

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT (1)

Meeting: Cabinet

Place: Council Chamber - Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham, SN15
1ER

Date: Tuesday 29 March 2022

Time: 10.00 am

The Agenda for the above meeting was published on 21 March 2022. Additional documents are now available and are attached to this Agenda Supplement.

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Stuart Figini, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718221 or email stuart.figini@wiltshire.gov.uk

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This Agenda and all the documents referred to within it are available on the Council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

5 **Public participation and Questions from Councillors (Pages 3 - 20)**

Questions with responses.

6 **Day opportunities transformation (Pages 21 - 60)**

- See item 5 above for statements and responses to questions
- Document referred to as being relied upon in the preparation of the Cabinet report - Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living – It's My Life – January 2022 – copy attached.

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 28 March 2022

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Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

29 March 2022

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Question from: Cllr Martin Smith (Sherston Division)

To Councillor : Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Development Management, Strategic Planning and Climate Change

Statement

- We are all aware of the difficulties affecting the Planning team over the last year or so caused by staffing issues, increases in the numbers of planning applications caused in part by Wiltshire Council's lack of a five year housing land supply
- Reassurance on staffing was given by the Cabinet member for Planning at the Cabinet meeting of 11th January 22.
- Since then anecdotal experience suggests that the backlog in applications is not getting any smaller and that many residents are having to wait over the statutory 13 weeks, in which an application for major development should be determined
- When an extended period has been agreed with the applicant, the government's policy is that the decision should be made within 26 weeks at most in order to comply with the planning guarantee

Question 1 (22-053)

How many planning applications are currently in progress across Wiltshire (i.e. not Closed)

Response

1,975 'live' (that is, not closed) applications

Question 2 (22-054)

How many planning applications are currently in progress across Wiltshire which have a valid date more than 13 weeks ago?

Response

825 applications

Question 3 (22-055)

How many planning applications are currently in progress across Wiltshire which have a valid date more than 26 weeks ago?

Response

475 applications

In response to questions 1, 2 and 3, it is important to note that there are various reasons for applications to remain 'not closed'. These include, for example, on-going negotiations with applicants to address issues (this will often be at the applicant's request and with an agreed 'extension of time' for determination), on-going work to finalise S106 agreements where applications have a resolution to approve, and where there are appeals. It follows that although the Council is processing high numbers of planning application at this time, caution should be exercised in using the above figures as evidence of this.

Statement

I understand that the green coloured notifications for planning applications are no longer going to be posted in the vicinity of the site under consideration. This was a temporary measure taken during the Covid lockdowns and is now being made permanent

Recent experience suggests that impacted residents are not aware of even large planning applications for multiple houses in their area

Question 4 (22-056)

How will Wiltshire Council ensure meaningful consultations on planning applications can take place, if residents are not aware of them?

Response

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order sets out the requirements for publicity for applications for planning permission.

The Order requires applications for EIA development, for development that does not accord with the development plan, or for development which would affect a right of way to be publicised by site display (the 'green site notices') and by publication of a notice in a newspaper circulating in the locality.

The Order requires applications for 'major' development to be publicised by site display or by serving a notice (the 'neighbour letter') on any adjoining owner or occupier; and by publication of a notice in a newspaper circulating in the locality. The Order requires other applications to be publicised by site display or by serving the notice on any adjoining owner or occupier.

The Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act sets out the publicity requirements for planning applications that would affect the setting of a Listed building or the character and appearance of a conservation area. In such cases the Act requires publicity by way of site display and a notice in a newspaper circulating in the locality.

Wiltshire Council complies with these publicity requirements by serving notices (the neighbour letter) on all adjoining owners or occupiers to an application site and by site display (the green site notices) and newspaper notices where the above legislation specifically requires site display in addition to the neighbour letter. Site display is not carried out where this is not required in addition to serving notices.

The legislation effectively defines what are "meaningful consultations". It follows that by complying with the legislation Wiltshire Council is fulfilling meaningful consultations.

Question 5 (22-057)

How is Wiltshire Council going to ensure that local communities are aware of planning applications going forward?

Response

See answer to question 4.

Wiltshire Council

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29 March 2022

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Question from: Cllr Clare Cape (Pewsham Division)

To Councillor : Richard Clewer, Including Finance and Procurement, MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health and Wellbeing

Statement

Following my two verbal questions to Council in the last nine months or so, I have some further questions regarding Wiltshire Council's policy for ethical investment for example, and not limited to pension funds.

Question 1 (22-058)

Would the Cabinet member responsible please indicate what investments – number and value – Wiltshire Council currently holds in any Russian businesses?

Response

The council has not placed and does not hold any investments in any Russian businesses.

The council acts as the administrator on behalf of the Wiltshire Pension Fund and is one of over 170 employers in the Pension Fund.. Any questions about the Pension Fund and its investment strategy should be addressed to the Pension Committee directly.

Question 2 (22-059)

What divestments from Russia have taken place in the last two months?

Response

As the council has not placed any investments in any Russian businesses there has been no need for disinvestment.

Question 3 (22-060)

What investments (number and value) does Wiltshire Council currently hold in countries where international human rights law is not upheld? For example, and not limited to China, Saudi Arabia and the settlements in Palestine illegally occupied by Israel.

Response

The council's investments are bound by the Treasury Management Strategy document that was approved by Council at its meeting on 15 February 2022. Appendix C of this strategy document is a list of approved countries for investments that is based on the countries sovereign rating (AA- or above).

Question 4 (22-061)

I note with regret, that the UK government is intending to remove the ability for principal local authorities to make responsible and ethical choices about investments. We all understand that primary responsibility relates to the liquidity and security aspects. What is the administration's position relating to ethical, social and governance (ESG) investments please?

Response

The position of ethical, social and governance (ESG) investments is set out in the Treasury Management Strategy as approved by Council at its meeting on 15 February 2022 in paragraphs 94-98.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

29 March 2022

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Question from: Melanie Boyle

To Councillor : Dr Mark McClelland, Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste, Street Scene and Flooding / Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Development Management, Strategic Planning and Climate Change

Question 1 (22-062)

Following the recent landslide at Dauntsey lock resulting in the closure of the road for the foreseeable future please can Wiltshire Council confirm that this was at least partly due to the trees and vegetation being removed and soil being compacted?

Response

The reasons for the landslide at Lyneham Banks are currently being investigated. It is too early to say what the likely contributory factors were.

Question 2 (22-063)

The Birds Marsh road, Chippenham hasn't opened as planned, is it true this is because it wasn't built properly and is on a natural spring and there are issues stabilising it?

Response

The Developer(s) (Persimmon & Barratt) are continuing to work to finish incomplete works and address defects identified by our Inspectors. There are no fundamental stabilisation issues involved.

Question 3 (22-064)

On a notification from Wiltshire Council it said Future Chippenham was on the agenda for this meeting but it isn't mentioned? Has it been decided that putting excessive housing on valuable farm land is unsustainable with current world events?

Response

The council is in discussion with Homes England regarding the HIF grant. It was hoped that those conversations would have progressed to a position further than exists at present, hence the delay in reporting to Cabinet.

Question 4 (22-065)

How will Wiltshire Council justify to the Planning Inspector that building a road on a flood plain between 2 areas that already flood in Chippenham and Lacock will be deliverable, sustainable and provide value for money to tax payers during a climate emergency with extreme weather becoming a regular event, when houses are already being built without taking tax payers money for the road?

Response

The Future Chippenham programme will follow all due process and will be independently assessed through a thorough planning submission. The design of the proposed road will take into account the flood plain.

Question 5 (22-066)

The Station Hill Traffic Lights latest sequencing changes have made no difference, this morning there wasn't a cyclist in sight (not surprising with stop and start cycle lanes and the existing 403 off road route being a much safer, healthier and enjoyable option), pedestrians walking out in front of traffic as they are unwilling to wait for the lights, 3 minutes is a long time when you are waiting to cross a road and breathing in fumes from gridlocked traffic, solely caused by unsuitable traffic lights put in at great expense to tax payers and have no advantage only pollution after a year of trying to change sequencing, when will Wiltshire Council admit they made a mistake, put back a roundabout and use the traffic lights for pedestrians only? With Rawlings Green 650 houses being built and the old college redevelopment construction traffic coming onto Monkton Park with only one entrance and exit until at least 200 houses are built at Rawlings Farm the situation is only going to get worse. What action is Wiltshire Council going to take to rectify the situation it has caused?

Response

The latest signal controller reconfiguration changes were undertaken between the 8th and 10th March. Monitoring surveys before and after have been undertaken and this data is currently being analysed. Initial indications however indicate a decrease in queue lengths and waiting times. The full data analysis will be completed shortly with the results made available at that time.

Question 6 (22-067)

Is there any update on the Hathaway Retail Park Traffic Lights, have you spoken to the developers to make them aware of the issue of having 2 sets of lights on green at the same time, it has been raised on Chippenham Noticeboard again today due to near misses.

Response

The signals have yet to be formally adopted by the Council, and we are continuing to work with the developer to ensure that their performance is fully optimised prior to that taking place. There is also a list of remedial works required beyond those associated with the signals. There is a fine balance to be reached considering safety and capacity – those discussions are ongoing.

Question 7 (22-068)

Wiltshire Council does not seem to understand Chippenham, the thought of Wiltshire Council leading a Partnership with the above and the Sadlers Mead Car Park fiasco evidence does not give residents any faith in Wiltshire Council's competency. What will Wiltshire Council do to show their aim isn't only to destroy Chippenham so they can grab bonuses for houses built and additional council tax as they build 40% more houses than they need to which will all need to be retrofitted?

Response

By utilising a masterplanning approach Future Chippenham can ensure policy compliant development that is able to proactively respond to housing need through a well-designed, high-quality, future proofed development. The integrated, walkable development can support and promote more sustainable transport solutions, deliver a network of walking and cycling routes and create neighbourhoods with facilities and services within a 15-minute walk or cycle.

Question 8 (22-069)

This is further proved by the fact residents are having to take Wiltshire Council to court on 26th May, raising funds which could be much better spent in the community when a Judge says there is a case to answer but Wiltshire Council will not back down and is using tax payers money to fight residents. How will you explain that to a planning inspector when public engagement is essential for the HIF (another waste of tax payers money)?

Response

The judicial review process provides for Court review of public decisions and the first stage (the permission stage) has a low threshold to ensure the public's right to access to justice. It will be up to the Court to determine whether the arguments put forward by claimants challenging the decision-making process are sustainable.

In this case the council is satisfied that its decision-making processes were sound and therefore is robustly defending its position.

As previously stated, the Future Chippenham programme does not determine the development that takes place, this decision is subject to the Local Plan review. Development proposed by the Future Chippenham programme will be subject to the Local Plan review and the statutory planning process.

Question 9 (22-070)

We see all over the County roads in a terrible state of disrepair due to funding reductions, is this really the time to be building more roads?

Response

The condition of the roads in Wiltshire is better than the national average, with B and C class roads in substantially better condition than in many authorities in the southwest.

New roads make a crucial contribution to economic development and growth and bring important social benefits.

Government confirms that continued high investment in our roads is therefore, and will remain, as necessary as ever to ensure the functioning of the nation and to reduce the congestion which is a major source of carbon.

New roads can reduce the pressure on existing roads and help limit the rate of deterioration.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

29 March 2022

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Question from: Andrew Nicolson

To Councillor : Dr Mark McClelland, Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste, Street Scene and Flooding / Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Development Management, Strategic Planning and Climate Change

Statement

Questions 22-033, 034, 037, 038, 039, 041, 042 and 043 and 045 related directly to the Future Chippenham scheme and/or its land assembly, financing, its proposed road and the route for that.

Question 1 (22-071)

Given that the "Future Chippenham Consultation Strategy Public FINAL V6 10.13.2020" said that in early 2021 you would do formal public consultation on "broad Concept Framework proposals for Wiltshire Council land", also described as "broad Framework of proposed development on council owned land" as well as the road route options; and that you had a "Future Chippenham Draft Concept Framework report (April 2020)" which was into version 4 by early March 2021,

(i) why did you not consult on it as planned? For example, did you forget, had you not finished it, or did you decide it was too sensitive?

(ii) What stage are you at in your stakeholder and community engagement activities, and with reviewing and developing the stakeholder and community engagement strategy and issuing a revised version, to cover your Masterplanning framework, for example?

Response

The consultation process outlined in the Future Chippenham Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategy was expressly intended to be "*flexible*" and to be "*subject to change*", in response to matters such as progress on the Future Chippenham programme and COVID-19.

The Council Executive consulted properly and in line with the intended approach set out in the Engagement Strategy. Moreover, this approach went beyond any statutory requirement to consult at such a relatively early stage in the programme.

Furthermore, as agreed in the July 2021 Cabinet report, masterplanning will take place including a full public consultation upon the overall proposals for Future Chippenham development including both road network and built environment.

It is our intention to review the Future Chippenham Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategy later this year.

Question 2 (22-072)

(i) When you decided to proceed with the southern section only of the Future Chippenham development and road route, was that because of public consultation feedback, or was it because of commercial problems with a landowner and the funding of a bridge needed for the northern section?

(ii) Are you engaged in negotiations to get the bridge funded, in order to revert to a plan that includes development of the northern section?

Response

This was covered in the report to Cabinet in July 2021.

We are not engaged in negotiations to get the bridge funded.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

29 March 2022

Agenda Item 6 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Question from: Cllr David Vigar - Trowbridge Grove Divison

To Councillors Laura Mayes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Skills /Jane Davies, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND, Transition and Inclusion

Statement

As the report on day opportunities before the Cabinet indicates, £117,906 per annum is currently spent on grants to 21 day centre lunch clubs providing lunches and company for older adults, typically for £10-15 a day. The number receiving such care is not given but as I am aware that around 50 people enjoy such provision in Trowbridge alone it is likely to run into several hundreds across Wiltshire. The provision is uneven, as Cabinet members have pointed out, with some clubs attracting much more funding than others and many similar clubs across the county receiving no council grants at all.

In many cases people have been referred to the clubs because they live alone and face the risk of social isolation. The overwhelming majority of those benefitting have not been formally assessed under the Care Act as requiring a day opportunity and thus fall outside the scope of the new ‘open framework’ which is exclusively for those who have been so assessed. This is clear because the paper also shows that, at the time of its writing, the number of people in all of Wiltshire aged over 65 who have been assessed as requiring a day opportunity and using the spot purchased care to which the paper relates was only 36. Furthermore, I am advised by officers that several of these will have conditions or disabilities that require provision other than that offered by a lunch club. The number of people assessed under the Care Act whose primary need is social inclusion, a comparable need to that informally identified in respect of hundreds of current lunch club members, is just 12. Councillor Davies has observed that there may be many people who merit such care but have not been assessed as such.

The current median rate for council funded day care is £45 per person. Assuming a total of 20 over-65s are assessed to be suited to lunch club style care, the total annual budget for their care at today's median rate would be around £45,000, around 40% of the current grant funding.

The 21 grant-funded lunch clubs have been invited to bid to join the open framework to provide for those assessed as needing a day opportunity through the forthcoming tender process. However there is no funding for those not formally assessed. For those hundreds of current club members, the only hope of continuing to benefit from any council support is that they may gain some collateral advantage if any of the centres are successful in bidding to take people who have been assessed and this enables them to maintain their provision.

Although this is presented as a 'transformation' or 'transition' to a new system, in practice for these clubs it is ending the current funding arrangement that covers hundreds of people and asking them to work to a completely different model should they be successful in bidding to provide for one of the 36 or fewer individuals assessed as requiring day care. They would become statutory providers rather than voluntary ones. They would receive direct council funding rather than grants. They would be catering for those assessed under the Care Act rather than those not assessed. They are being invited to take on a new function in a new structure with a new clientele while losing the grant funding that they have hitherto enjoyed.

Question 1 (22-073)

Will the Cabinet accept that over £117,906 of Wiltshire Council funding that currently supports hundreds of elderly people not formally assessed under the Care Act is being withdrawn over the next two financial years and not replaced?

Response

This question relates not to the proposal being presented to Cabinet, but to a decision that has already been made at Full Council on 15th February 2022. However, it will be possible for clubs to bid for other grant sources, such as Area Board funding from revenue grants and where applicable capital grants. In addition, clubs will be able to apply to join the Open Framework which is the subject of this proposal. Those attending clubs may seek a Care Assessment and if eligible to have their needs met through funding to Day Services, such as lunch clubs. The funding for Care Act eligible need is demand led. Grant funding for day services is being gradually withdrawn and not replaced, however, need will be met through the new Open Framework. The framework can also be used as a way to find a wide range of quality assured opportunities for self-funders.

Question 2 (22-074)

Will the Cabinet accept that there is no provision in the new open framework for those not formally assessed under the Care Act as requiring a day opportunity?

Response

No, this is not the case. The open framework will provide day services for people assessed under the Care Act, or for carers who have been assessed as needing a break (including where the cared-for person does not have Care Act eligible needs), or for young people who are eligible to receive support. The framework can also be used for self-funders.

Question 3 (22-075)

Will the Cabinet accept that the way to address the uneven funding is to even it up rather than eliminate it?

Response

Given the significant inequity between the grant income of some centres and others, and even more so between some community areas and others (five areas have received no grant funding at all over the years), it would not be possible to redistribute this funding as suggested in the question, in a way that is aligned to need.

It is also important to emphasise that giving out grants using the current system lacks appropriate oversight of quality, governance and safeguarding arrangements.

As long as the Council gives grants to an existing group of organisations, and not others, without an open, equitable framework, it will be vulnerable to challenge around not appropriately meeting need.

Question 4 (22-076)

Do the Cabinet accept that voluntary provision of lunch at lunch clubs is an effective and economical way to avoid social isolation and in some cases avoid the need for Care Act assessment?

Response

As these centres have been grant-funded and not commissioned, the Council has not collected data about the effectiveness or cost-effectiveness of this provision. It is therefore not possible to provide evidence one way or the other whether these services have avoided the need for a Care Act Assessment for some people.

Question 5 (22-077)

If the answer to question 4 is yes, does the Cabinet accept that jeopardising the existence of the clubs by withdrawing their grants may not only risk leaving vulnerable people without provision but, as they care for people at roughly one-third of the going rate for council-funded care, prove to be a false economy?

Response

Officers have provided information and advice to clubs about alternative ways of raising income, e.g. through fundraising, area board grants, collaboration, attracting self-funders and the Open Framework. We hope that this, alongside the grant which will be given to clubs in 2022/23, will help those clubs to continue. If, unfortunately, some clubs are not able to continue, no older people with eligible needs will be left without provision – people will be supported and signposted to alternative services in the County. This has been evidenced in recent years when alternative provision was identified after a number of clubs in receipt of grants closed because of the pandemic.

It is not believed that this step will be a false economy. It is unusual for councils to provide grants to clubs which don't support people for whom the local authority has a statutory responsibility. In other areas of the country, clubs have found alternative ways to fund their provision.

Question 6 (22-078)

While proceeding with the open framework tender, will the Cabinet:

- reconsider the withdrawal of grant funding to lunch club day centres;
- maintain the full grant funding of £117,906 for one year while the system is reviewed;
- review grant-funded clubs to create more even provision;
- inspect grant-funded clubs to ensure high quality provision; and
- mount an initiative to identify those who should be assessed under the Care Act as potentially requiring a day opportunity?

Response

It is noted that this question is about the decision to withdraw grants, which was a decision made as part of the formal budget setting process and approved by Council at its meeting on 15 February 2022, and not about the proposal being presented to Cabinet.

However, this would not be appropriate for a number of reasons. The Council has no remit to inspect day centres or clubs which receive grants; the only way we can monitor performance and outcomes is by commissioning these organisations, which is why we are proposing an open framework.

The suggestion in question 6 also overlooks the many services (whether centre-based or not) which don't receive grants. If the Council only reviewed grant-funded clubs and not those that don't get a grant, it would be maintaining the status quo.

In the meeting with day centres on 23 March, officers advised clubs to contact the Advice & Contact team about any person who they felt may be appropriate for a Care Act assessment.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

29 March 2022

Agenda Item 6 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

**Statement from: Helen Dixon - Statement on behalf of Cricklade Open Door
Registered Charity 1124700**

To Councillors : Laura Mayes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Skills /Jane Davies, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND, Transition and Inclusion

I am Helen Dixon and Vice Chair of Cricklade Open Door. I first became involved with the charity when I was County Councillor for Purton and Cricklade.

The club was under threat of closure. With the help of Wiltshire Council, Cricklade Town Council, local businesses, local residents and some very vociferous members, Cricklade Open Door emerged from the ashes and the rest is history as they say. Sadly it looks like history could repeat itself!

I became a trustee in 2009 and I have seen Cricklade Open Door flourish. It provides much needed, friendship, fun and support to those who may be lonely or socially isolated or just want a cuppa and a chat with friends. It should be noted that many of those friendships have been made through Open Door.

As a result of the Covid pandemic it has become more apparent that our work at Open Door is about preventing our members from needing one to one care and support from other agencies including Wiltshire Council. During the pandemic, despite our volunteers keeping in regular telephone contact with members, shopping, picking up prescriptions, providing meals, receiving birthday cards etc. many members became very depressed and missed the social contact that they’ve enjoyed at Open Door. Clearly, as many of our members are elderly, nature takes its course and 8 of our members died during the pandemic but a further 10 went into care and we believe that had Open Door been able to operate as usual that number might have been significantly less. It is worth pointing out that, despite the sad loss of 18 members, our membership is rising and almost back to Pre-Covid levels.

My understanding is that the cost for Wiltshire Council to provide day care to an individual is £45 per day. With our current grant of £8982 per annum we operate 3

days a week (147 days a year) and with our current membership of 64 that equates to 96p a day.

We have been held up by Wiltshire Council (and in the past by Age UK) as an exemplar to other Lunch Clubs and Friendship clubs in the county. We continue to act with due diligence on behalf of our staff, volunteers and, above all, our members and we very much hope that we are able to continue.

We carried out our usual members' survey recently and members were asked to describe Open Door in 3 words, the top words were, caring, helpful and lifeline and under other comments somebody wrote 'Open Door is a Cricklade diamond'.

I know there are many diamonds across the villages and towns of Wiltshire and I would respectfully ask that Wiltshire Council reconsider their intention to withdraw our grants.

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It's My Life

understanding people's views
and ideas about how they
want to live their lives, what
is important to people and
what they need in order to
live their good lives

January 2022



Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living
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Charity no. 1120611 Company no. 5480761

This report was facilitated and produced by the Wiltshire CIL User Engagement Team, under a contract with Wiltshire Council, to provide a User Engagement Service.

The User Engagement Team works alongside people with lived experience of health and social care services to support, encourage and facilitate them to have their say, ensuring that their voices are heard and that they are able to contribute and influence how services are shaped and developed in Wiltshire.

The User Engagement Team uses creative and interactive ways of engaging with people, co-producing each piece of work uniquely, to value the authentic voice of all service users.

It's My Life Key Messages

People with learning disability and/or autism want what everyone wants to live well: a home, equal relationships, to work and have purpose, to have dreams and aspirations. Making this a reality for everyone is a priority for now

Housing needs to be de-institutionalised: people want to live in homes not houses, where they have choice and control over all aspects of their daily life

Independent living does not mean living without support. Relational support provided by people that are liked, known, and trusted can work with the person to enable them to keep safe, learn new tasks and take care of themselves

'Written off for being different' is not an acceptable experience for people living in Wiltshire today. We now need to act and ensure that every Wiltshire resident and every professional involved in the health and social care system play their part to ensure that disabled people get to live the lives they deserve

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8. Health

Conclusions and recommendations

References



1 Introduction

Between May and December 2021 Wiltshire Council conducted six online workshops with providers of adult social care in Wiltshire. The providers that attended the workshops were all part of the Wiltshire Good Lives Alliance (providers that Wiltshire Council has checked to make sure that they can provide good quality services).

The workshops focused on various themes which are aligned to Wiltshire's vision that services should support people to achieve their goals, to be understood and have their communication needs met, to learn skills which enable them to take an active part in society, to be economically independent and to be enabled to take positive risks.

To compliment and run alongside the provider workshops Wiltshire CIL ran a series of mini Knowledge Cafés over the same time period to gather the views and ideas of people with a learning disability and/or autism.

The Knowledge Cafés looked at the following topics –

- ▶ My good life
- ▶ Good support
- ▶ My community
- ▶ Work and employment
- ▶ Living my life
- ▶ Health

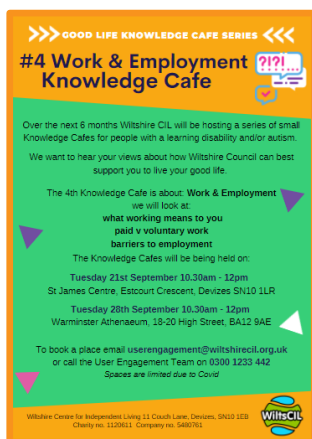
This work was carried out at the request of Wiltshire Council to support them with creating a robust care market in Wiltshire which meets the full range of needs of Wiltshire's residents in a strengths-based way

Aim – the purpose of this piece of work is to understand people's views and ideas about how they want to live their lives, what is important to people and what they need in order to live their good lives.

2 What we did

Between May and December 2021 six themed knowledge cafés were held, with two taking place for each theme: one in Devizes and one in Warminster.

Knowledge cafés are fun, interactive events using work sheets, colourful pens, stickers, post-its, sweets, fruit etc. creating a relaxed informal environment where people feel comfortable to have open and honest conversations about their views and experiences.



Posters were made for each of the Knowledge Cafés and were publicised through Wiltshire CIL's contacts, on Wiltshire CIL's social media platforms and through the Good Lives Alliance membership.

A total of 95 people attended the Knowledge Cafés over the 6-month period that they were held.

A series of questions were developed and asked at each Knowledge Café that were specific to the theme that generated lively discussions. In this report we analyse the feedback gathered from all of the Knowledge Cafés.

3 My Good Life

The first Knowledge Café looked at people's good life so that we could get an understanding of what a good life looks like for people, who they are and what is important to them.



Purpose and Autonomy

Crucial to people having and living their good life is having a sense of purpose to their days. People want and need things to do whether it be being active, **going for walks**, **going on days out** or **gardening**. Or, enjoying hobbies such as **stamp collecting**, seeing the world and going on **holiday**, **watching TV** or **shopping**. Opportunities to socialise were also important, people valued **social clubs**, going to the **pub**, the **theatre**, and **music festivals**.

Positive Relationships

Relationships are fundamental to people's good lives, highlighted were relationships with **family**, **girlfriends**, **partners** and **neighbours (to get on with)**. Having positive relationships where you **feel valued** and **accepted** are important. People described how they **don't want people to write you off for being different**.

Getting the Basics Right

The basic minimums that we should all expect were highlighted as key factors that contributed towards having a good life.

The opportunity to **live where I want to live**, to **live in a bungalow** or **live in a house** – having choice and control over where you choose to reside is important. **Good health** was highlighted as a contributing factor towards having a good life.

Accessibility also plays a key factor in people's ability to live their good life especially **having accessible places to go**. Having the **freedom of a car** was also beneficial.

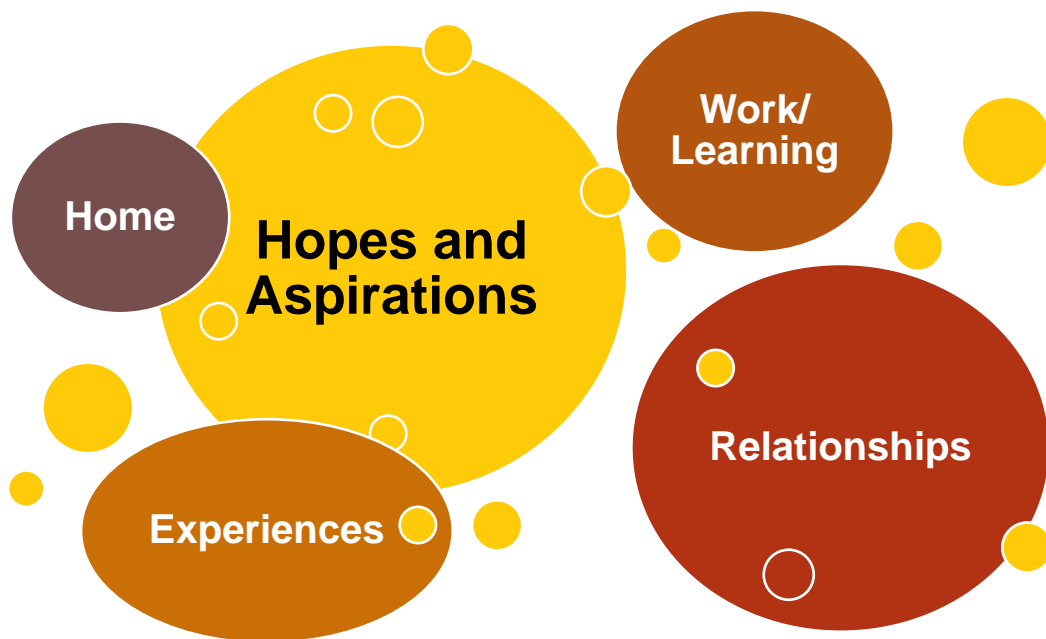
The basics that many take for granted such as choosing where you live, having a job and being able to access your community for example are things that most people don't consider necessary to mention as they are just part of their everyday life. However, the fact that these basics are mentioned by people with a learning disability and/or autism highlights that they do not get to experience these things as standard and part of their everyday life; they often have to fight for the basics to be acknowledged.

Throughout this report we look at the importance of getting the basics right and how crucial this is to the quality of people's lives and their ability to live their good life.

Alongside looking at people's good life we also wanted to understand what people's hopes and aspirations for the future are and what people had to achieve this.

Hopes and aspirations for the future centred around four main themes:

- ▶ Home
- ▶ Work/Learning
- ▶ Relationships
- ▶ Experiences



Home

Choice and control over where people lived featured in peoples hopes and aspirations for the future. One person described how they **wanted to have a flat with a garden** whereas, another simply just wanted **to move out**. Someone else wanted the opportunity to be able to **sort and tidy their house**.

Work/Learning

There is an ardent desire amongst people to want to **improve their (my) education**. Some people want to learn specific skills such as **computers**. The motivation for people to improve their education centred around the aspiration to work - **to help me find work** and to be in **paid work - a full time job**.

Relationships

As we have already seen, positive relationships are fundamental to people's good lives, and this is reflected through peoples hopes and aspirations. People want to **get married** and to **meet people in person**, **they don't want to be excluded**.

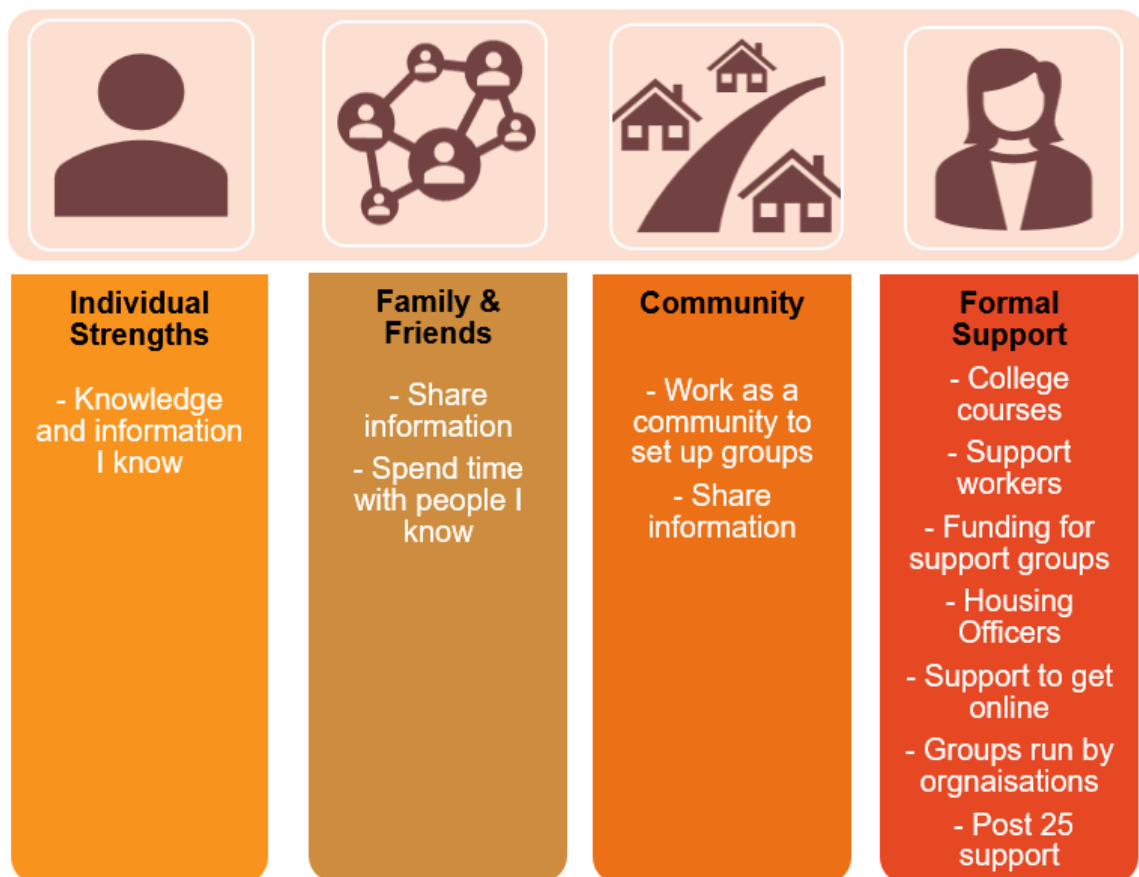
Experiences

People have hopes and dreams to experience new and exciting things such as **sky diving to raise money for charity**, to go **on holiday to**

France, to win the lottery. For some people Covid had impacted on their hopes and aspirations and following prolonged periods of isolation and lockdowns people’s hopes were around wanting **Covid to go – to get back to bingo and social clubs, to get out more and to carry on with their hobbies.**

People do not have unrealistic hopes and aspirations for their futures they have everyday dreams that we can all relate to.

We then looked at what people needed, what resources they had and could call on from other sources in order to achieve their hopes and aspirations. There was a disproportionate need or requirement of formal support to be able to realise their dreams.



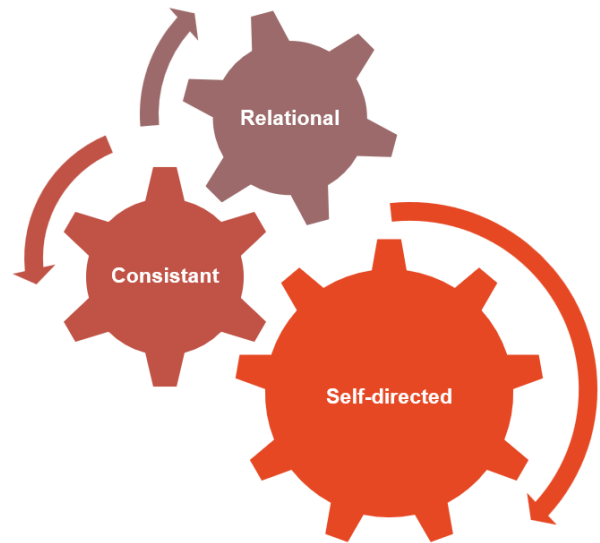
The realisation of hopes and aspirations becomes more difficult for people with a learning disability and/or autism as their lives are often lived in a ‘service world’ that is led by staffing, budgetary and risk assessment constraints.

4 Good Support

In this Chapter we look at what good support looks like and means to people.

Good support needs to be:

- ▶ Relational
- ▶ Consistent
- ▶ Self-directed



Relational

People want to be supported by people who are **friendly**, people who they can **build a good relationship with**. It is important that support is provided by **people that know me** and they recognised that **new staff need extra time to get to know me**.

People found it very difficult to be supported remotely and wanted to **talk to a person and not a machine**. Value was also placed on support from people **who would stand up for you if you are being bullied when out and about - 90% of good support is because of good people**.

Good quality, accessible support where you can **ask people for help** was valued. The merit in having a **good social worker** was recognised as was society being educated about disability and equality; an example given suggested that **public transport staff and customers need to be more aware of different people's needs**.

Only having one social worker instead of meeting new ones all of the time and having to go over everything again.

Good, effective support is provided by a variety of people/sources including **family, friends, the community and professionals**.

Consistency

There were many examples of inconsistent support and why it is detrimental. Experiences such as having **lots of agency workers in the past year which has been really difficult, in particular during a recent bereavement**. People described how they **could not cope with agency care and inconsistent carers**. Covid has impacted on some peoples support and causes uncertainty over who can provide the support and **knowing who can step in if staff get pinged - this is worrying for people**.

Good support can also be impacted upon by time limitations and constraints, you **don't always know how much staff time is available for plans until the day**. This makes it difficult for people to be able to plan what they are doing.

Limitations were experienced by people when looking at what support they valued as they felt that they needed more **support groups for adults as most groups are for children**; it was felt that **transition is good but there is not enough to do for 18+**.

There were strong feelings about financial accessibility of support and that social care support should be **non-means tested** and that **it should be free for all people to get help to access the community**.

Self-directed

The best support put the person front and centre, it was **person centred** and **inclusive**. It was suggested that it would be hugely beneficial to **match people with support based on interests**. Being able to choose and direct what you did when being supported was important, one person described how being supported to **meet people in the community and friends and family is important to me**.

Support that is person centred enables people to lead a fulfilling life. For some this was around having **emotional support - I need this as there have been difficult times**, for others it was **1-1 support** or **support for me to be able to help my family (I care for family)** or **medical support**.

Voices into Action!

The importance of people being able to live independent lives where their support is directed by them can be seen in national campaigns such as *Stay Up Late* <https://stayuplate.org/>¹



Stay Up Late was set up to ensure that person centred planning for people with learning disabilities and autism meant that it truly reflected what an individual wanted to do in their life.

In particular they were concerned that people with learning disabilities, and autism, weren't able to Stay Up Late and do the things so many people, who don't need support, take for granted.

The support people valued was unique to them and their good life. It enables them to do the everyday things that are important to us all such as cooking - **support for recipes if they more complicated, support with things going on in the community, going to the park, filing in forms, support with spelling and grammar or music and technology.**

Value was placed on support that enabled people to learn, develop and become more independent. People want to learn new skills - **to be able to do courses at college for learning disabilities, I want to do reading, writing and computers but there doesn't seem to be anything.** Learning for career purposes such as **how to be a police officer** was suggested or for personal development so they could become **kinder and more enthusiastic.**

Support to increase people's independence and autonomy was valued by many especially around independent travel – **planning a journey and travel training for new places to build confidence both on foot and on public transport.**

The recipe for achieving good support requires support providers having a mixture of knowledge, skills and qualities.

Skills such as **listening, sign language** or the ability to translate/change the **wording so that I can understand** are valuable.

Support providers should be **welcoming, tolerant, flexible, patient** – **I can't get my words out always, so people need to be patient and not jump in.** Support providers **doing what they say they will do** is also important.

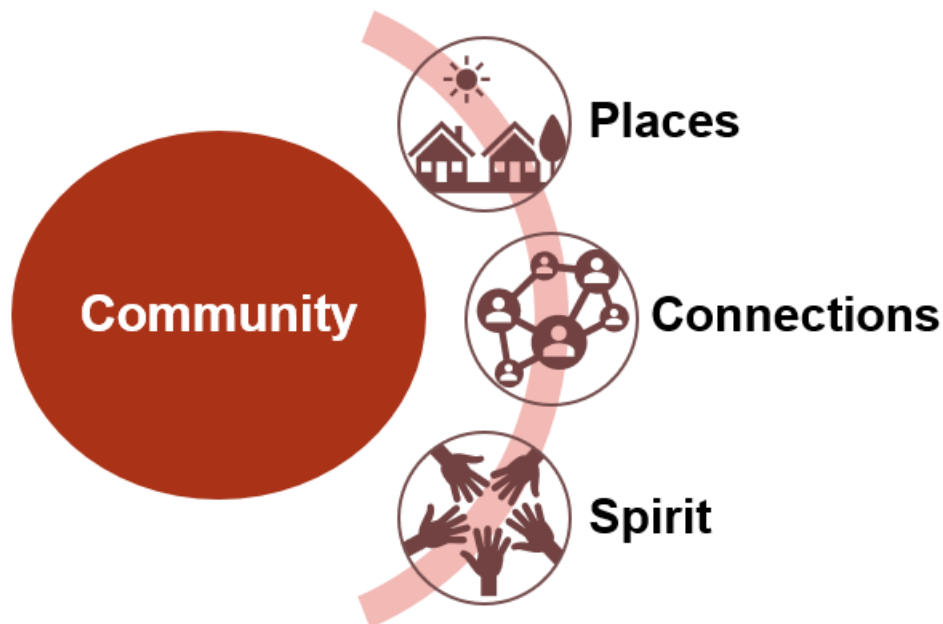
Knowledge is very important, especially of the person being supported. It is essential that they **understand you properly - understand your background and where you are coming from.** To achieve this, it was also recognised that **the person being supported needs to explain how the condition/s affects you - be open and honest.** The support provider should always **ask what I, the person being supported want.**



5 Community

Next, we look at the role of communities. We focus on what communities mean to people and the benefits people get from being part of their community. We will discuss how communities work for people and to what degree people feel part of their community, finally we will look at how communities could be improved for people.

Community means lots of different things to people and is centred around places, connections and community spirit.



Places

When people think about what their community means to them, they identify with physical places in the community. Places such as **the pub, sports centres, creche, bingo, sports groups/clubs, community hubs, church and the railway.**

People access the places in their community that are central to living their life and that benefit them, such as, the places that provide them with entertainment like **bingo, the theatre or cinemas**; places that provide education such as **museums and libraries**; places that meet

cultural and religious needs like **churches**; places that promote wellness and health such as **leisure centres, Zumba, dance or relaxation**.

Benefit is gained from accessing places in the local community, they have **fun, visit new places** and **it gets them out of the home**.

Voices into Action!

During the course of discussion about the community one group talked about difficulties in getting sunflower lanyards locally. One person had ordered one online, but it was never sent.



The group agreed that the Civic Centre would be a good place to get them as it is not as loud and busy as a supermarket and the staff are very helpful.

Together they drafted a letter to take to the Civic Centre to hand over in person to ask them if they could be a local distributor of sunflower lanyards.

How people get to places and access them is also important. Many people rely on local infrastructure networks to be part of their communities, they need **public transport** to be able to part of their community.

It was also highlighted that people's ability to **go to places independently, practicing new routes and places** was important and follows on from the need to have good support that facilitates learning and independence.

Connections

Connections with people play an important role in how much people feel that they belong to their community. Connections come in many different guises. There are the relationships that people have with **neighbours, family, with friends through WhatsApp and Facebook and social media**.

There are the social groups and clubs such as **Monday Club, WAVE, Golden Oldies** the **WI** or **camera club** which are a huge catalyst to people making connections within their community.

People have connections with those that they work with when **working in charity shops and doing charitable work**. Volunteering at the **Christmas bazaar**, the **theatre** and the **park café** all sited as ways to **meet different people**. There are the connections that people have with the local emergency services such as the **police, fire** and **healthcare**.

Community connections bridge isolation gaps and loneliness giving people **something and someone to talk to/about**. It helps **build confidence around people** and facilitates **meeting other people not in your home**.

Spirit

A sense of belonging to a community and feeling part of 'community spirit' is important. The covid-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of communities for so many people and the overwhelming display of community spirit that was displayed in the setting up of local support groups that showed the kindness within our communities. This was seen in the **clapping for paramedics** and the joint collective effort to **wear masks and using sanitiser in public places**.

Outside of covid-19 people also feel the value in kind communities and doing things for the benefit of others:

Communal garden - where we live that I do some things in. The new chap downstairs has got some plants so it might become a thing a few people do

On the flipside however, not everyone experienced this as some felt that **like in the war where people used to look out for each other – this doesn't happen anymore**.

There are very mixed feelings about whether people feel that their community works for them and whether they feel part of their local community.

On the whole most people felt like their community was working for them; they **felt safe living there**, they had good connections with their **neighbours**, there were people who were **kind and would look after me and calm me down when I have panic attack**. There was a feeling that **we need to remember to embrace and appreciate what we do have in my community**.

In Boots they know me so can just go up to the counter and ask for what I want. I am getting to know their names too.

The connections that people have make them feel like they are part of the community, whether this be with **neighbours**, local shop keepers or at work where people **feel part of the team**.

For those who felt that their community did not work for them this was due to them feeling that there was **not enough to do here so go to other towns where there is more to do**.

There were also lasting consequences of people's experiences during covid-19 and lockdowns, one person described how **since pandemic feel petrified about leaving the home** another saying that they are **not used to large groups anymore I got used to us staying at home and watching TV**. These fears and concerns added to people's feelings of not belonging to or relating to their community.

There were several suggestions made about how Improvements could be made to the community so that it was a nicer place to live and became more viable for people.

Suggestions included improving the high street – having **stores and markets on the streets, filling spaces of the shops we lost during the pandemic**.

It was felt that communities could be kinder, that people could be **more friendly to each other** and that the **council could be more welcoming**.

Having **more support** to access the community would mean that people had more of a sense of belonging to their community and **reduce the strain on families**. **More social opportunities** for people to engage with was also suggested.

Accommodation was also touched on, **having more affordable social housing, quiet neighbours and good quality landlords who listen to you** are all improvements that people would benefit from.

There were some general attitudes in communities that could be improved and would lift the spirit of community such as people **not dropping their litter and looking after the environment better, reducing bullying and controlling people** and generally **more positivity**.

There were some ideas suggested about improving community spirit like having **more community events** and/or **street parties**.

The most improvement of all would be around accessibility and equality:

Make all events inclusive to everyone, accessible, and affordable so that everyone has equal opportunity regardless of who they are.

6 Work and Employment

Work and employment are part of everyday life for millions of people in the United Kingdom where 75.3%² of the population is in employment. In comparison however, only 5.1%³ of people with a learning disability are in employment.

The discussions at the knowledge cafés looked at why work and the opportunity to work is important for disabled people, three themes emerged:

- ▶ Purpose
- ▶ Reward
- ▶ Development



Working gave people a huge sense of **purpose** and meaning to their lives. It gave people **structure to their day, a routine, something to do.**

By participating in work people felt that they were **being useful.** It also gave people a reason to **get out and about,** with one person describing how participating in work has **changed my life.**

People placed importance and value on work and viewed it as an **occupation – something that a person does or has done.** There was a desire to **find a good job – paid employment** and people felt **grateful to have a chance to work.**

Those that did some form of work (paid or voluntary) described how they **love work and would like more work** and how they really enjoyed **being part of a team.**

Some of the knowledge café participants had experience of **being an employer and employing Personal Assistants** but found it difficult as a disabled person to get paid employment themselves.



Work is generally viewed as a catalyst to gaining reward especially monetary; it was recognised that paid work = **money**.

Whilst money is important the other rewards that work gives people were more significant. **Helping other people, giving back to others and working in a team, helping each other**, were all highlighted as gains that people got from working. The feeling of **helping the community** was also highlighted.

People were also rewarded by the relationships and connections that they built at work with their colleagues and/or customers – **where I work feels like a family to me**.



Alongside working giving people purpose and reward it also enabled people to grow and develop as an individual learning a plethora of transferable skills.

The **trust** and **respect** that was placed in people at work boosted confidence and self-esteem as did **being accepted** by colleagues. People learnt **responsibility** when working, in particular around time keeping – **getting there on time** and **letting them know if you are running late**. **Keeping safe and looking after yourself** were also important.

Confidence grew through **coping with changes, making friends** at work and **going out after work** with colleagues. People felt able to **ask for help** when needed, having a **buddy to work with** and **job coaches** helped.

Taking instruction and **listening to your boss/line manager at work** was an important skill to develop. People recognised the importance of **learning company rules and policy** and being a representative of their employer.

Many of the knowledge café participants took part in either paid or voluntary work and spent some time looking at paid work V voluntary work.

Paid Work

Some of the main advantages of having paid work is earning **money** which then can enable you to **give money to charity**. Paid work gives people **security for life** as they can **build up a pension**, they can **progress further** in their career and **feel secure in what you do**.

The benefits that you receive with paid work such as **annual leave** and **sick leave** are a big advantage of having paid work over voluntary work. Paid work also supports people to **gain confidence in yourself**.

Voluntary Work

Peoples' experiences of doing voluntary work showed that **employers can be more understanding about health and disability, more flexible** and can be **more empathetic when things go wrong** than employers you do paid work for. It was felt that if you **have an off day, you can't get the sack** and there are **less implications if you can't go into work**.

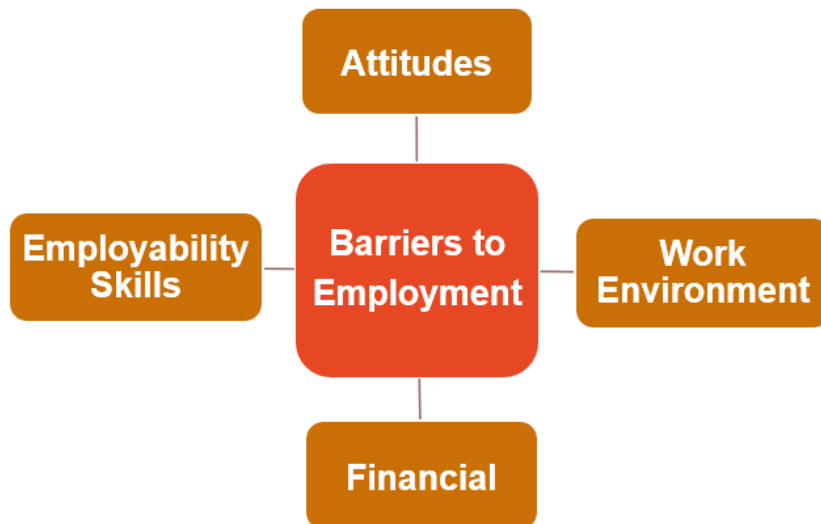
Volunteering opened lots of opportunities for people where they could **try out a role**, they **learnt new skills**, they could **gain experience**. Volunteering was also viewed as a steppingstone as you **may end up getting a paid job**. Volunteering also **affects your benefits less**.

As there are **lower expectations** of people doing voluntary work it **takes away the pressure**. The experience of working is better as it is **more relaxing, and it doesn't matter if you take longer to do things**.

People found volunteering rewarding as they were able to **help the community**. It presented them with opportunities to **get out and about, talk to people and get to know people**, as well as make new friends and have a social life. Volunteering can also give you a **sense of achievement if it is something you've wanted to do for a while**.

Barriers to Employment

There is little incentive for people with disabilities to take up employment as there are so many barriers preventing them from doing so.



Attitudes

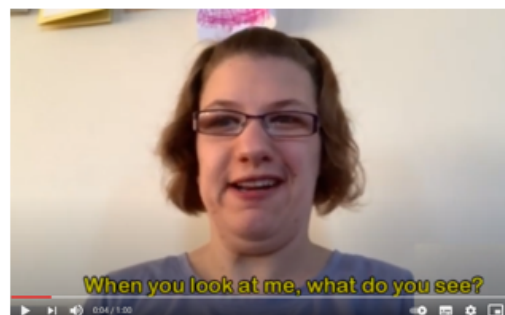
The attitudes within the work environment from the employer and the workforce can be a huge barrier to disabled people being employed.

Discrimination from colleagues - builds up and gets to the point where you feel like you will explode can be incredibly difficult to handle as can **sexist jokes in the workplace** or people making **sarky comments about how you look** or being **rude**.

There is a lack of understanding that people may have **hidden disabilities**. It should also be **taken into consideration that it might take me longer to do a job**. Some found that employers **expectations can be high**, there is **more pressure** doing paid work and **if you work a few hours, you can be pressurised to do more leading to stress**.

Voices into Action!

The **#SeeMySkills⁴** campaign has been coproduced with people with a learning disability who wanted to raise awareness amongst employers that they should see their skills first before their disability.



A video was created to highlight their message -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wyvDW8aFWP0>

There are some very simply solutions that can be adopted by employers so that they can become inclusive employers including educating their workforce and supporting their disabled employees. The ***Tips for Becoming an Inclusive Employer***⁵ guide created by disabled people in Wiltshire has lots of really useful information and idea for employers.

Due to the barriers that many disabled people face some at the knowledge cafés see becoming **self-employed/being my own boss** as the best way forward for them.



They also wanted to reiterate that **just simply listening to people and understanding them removes many barriers!**

Work Environment

The working environment can pose many challenges to disabled people. This can be physically due to poor or no **wheelchair access and not being able to get places.**

Covid-19 has also introduced barriers and has **made work hard for some people.** The recent move to hybrid working can make it easier for some people to work but for others **working from home can be a real barrier.**

It was recognised that embracing technology to assist people in the workplace such as using **Alexa and mobile phones** to assist in doing the job was beneficial.

Suggestions were also made to improve the accessibility of workplaces by investing in **talking toilets and installing handrails etc.**

Financial

Whilst paid work presents many advantages to people it also can cause concerns for many disabled people especially around the implications of earning money. People worried that **benefits may be taken away** or it will **affect your benefits** therefore creating a barrier to employment.

Employability Skills

Many challenges are faced by disabled people when trying to get paid work.

People experienced difficulties and challenges with the skills needed to find and get a job. **Applying for jobs can be stressful – so much paperwork**, the interview process is difficult especially as the **questions can be confusing**. People found it **harder to get work or keep work without a job coach**.

The **Top Tips for Finding Work**⁶ guide written by and for disabled people in Wiltshire has lots of useful practical advice and information.

Possessing the social skills needed to successfully navigate the workplace can also be challenging for some. Lack of **confidence, nerves** and how to **manage situations like disagreements** can be difficult. **Asking for help can be difficult** and people may not always feel **able to ask for help** or for example **let your employer know if you are unwell**.

The knowledge café participants had some useful and motivational tips for each other to overcome some of these barriers such as – **learning about the company before you start, not giving up on yourself if things go wrong** and **going in with an open mind and try things!**

Top Tips for Finding Work

Written by disabled people, for disabled people.

Disabled people are **30%** less likely to be employed than non-disabled people.

Only **6%** of adults with a learning disability are in paid employment.

It's time to change this in Wiltshire...

This guide has been created as part of a ListenUP Wiltshire Campaign.

With support from Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living.

Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living (WiltCIL) ListenUp Wiltshire

7

Living My Life

In this chapter we discussed what people need in order to live their lives in the way that they want to. We look at what independence means to people and how important choice and control is for them.

Crucial to being able to live their lives it was identified that people needed:

- ▶ Purpose/autonomy
- ▶ Connection
- ▶ Money
- ▶ Support



Purpose/Autonomy

As we have already seen throughout this report having purpose and autonomy is a reoccurring theme. It comes in many guises from having a **job** and being **part of a team** to doing activities such as **dancing**, **having a social life**, **gateway club** and being able to experience **new opportunities**.

Learning/**education** continues to play a huge part in what people need to live their lives. Being able to do **college courses to learn new skills** meant that people were **able to keep their independence**.

Connections

Having connections contributed to how people wanted to live their lives. Important are connections and relationships with **friends, neighbours, family – mum, dad, nephews, nieces** and **girlfriends**.

People wanted to be able to have those ‘traditional’ connections and relationships where they can **get married** and **have a family** of their own.

Money

It was recognised by everyone who took part in the knowledge cafés that money is an important factor to life and people’s ability to live the life they choose. They all experienced difficulties with **money**, needing **more of it** and having frequent issues with **Universal Credit**.

Support

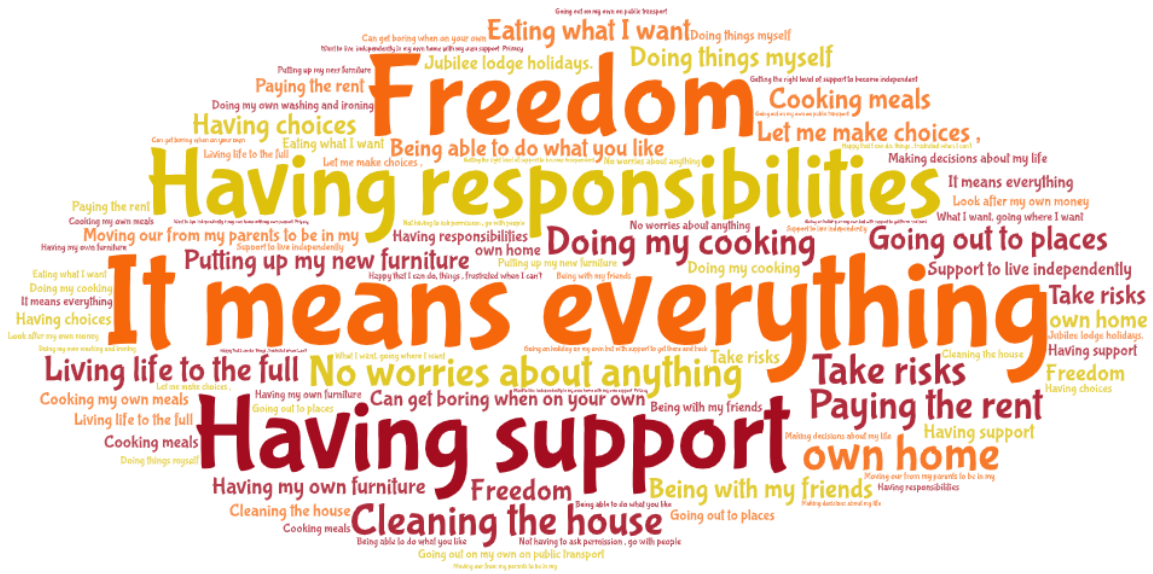
Many people highlighted that they needed a degree of **support** to enable them to live their lives. Having choice and control over that support was crucial – **my own carers in my own home**.

The type of support people wanted was to enable them to develop their skills in areas such as **cooking, computers, filing in forms**.

Support wasn’t always needed by ‘people’. Having a **bus pass** was a valuable form of support. For others technology was a huge asset

Alexa helps me to live my life - music, check spelling, the news and weather, 2-minute timer to brush my teeth, medication etc.
Technology really helps

We looked at what independence means to people and what they want to have choice and control over in their lives.



Choice

Having **choice** represented independence for so many people. It was important for my people to have choice over all aspects of their lives.

Some of the choices that people were asking for are those that we all take for granted every day of our lives, such as the option **to do my shopping** and **eat what I want**, to **cook with my friends**. The choice over food extended to even being able **to choose when I eat and what as there is no choice in a group home**.

People also wanted choice over **what they do in their lives**. People want **to be able to do what you like**, to **go out to places**, to **be with my friends**. Some wanted to choose **what job they have**, wanted to **create their own dance company** so that they **can teach dancing**.

Having choice over your appearance was also important, such as being able to choose **what I wear** and choose **my haircut**. People want to have choice over **who I want to be** and to **be a role model**.

Being able to choose how and by who you are supported is also especially important – **I want to choose who my support/carers are**.

People also wanted to be involved in the making whole society choices such as having **the right to vote** and to choose **who the prime minister is**.

With independence also comes **responsibility** and people wanted to be responsible for **cleaning the house, paying the rent**. People want to be able to **live their lives to the full**.

Having choices was described as being given **freedom** and **it means everything - living your life is about doing the things you want to do**. It was highlighted how important it was to **let me make choices and take risks, I don't want to be told what to do**.

Control

Independence means having **control** over your life, all aspects of your life. The things that were mentioned at the knowledge cafés that people wanted to have control over were the everyday mundane things that we all take for granted.

The lack of control that people currently experience over where they live was highlighted, people wanted to **move out from my parents to be in my own home** and **make decisions about their life, I don't want my parents to control my life**.

I want to live independently in my own home with my own support not in a bad home, it is suffocating, I want my own privacy, people get on my nerves, I need personal space.

It was not only where someone lives that they wanted to have control over but also **who they live with** and how they live their life in their home. People wanted control over **decorating my own room, having my own things in my room like pictures and knickknacks, putting up their new furniture, having my own furniture** and to be able to **do their own washing and ironing**.

People want control over **when I get up and when I go to bed, there are limits at home!** They also didn't want to be **pushed around by other residents**.

Having control over what you do each day is also important, people **don't want to be told what to do**, they want to **go out on their own on public transport**, they want to **decide what they do each day**.

It was also very important for people to have control over their relationships, such as **when I can see my girlfriend** for example. Some also indicated that they did not have control over how they lived their lives, they didn't want to have to **ask permission to go out with people**. They wanted to be able to **do what they want and go where they want**.

Having control of and being able to manage your own **health** was also highlighted. One person described how they wanted to manage their **diabetes** and that they **use an app to help control my diabetes**.

The fact that people felt the need to highlight these areas indicates how little control people with a learning disability and/or autism feel that they have over their lives and that they need to ask to have control, to be given choice and to be granted the permission to live their lives how they want to.

I want control over cooking my own meals, control over choosing my key worker, control over what support I have, control over my own choice of furniture and plants in my own bedroom.

Whose Social Care is it Anyway Inquiry

The powerful thing about this inquiry is that it has been led by us, people who draw on social care to lead our lives or who support loved ones to do so. We got tired of being left out of the discussions about reform or being the 'tick box service-user' so we took matters into our own hands and started the Whose Social Care is it Anyway? Inquiry.

**WE ALL WANT TO LIVE
IN THE PLACE WE CALL
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AND THINGS THAT WE
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**THAT'S THE SOCIAL
CARE FUTURE WE SEEK.**

#socialcarefuture

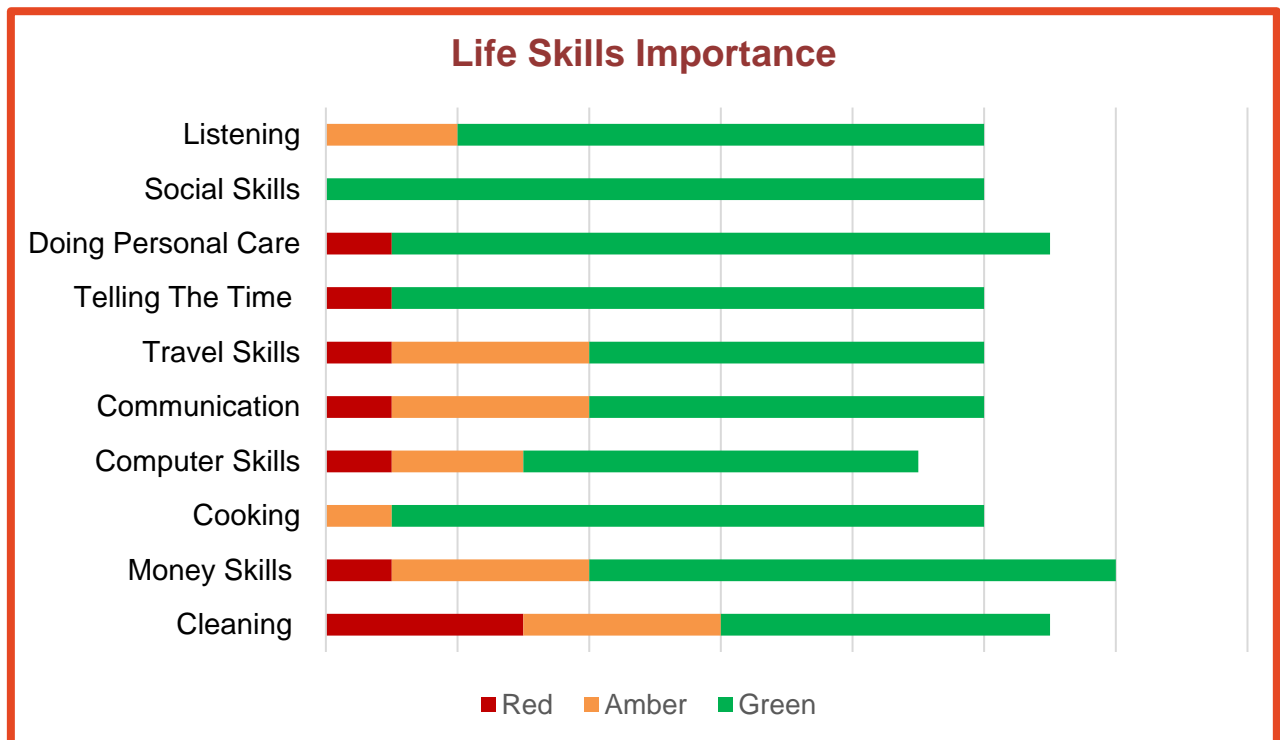
In May 2021 the 'Whose Social Care is it Anyway?' Inquiry group issued their 5 key changes that are needed to bring about their vision:

1. Communities where everyone belongs
2. Living in the place we call home
3. Leading the lives we want to live
4. More resources, better used
5. Sharing power as equals

Read the **Whose Social Care is it Anyway? Report⁷**

Life Skills

We spent some time looking at life skills and which one's people feel are important to them. At the knowledge café we asked people to rank how important a life skill was to them using the traffic light system of green being important, amber some what and red not important.



Significant importance was placed on all of the life skills detailed above; **social skills** were of particular significance which included for some **being able to help others**. This sat alongside **listening** and **communication** being important especially around being able to **talk on the phone** and **knowing how to say things**. Good **communication** skills could also help if you needed to **contact the emergency services**.

Cooking featured highly on the list of life skills that are important – **cooking, is important but it's not easy to do, I wish there were more opportunities to learn to cook**.

Money skills was of significant importance to most people, people wanted to **know the value of coins, counting change, reading receipts, cash machines, paying bills and understanding bills**.

General living skills including **personal care, telling the time and cleaning** all had a level of importance placed on them as did **travel skills**. People also wanted to learn things such as the **bin day and recycling day**.

Computer skills generated quite a bit of discussion as although many wanted to learn computer skills to do things like **online shopping** there was apprehension. Some were concerned because of **scams and pressing the wrong buttons, I need advice on keeping my personal info safe. Personal safety** was also a concern – **who/what to tell information to and how much I should tell**.

The skills highlighted are all ones that promote and facilitate people living an independent life giving them the choice and control on how they wish to live their life.

In this chapter we focus on health – what being healthy means and how people would like to be supported with their health and to make decisions about their health.

When we looked at what being healthy means to people, four key themes emerged –

- ▶ Active
- ▶ Lifestyle
- ▶ Connect
- ▶ Wellbeing



Active

When discussing what being healthy means to people being active featured most prominently.

Participating in physical activity such as **Judo, Zumba, swimming, cricket** or **dancing** were all ways that people kept active. It was also recognised that being ‘active’ didn’t necessarily mean that you had to participate in strenuous activity. **Walking my dog** or just **being outside**

achieved the same goals in contributing towards being healthy. Gentle exercises such as **yoga** also **helped with breathing and anxiety**.

Peoples' motivation for being active was **looking after my weight and conditions** and **helping physical and mental health**.

Lifestyle

Alongside being active your lifestyle also contributed towards what people felt being healthy was.

It was important for people to have a good diet and to eat well; eating **veg, carrots and fruit** were all mentioned as was having **three meals a day and a balanced diet**. Whilst some enjoyed **making healthy smoothies** others needed **my caffeine** and a **double scoop of coffee!**

Eating healthily was important because it helps to get your **vitamins and minerals** as well as **looking after your weight and conditions**.

If I wasn't healthy, I couldn't go out and enjoy myself this is why it's important to stay healthy

Having a **good amount of sleep** and **peaceful sleep** is also an important contributing factor towards being healthy. People tried to **stick to a sleep routine** but could find that **when something worries me, I don't sleep very well**.

Connect

Having connections and relationships with people played a huge role in being healthy for people. Having interactions with **family, meeting up with friends**, and **talking to other people** all helped people's **mental health**. Some also **found dogs very therapeutic**.

Social activities such as the **Camerados Living Room** in Devizes or **going to a coffee shop** were all important.

Wellbeing

Your **mental and emotional wellbeing** influence your feelings of being healthy. There were many different techniques used to promote positive wellbeing such as **music, aromatherapy, meditation** and **essential oils**.

Listen to a favourite song that brings back happy memories and lifts your mood

People also talked about using their **senses to help ground** them and to help them **not get too anxious**.

Keeping the brain active also helped - **fine motor skills like going on a computer, knitting and art helps my mental health and keeps my brain active**.

In addition to being active, your lifestyle, wellbeing and connections medication was needed by some to promote them being healthy especially around **managing diabetes**, having **vaccinations** and taking **vitamin supplements**.

When discussing how people wanted to be supported with making decisions about their health and being healthy the discussions mainly centred around have practical support and who they would like this support from.

Many relied on the people that know them best such as **family and friends** for guidance and support. Or their support workers – **I will ask my support worker whether they think I should go to the doctors; it stops me going to the doctors for issues like a cold when I don't need to see a doctor**.

Some people needed support to keep active and may **need lifts to get to places to do exercise**, others needed **meals on wheels** to help with having a good diet. Some have **health coaches** who talk to them about being healthy.

People were keen to make their own decisions about their health especially **now that I am an adult, I should be able to make my own decisions, it should be up to us to decide what we eat, drink and whatever we want to do**.

It was frequently identified that people needed support to **attend appointments**, there was a lot of concern, anxiety and fear around going to medical appointments or staying in hospital.

I need someone to support me to go get a smear test because I'm scared, I need to pluck up the courage to go to the surgery. I am nervous, I had a bad experience last time I went as the staff were so rude I am scared to go again I wish someone would go with me

There were some suggestions made around using **health passports** so that you can **tell professionals what you do and don't want**. Health passports would also help when communicating with the doctor, **I need to be given time to talk because it takes me longer to get my words out**.

Some people had had great experiences with their GP practices where their **GP asks how they can support me, they say that I am in the driving seat, and I am in control – this empowers me**. It was however also felt that a lot of work needed to be done around **challenging people's perceptions of disabilities in particular learning disabilities**.

Support from friends who had been through similar situations were really empowering and beneficial to many, such as being part of **peer groups and chat rooms with people who have the same condition as me**.

Being informed was an enormously powerful way in which people felt that they were in control of managing their own health, some would use **Alexa** and **google** to find information on health as their previous sources of information no longer existed.

Years ago, they used to have leaflet and booklets about health, now they put it all online, but I wish they had more paper-based information- have these in doctors, surgeries, dentists, opticians and libraries.

A nurse used to be at the library, and I was able to talk about any of my issues and worries, it helped me know whether I should go to the doctor or not. I think the nurse was paid by a charity, they don't come anymore and that's shame because we missed a great resource.



Conclusion and Recommendations

People with learning disability ‘*experience some of the worst of what society has to offer: low incomes, no work, poor housing, social isolation and loneliness, bullying and abuse*’⁸. Professor Sir Michael Marmot, 2018

This report outlines what people with learning disability and/ or autism want to live a good life of their choosing. It is simple in its message of what constitutes a ‘good life’:

- ▶ A home where people can live how they wish
- ▶ Choices and control in all aspects of daily living
- ▶ Relationships that matter and which are based on people being equal partners
- ▶ Person centred/ person led support that enables people to live full and independent lives
- ▶ A sense of purpose in life achieved through work and being part of a community
- ▶ Things to hope for, dream about and plan for, things to be joyful and excited about

No one can argue with this, and it is something that those without disability take for granted. However, the fact remains that for many Wiltshire residents who have a disability these fundamentals for a good life are out of reach. We know and have known for many years that all disabled people already experience inequality at some level and it is well reported that being disabled increases the likelihood of disadvantage in social activities, income, housing, employment and health. We also know that people with learning disability and /or autism are particularly disadvantaged. For example, people with a learning disability die up to 20 years prematurely⁹.

What needs to change in order to afford all Wiltshire residents with the same life chances? This report shows there are two elements: changes that happen on an individual basis and changes that need to take place on a wider societal basis.

The two words that most represent what individuals need to live well are: choice and control. This report shows that people lacked choice and control in key areas of their lives, and this limited their ability to live well.

Group homes, in particular, can impact significantly on people's ability to make even basic life choices from what they ate to who they saw to when they went to bed.

Good, person-centred support can enhance all aspects of people's lives by ensuring they do have choice and control. Support works best when it is relational: provided consistently by people who are known, liked and trusted. Having a good foundation of support enables people to flourish. They can continue to learn and work and live independently whilst also having the support to stay safe and look after themselves. With this in place people can do all the things that enable them to live their 'good life'.

The social model of disability is over 40 years old¹⁰: it states that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. Barriers can be physical, like buildings not having accessible toilets. Or they can be caused by people's attitudes to difference, like assuming disabled people can't do certain things.

This report contains many examples of the barrier's participants had to face in their daily lives: having to leave jobs as employers and work mates lack understanding, feeling fearful of going to health appointments because of staff attitudes, and the feeling of being 'written off for being different'. There is a lot that disabled people are doing to address these barriers and there are some great examples in this report such as the 'see my skills' campaign, and where people with learning disabilities make valuable contribution to creating kind and respectful communities, through volunteering and co-creating community spaces like gardens.

However, it is not disabled people's responsibility to make society accessible. We know what people want and need to live a good life, it is up to all of us as residents of Wiltshire and particularly professionals involved in health and social care to be allies, and work to make this vision into a reality.

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