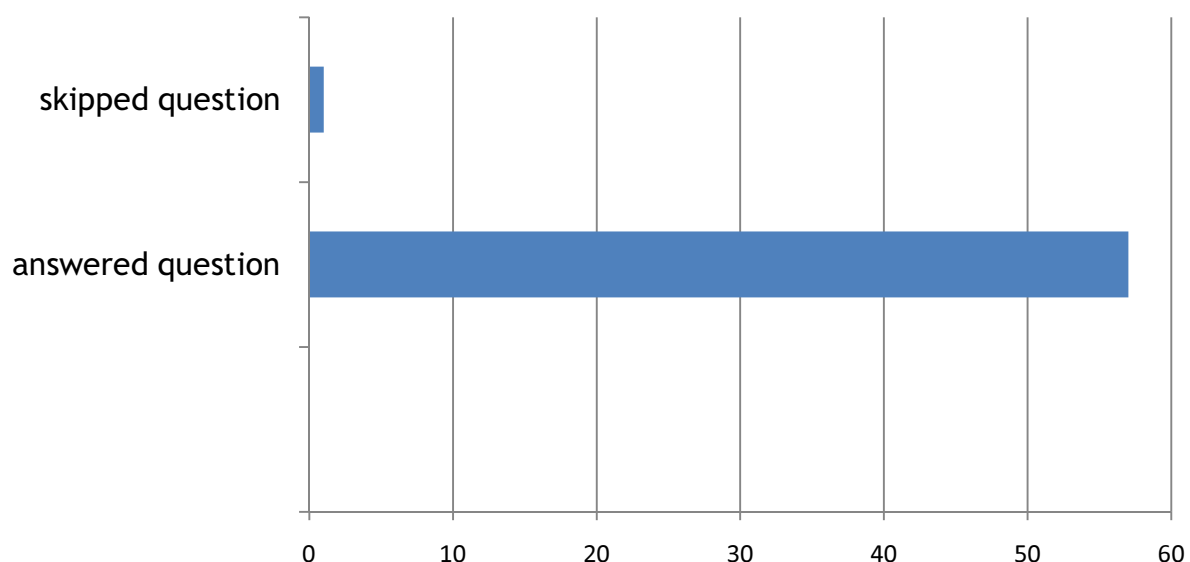
We think the survey gives a good idea of what these 58 people think. The comments at the 1 July forum do as well. But we would like to ask some younger people aged less than 18 to do the survey next to see what they think too.

Thank you to everyone who has helped by filling in the survey or attending the forum.

Jo Osorio
Healthwatch Swindon


Question 1

What are the most important things in your life? You might want to think about people you know, places you go to, things you do or anything else.



Question 1

Other

Sport

Work/Volunteer

Where I live

Other places I go/things I do myself

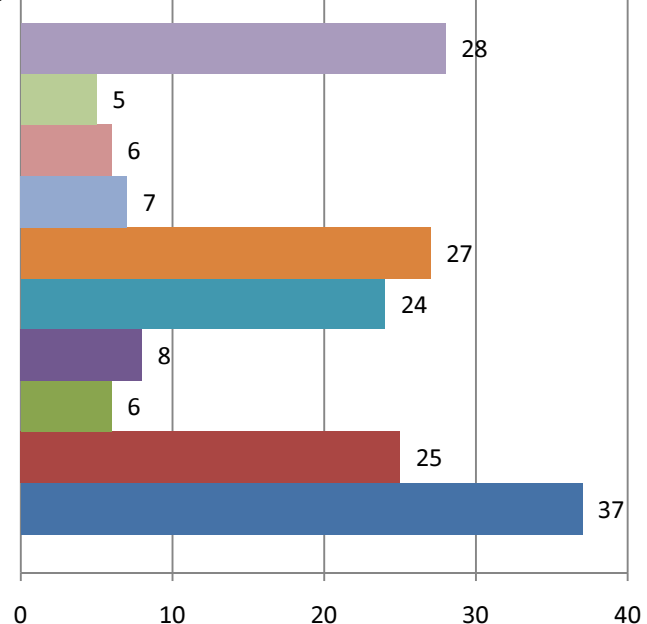
Services inc college

Carers

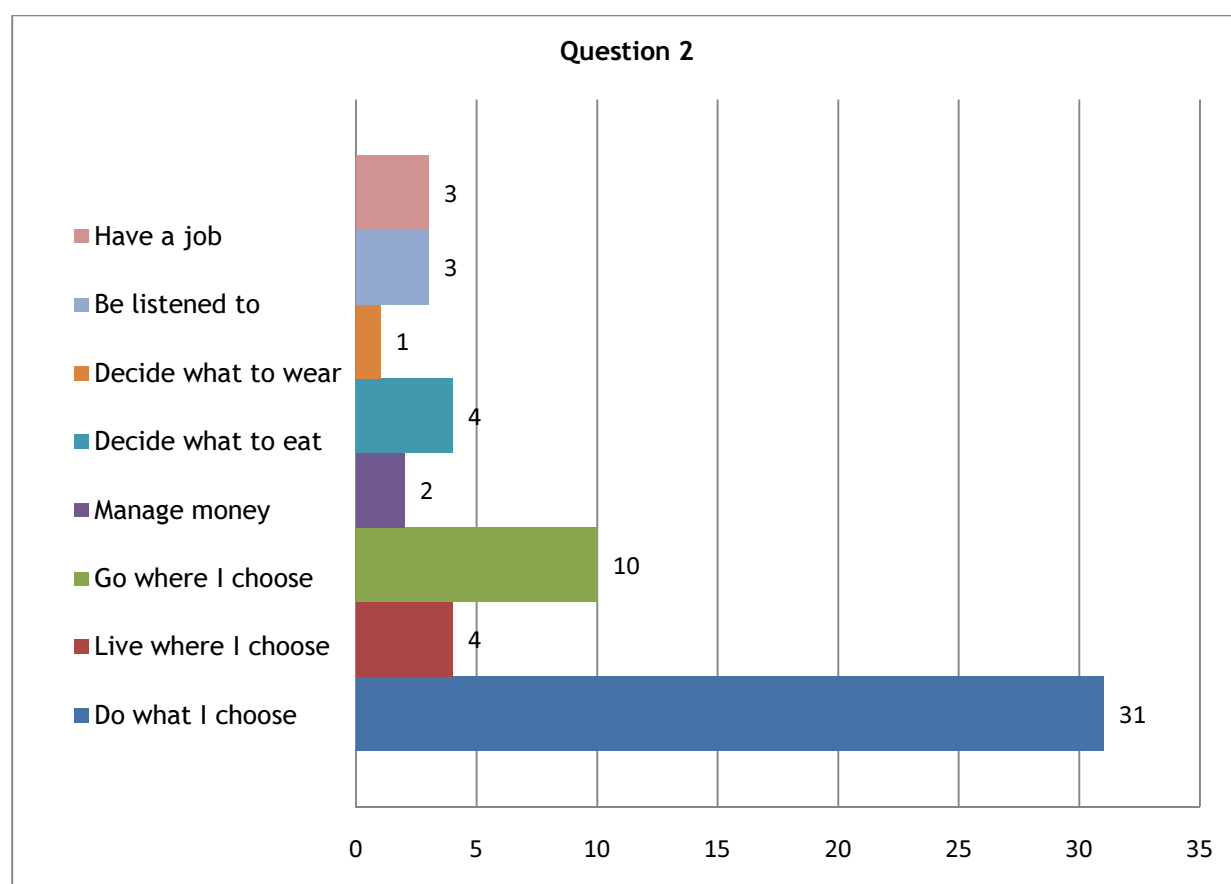
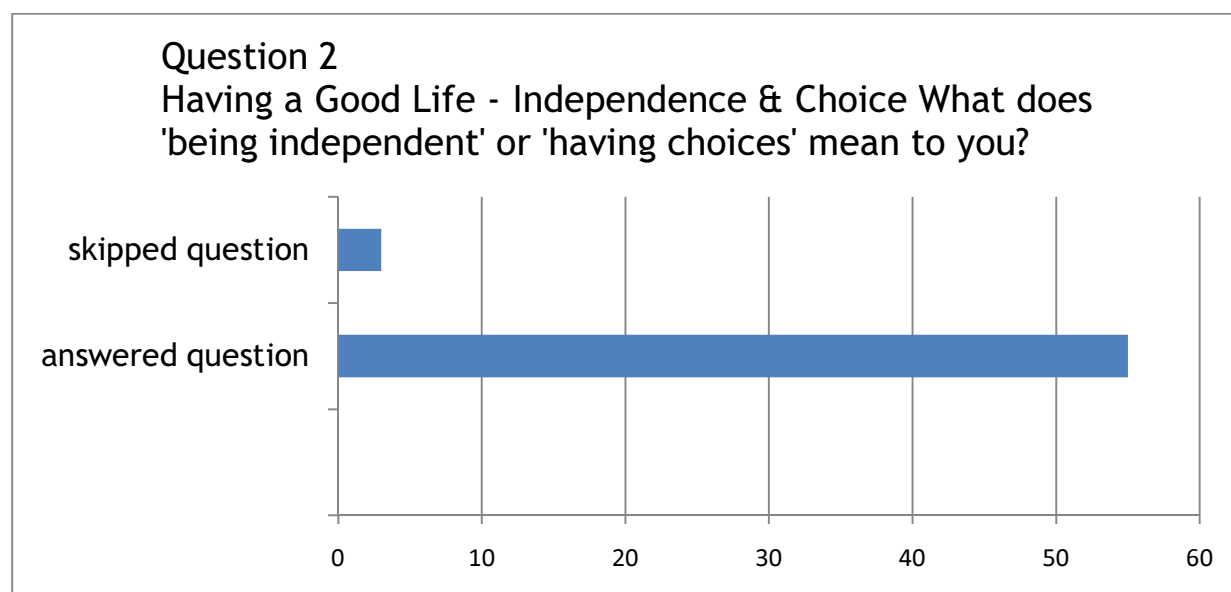
Pets

Friends/company

Family

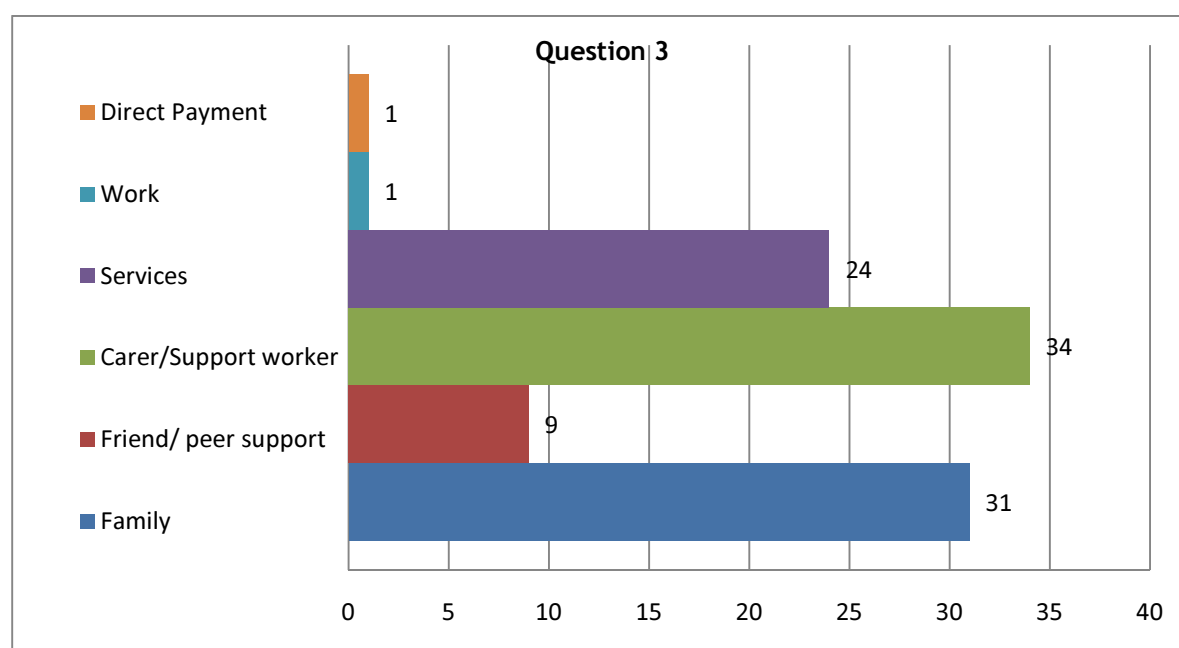
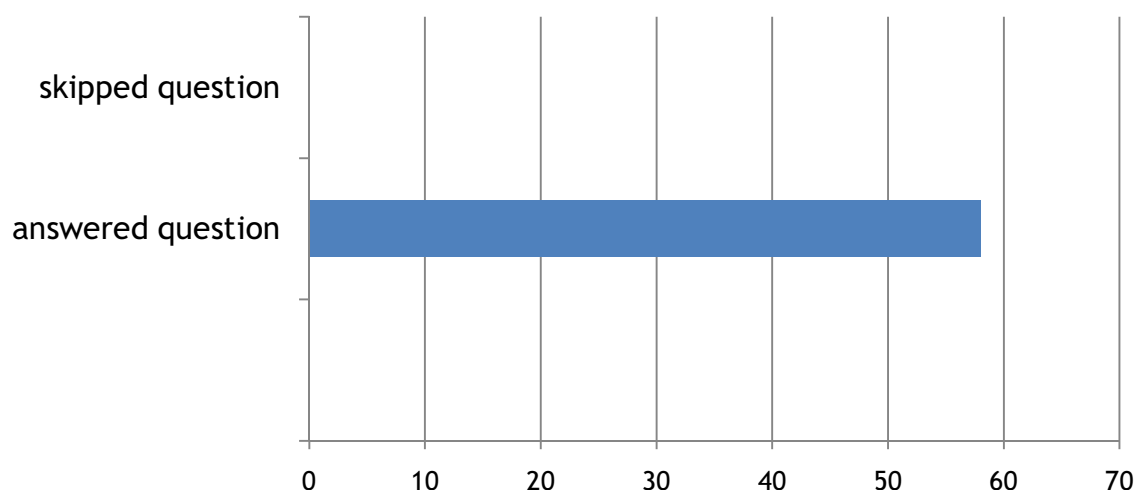


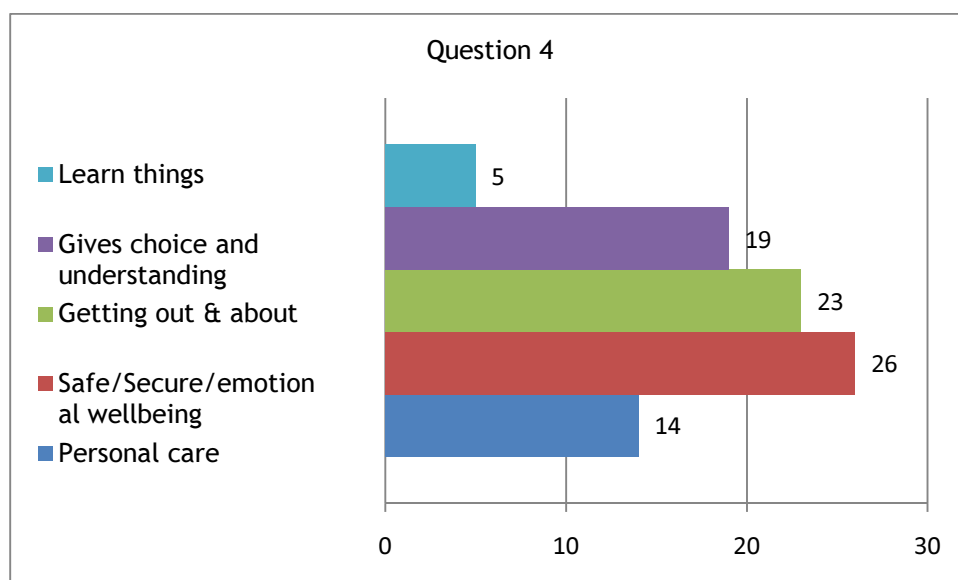
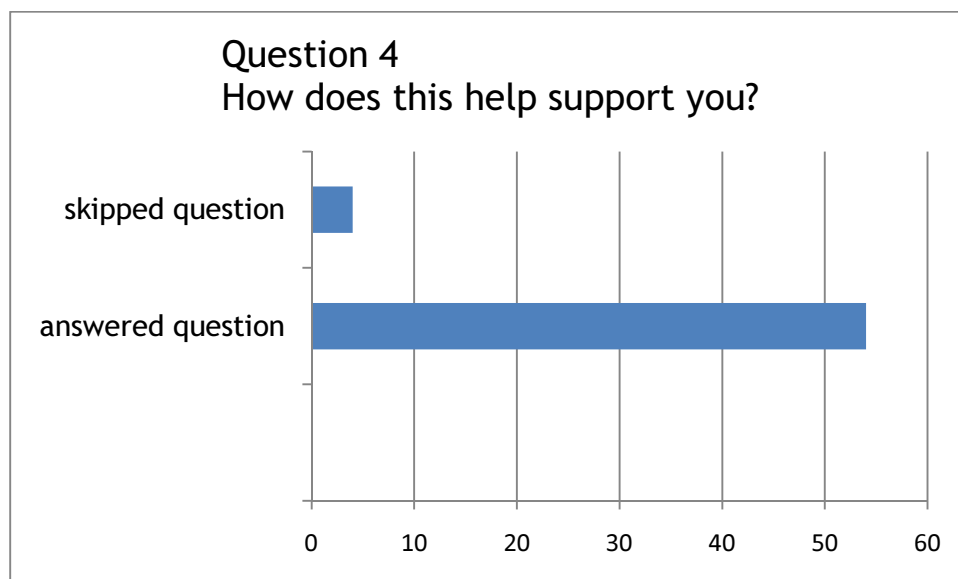
This shows the list of things people talked about in the survey and the number of people who mentioned them



Question 3

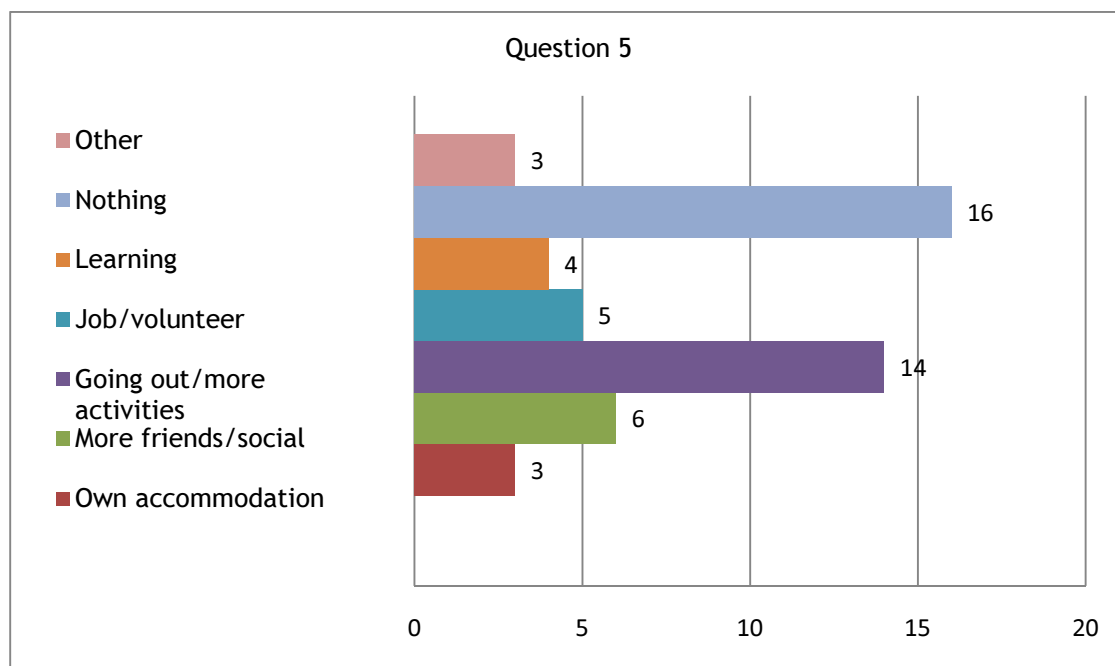
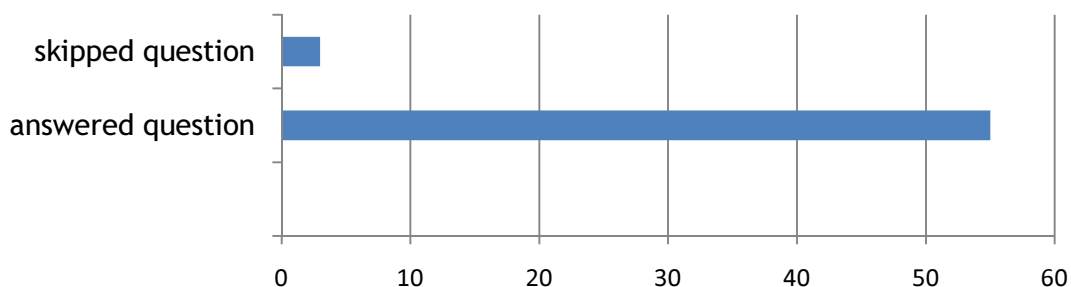
What support do you get to help you do the things you want? This can be paid staff or people that help you as family members, a friend or volunteer. You might want to think about where you live, your social life, jobs or volunteering, having thi





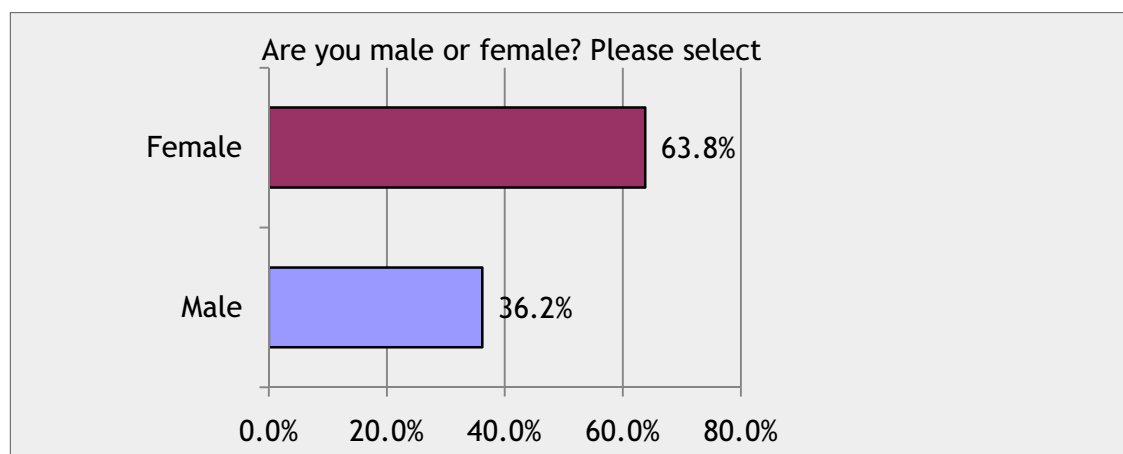
Question 5

Is there anything you would like to change to help you feel more independent? You might want to think about where you live or who you live with, your social life, jobs or volunteering, having things to do, your health or anything else.

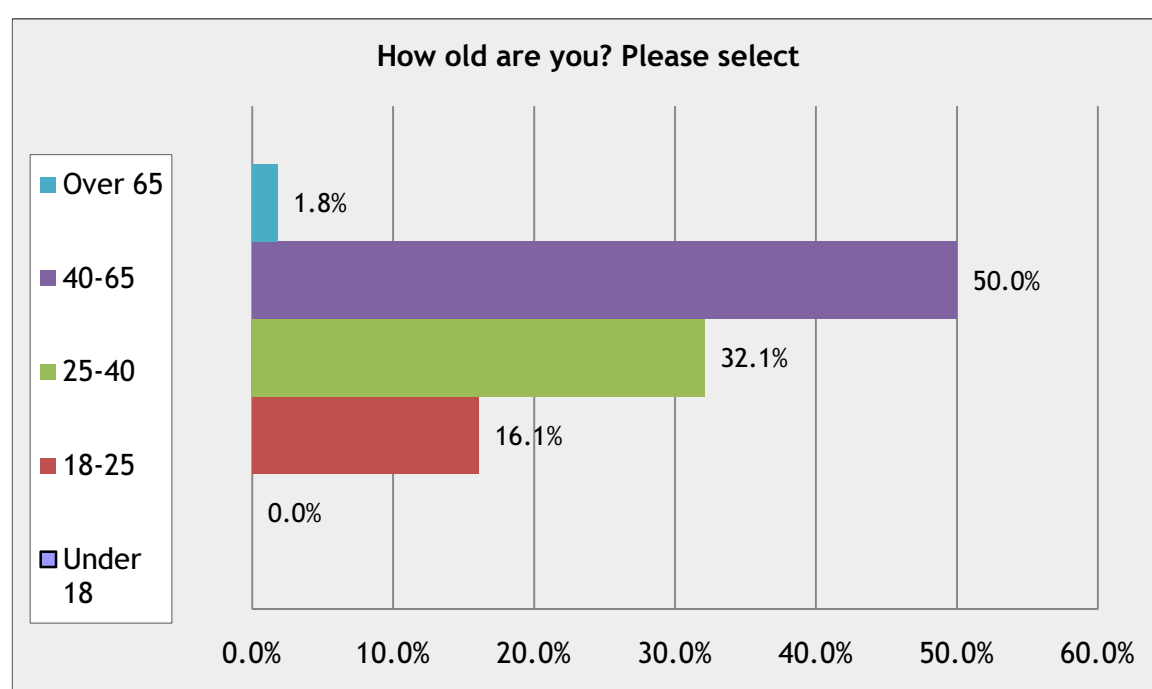


Swindon Learning Disability Partnership Board survey and forum report: June/July 2014

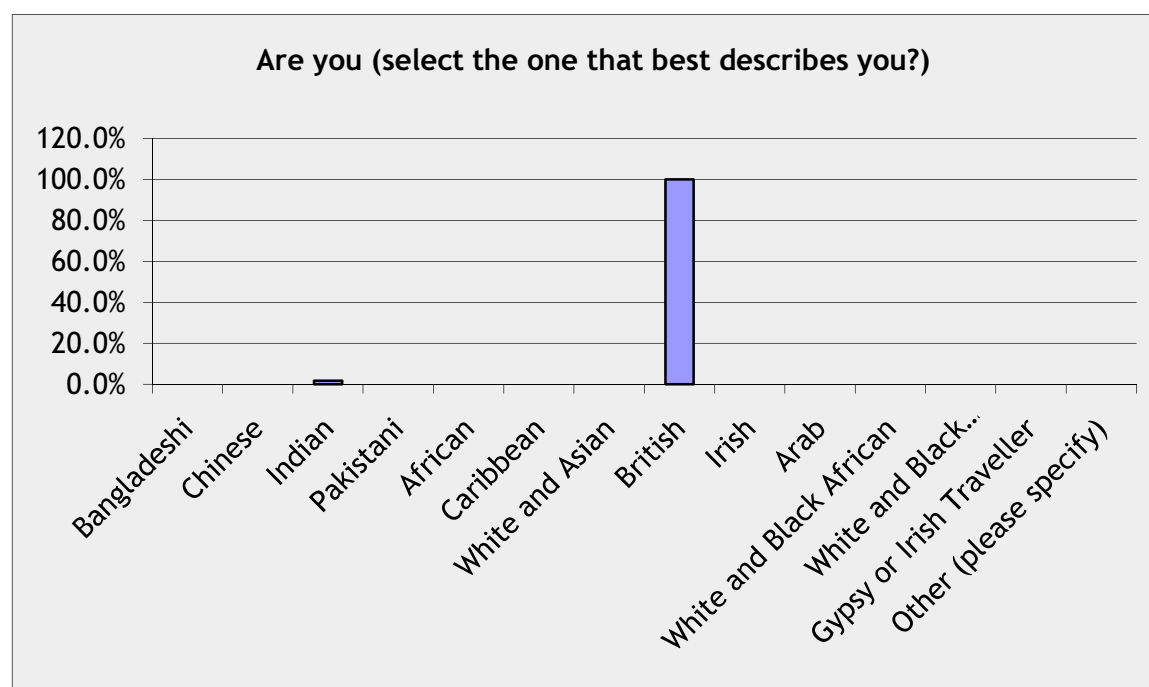
	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	36.2%	21
Female	63.8%	37
<i>answered question</i>		58
<i>skipped question</i>		0



How old are you? Please select		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Under 18	0.0%	0
18-25	16.1%	9
25-40	32.1%	18
40-65	50.0%	28
Over 65	1.8%	1
<i>answered question</i>		56
<i>skipped question</i>		2



Are you (select the one that best describes you?)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Bangladeshi	0.0%	0
Chinese	0.0%	0
Indian	1.8%	1
Pakistani	0.0%	0
African	0.0%	0
Caribbean	0.0%	0
White and Asian	0.0%	0
British	100.0%	57
Irish	0.0%	0
Arab	0.0%	0
White and Black African	0.0%	0
White and Black Caribbean	0.0%	0
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	0.0%	0
answered question		57
skipped question		1



Getting your views about...

...Having a Good Life - Independence & Choice

The **Swindon Learning Disability Partnership Board** wants to find out what people with learning disabilities think about life in the town.

We are doing this so we can pass your views on to the people who make decisions about how money is spent on services and support in Swindon. This is a difficult time for Councils and health services across the country. We want to make sure money is spent on the things that make the most difference to people's lives.

The **Learning Disability Partnership Board** is a big meeting that happens 6 times a year. It is supported by Swindon Borough Council but is made up of lots of different people. This includes people with learning disabilities, family carers, health services, council services, voluntary groups and other organisations or businesses that provide support.

The aim of the Board is to help everyone work together to make life better for people with learning disabilities and their families in Swindon.

Healthwatch Swindon and Swindon Advocacy Movement (SAM) are members of the Board and are helping to run this survey.

We have come up with some questions that we think will help to get the information we need. We are sending these questions to lots of services and groups. We want to hear from as many different people as possible about the services you use and any new opportunities you would like to have.

We do not need to know your name or where you live so we will not know who has sent us answers to the questions. We hope this means you will be able to tell us how you really feel about services or the things you would like to change.

Once you have filled out your answers you can return the form to:

Healthwatch Swindon

23 Brunel Plaza

by

Brunel Centre

Swindon, SN1 1LF

Thursday

31

July 2014

What makes a good life? There are lots of answers to this question. It will mean something different to everyone.

Often it means being able to do the things that are most important to us even if we need some support. It can also be about having choices. This could be choices about where we live, who we spend time with, what job we do, what we eat and all sorts of other things.

We want to know what you think a good life is. To do this we would like you to think about these questions and write down your ideas. You can do this with support if you need it.



You might want to think about:

People you know

Places you go to

Things you do

Anything else?




1. What are the most important things in your life?



2. What does 'being independent' or 'having choices' mean to you?

To help us to find out what a good life is for different people it would be useful if you could answer these questions.

We do not need to know your name or where you live.

Are you male or female? Please tick		
	Male	Female
How old are you? Please tick		<input type="radio"/> Under 18 <input type="radio"/> 18-25 <input type="radio"/> 25-40 <input type="radio"/> 40-65 <input type="radio"/> Over 65
Are you (tick the one that best describes you)?		
Bangladeshi		White and Asian
Chinese		British
Indian		Irish
Pakistani		Arab
African		White and Black African
Caribbean		White and Black Caribbean
Other		Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Please return completed forms to: Healthwatch Swindon 23 Brunel Plaza Brunel Centre Swindon, SN1 1LF	by	Thursday
		31
		July

If you have any questions you can call: SAM on (01793) 542266

Report on the Independence Forum held on 1 July 2014 at Pinetrees Community Centre, Swindon

1 Introduction

We started the forum by asking the individuals to work in small groups with some support. We asked each person to think about independence, and what having independence means to them personally.

Several answers to this question related to having more control in their lives. For example, practical things like

- having a front door key,
- being able to go out when they want to and
- taking part in hobbies they enjoy.
- Also “going to places for appointments” and
- “going on holiday”.

Another key aspect related to skills required for independence. Things such as;

- travel training,
- knowing how to budget money and
- cooking and household skills.

This suggests that having these skills would enable the individual to feel more independent, instead of having to rely on staff to facilitate travel, finances and looking after the home.

2 Group work on topics

We then asked each small group to pick one of the topics of independence that we had suggested. They were free to pick any theme from a broad range including

- employment,
- skills,
- spending time with friends,
- hobbies.
- They were then asked to think of a **positive/success story about this theme**; for example, if they picked employment they might talk about an experience when employment has improved theirs or somebody else’s independence.
- We then asked them to consider **any barriers to this theme**, and which therefore impedes independence. So in the case of employment it might be that they don’t get the support they need at the job centre.
- And finally we asked them to think of ways to overcome these barriers, so that their independence wasn’t affected. In this case it might be speaking

to the job centre to let them know about specific needs of clients with learning disabilities.

3 Independence theme - Friends

- **Success stories**
 - The group talked about inviting people home, so they are able to spend time together away from services.
 - People discussed how they are able to see friends by accessing different services such as Open Door and SAM Buddies.
- **Barriers**
 - People discussed the barriers that get in the way of friendships and impede how this can promote independence.
 - A major barrier for this is transport.
 - There is a lack of opportunity to develop skills to meet up with friends.
 - Further to this money is an issue.
 - This was discussed in terms of not having access to their money,
 - and lack of budgeting skills.
 - Additionally having to give support staff lots of time to arrange to get extra money to join in with outings for example.
 - The people in the group also discussed, “not being listened to by support staff”.
- **Solutions**
 - A solution that the individuals came up with was, SAM Buddies. They spoke how, as it was peer support, they might be able to share skills and ideas, maybe using the Men’s or Women’s group to try something new.

4 Lots of groups chose the independence theme - Hobbies.

- **Success stories**
 - The people who attended the forum identified that they had been able to meet new people and opportunities through taking part in hobbies.
 - For example, one person attends a bowling group and has travelled to Coventry with the group to take part in a competition.
 - Additionally, people were pleased to be able to share information about their hobbies with the people they live with, so they can come along too.
 - Some of the groups talked about a specific hobby that they currently accessed, such as going to the link centre for trampolining and learning new skills.

- **Barriers**

- Two barriers to accessing hobbies to promote independence that came up numerous times were money and transport.
 - This was discussed in terms of having the money to take part in the hobby and
 - having access to transport if the activity took place in the evening when buses didn't run.
- Fear about attending was also discussed as a barrier to accessing hobbies, trying something new.
- One specific thing was going into a new hobby by themselves and not knowing who to speak to.
- Support staff were also identified as a barrier.
 - This was in terms of them sometimes being "over protective" and not allowing people to take a risk, even if it is a small one.
 - One of the individuals at the forum said that he felt he was "wrapped up in cotton wool".
 - Further to this, staff would want to give medication at specific times, which would sometimes interfere with when a hobby took place.
 - Additionally, the people at the forum identified that sometimes support staff aren't flexible enough. For example not working during the evening or at weekends.
- Another barrier identified related to staff absences. If the staff at day centres who run or support people to certain sessions are away, they are unable to attend the session.

- **Solutions**

The people who attended the session came up with various solutions to these problems.

- With regards to the money, they suggested learning to budget so that they would be able to make decisions about what they spent money on.
- An alternative might be to group together to try something new, which might bring down the cost.
- One option considered was to be supported to create a savings account so they would be able to save up to take part in their desired hobby or activity.
- To counter the fear of trying something on their own, they suggested asking friends to go with them.
- Another option was to join SAM Buddies so that a Buddy could be paired up who might have experience at the given hobby, so can introduce them to it.
- To counter the barriers presented by support staff and their working restrictions was to give them some training. This could be training in how to support people to take more risks.

- Also actually speaking to care managers or support staff directly (possibly through reviews) so they know how you want to receive your support.

5 Independence Theme - Money

- **Success Stories**

- One of the individuals at the forum was really pleased that budgeting, with the support of a PA, has meant that they have been able to stay in their own flat.
- Another person is currently saving up for a wedding; this person's family is supporting them to do this.
- Further to this, one individual is able to save up money each week to enable them to go on holiday; again this is with the help of support staff.

- **Barriers**

People at the forum identified that the cost of living is going up, but it doesn't seem as though the amount of money they receive is increasing.

- The biggest barrier is not having the skills in budgeting.
- People commented on how they would spend too much money when they first get money, and so run out before next pay day.
- There doesn't appear to be anywhere to learn budgeting skills.

- **Solutions**

- The solution that would be the most useful was more access to training or support in budgeting, to enable them to learn to budget so that the money lasts the whole time, not just for the first few days.
- Another suggested solution was to eat out less and possibly improve cooking skills.
- So, an accessible cooking course that could inform people of how to make food on a budget.
- In addition the group spoke about the importance of asking for help, instead to carrying on with a problem until they got into debt for example.

Anneliese Baker
SAM Buddies Coordinator



September 2014