



**Learning
Disability
Alliance
England**

Learning Disability Alliance Launch | 2015 | www.learningdisabilityalliance.org

Government must do better

Shocking results of mass survey published



Over recent weeks people with learning disabilities, their families, friends and their allies were surveyed by LDA England. About 2,000 people completed the survey 50% disabled people and 27% families. The results reveal the deep level of shock and outrage felt by many. The survey asked people to score the Government in 12 areas: **rights, advocacy, family life, community, income, education, work, home, support, health, safety & justice.**

$\frac{2}{10}$

In every area the Government was seen to have failed. Putting all the scores together means that people gave the Government a mark of 2 out of 10. People also shared stories and views, typical responses included: ***“This Government does not care.”*** and ***“The Government don’t have a clue about the lives of those they are changing.”***

More detailed information will be available in the following weeks as the data is published. Find out more: bit.ly/LDA-results



A dismal performance

Government marked in 12 key areas:

1
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10

The Government's worst scores were in the areas of Income & Taxes and of Work. 83% said income was worse, 69% saying it's a lot worse. One said: *"I have had benefits cut to a point where we are running up massive debts."* another: *"If you try and do voluntary work they think you're fit and take you off benefits."*

2
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10

The Government also did very badly on Rights, Advocacy, Family, Education, Home, Support and Justice. 80% said Family Life was worse under this Government. One said: *"Most support services are no longer there."* another just said: *"Try living like us."*

3
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10

Slightly better, but still dismal, was the Government's marks in the areas of Community Life, Health and Safety. For example 52% said Community Life was now a lot worse. One said *"I took my godson to the local supermarket and was screamed at because he has Down syndrome; they called this 3 year old and me scrounging b***ds and punched me in the face and tipped my godson's pushchair over and started kicking him."*

Unite for our rights

We must embrace our diversity, our differences, our talent and work together until we can dream the dreams of all. It may now be a nightmare, but we too can dream. To dream is a right for all humans and the first step on the road to justice. Without our dreams we have no hope, and we all have hope. Our rights, our dignity, our existence can all be threatened, but the flame of our hope cannot be extinguished.

The hope of a world in which all humans are seen as people first, people, with fundamental rights: to eat, to drink, to live, to love, to be free, to dream. We can dream of a day when all children grow together, learn together, play together regardless of ability. We can dream of a day when those children become adults, accepting adults who see the world as equal, a world of ability not disability.

We can dream of a world where people have the right to have their basic needs met, in whatever form they arise.

This marvellous new power which is rising in our disabled community must not lead us to dismiss all those outside of our



Gary Bourlet gave this speech at H&SA's 2014 Conference.

community. For many of our not-yet-disabled sisters and brothers have come to realise that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And slowly, but surely, they are coming to realise that their freedom is bound to our freedom.

We cannot travel this road alone.

And as we travel we shall make this pledge, a promise to travel together on a journey with our leaders at the fore. A journey led by those of us with disabilities, a journey supported by those paid to provide the framework upon which we build our lives.

For freedom, when it comes, is about our choices: the choices of disabled people, the lives of disabled people, the voices of disabled people. Our choices. Our lives. Our voices. Made with our families, our carers, our supporters. But always, always, always, at heart, our choices, our lives, our voices - not those who may want to speak for us.

Gary Bourlet works with **Kaliya Franklin** at People First England.



The price people pay

- Social care services in crisis**
- Institutional abuse continues**
- Hate crime and stigma increase**
- Poverty getting deeper**
- Unemployment high and rising**
- Exclusion for children & families**
- Help for families cut**
- Advocacy and legal aid cut**
- Local community services cut**

Many people with learning disabilities and families are experiencing the results of these wrongs:



Died in the bath after an epileptic seizure in an ATU despite advice of family. Was a preventable death.



Sent away from family to an ATU against family wishes. Family and advocates told to 'back off' from fighting.



Died in a care home having moved from an ATU where he experienced abuse and poor care. No-one listened



Sent away from family to a secure unit against their wishes instead of getting specialist help near home.



Seriously neglected by the organisations supposed to care for him. The family are ground down by the fight for justice.



Taken from his family and placed in an ATU and planning to move further away against the wishes of his family.



Young man with Asperger's has to go out of county to college to be able to get the right support.



Lost 2.5 stone in weight because school insisted on changing routine against wishes of family.



Fear of funding cuts and the closure of the ILF. "Don't reduce my funding package as you will reduce me having a life".



Told he must live in residential care instead of being supported to stay with family because "it is too expensive".



Professionals take legal action against a family who dispute the care being offered. The family win in court.



Health professionals assumed mother could not parent well instead of diagnosing her son's condition.



Accused of fabricating her child's illness instead of giving her the help she needed to look after her child.



Sent away to a secure unit instead of getting the support he needs to stay with his family.



People do not listen or show enthusiasm for self advocacy. Some self advocates have been threatened and called liars.



I should not be criticised for how I dress, I am a young woman, not a child, I can make my own choices.

Winterbourne

What can be done?



People with learning disabilities go into ATUs because commissioners do not know how to make sure there is good housing, support and specialist help in their communities. Providers of ATUs make a lot of money and it is not in their best interest to help people to live in their communities. Some of them are incompetent providers and don't do what they say they will do, assess and treat people.

Psychiatrists do not understand that people can actually get better if they have the right housing and support in their communities so they keep them in ATUs and give too many drugs to treat the problems instead. The only people that have suffered because of this are the people with learning disabilities and their families. Some people have come out of ATUs but a lot of people have also gone in.

The Government has tried to make this better but has failed. This is because they did not understand what was needed to change things, they asked the wrong people to help and no-one had any authority to make

commissioners, providers and psychiatrists do the right thing. CQC have told some ATUs they must get better and have refused to register others because they do not think they are needed.

The National Audit Office did a review and said the Government has failed to help people. NHS England are now working harder to change this and have made a promise that they will close ATUs and have a proper plan within 6 months.

If they want to be successful they need to do the following:

- Make sure they do good plans with people in ATUs and families so they know what they want.
- Put money into housing so they can get people out of ATUs.
- Make sure that there is good local support to help people manage their behaviour so they stop people going in to ATUs.
- Work directly with the good providers that already know how to support people well.
- Make sure that the money is flexible so people and families can choose how to spend it.
- Don't waste money on consultants and managers that don't know how to do this properly but work with people, families and organisations that have experience of doing it the right way.

Alicia Wood is CEO of the
Housing & Support Alliance

Our Manifesto for a Good Society

The National Forum of People with Learning Disabilities and the National Valuing Families Forum set out our goal:

1. Human Rights

The right
to be
ourselves



2. Advocacy

Being
listened to
for real



3. Family Life

Being loved,
and able to
love others



4. Community

Being a
citizen who
is a real part
of life



5. Income

Decent income,
the chance to
save and earn



6. Education

High hopes,
help to learn
and grow



7. Work

Contribution,
value and a
fair reward



8. Home

A place of
our own,
with people
we love



9. Support

Respect
and help
to lead our
own life



10. Health

Equal access
to the best
care and
advice



11. Safety

Independence
and freedom
from fear



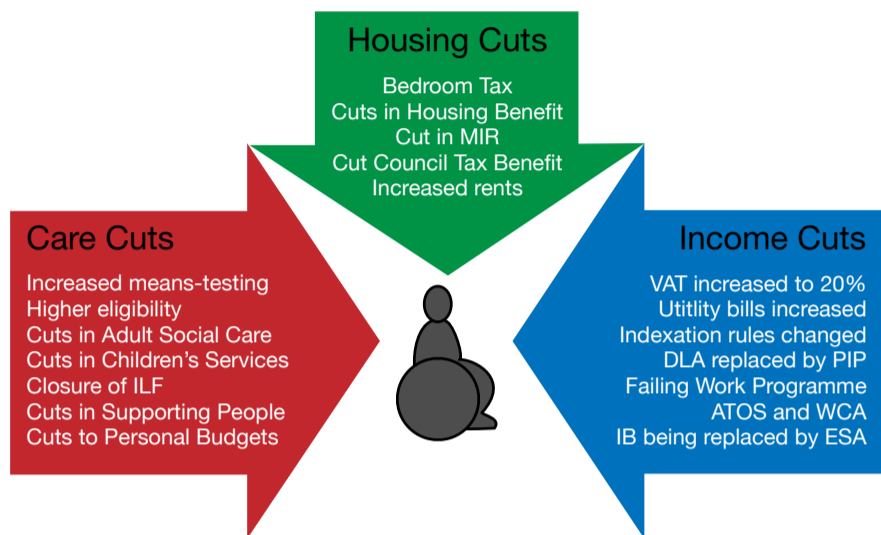
12. Justice

Fair treatment
and protection
by the Law



Cuts target disabled people

Why are people hit by so many different cuts?



Since 2010 the Coalition Government has quietly introduced a whole series of policies that target disabled people for cuts:

- Cuts to benefits
- Less support to find work
- Cuts to housing
- Cuts to care and support services
- Increased taxes

People in poverty have been targeted for cuts nearly **3 times** as much as the average person. People with the most severe disabilities have been targeted for cuts **6 times** more than the average person.

The Government try to deny these facts, although three independent reports have confirmed them. There continues to be no media coverage of this issue,

despite the Prime Minister's pledge that *“those with broader shoulders should bear a greater load.”*

In our survey one person said: “They should be completely ashamed. The way our most vulnerable and disabled have been treated the past five years is absolutely disgusting.”

A recent analysis by the Institute of Fiscal Studies showed that the poorest 10% of households, have lost £500 per year, through tax increases and benefit cut. This is a **9% reduction** in people's income after tax.

The Learning Disability Alliance was formed in order to defend people's basic rights and to draw attention to this growing injustice - bringing together disabled people, families and their allies.

Why do the heaviest cuts fall on disabled people?

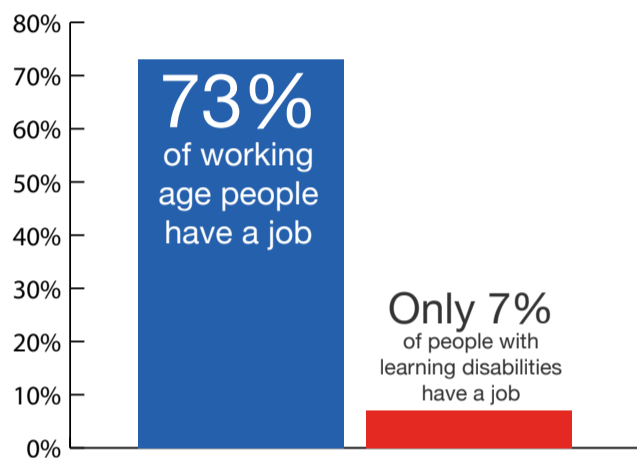


Average annual cuts per person by 2015-16

Exclusion from ordinary life

In every area things are going backwards

Why do so few people have real jobs?



Jobs - The UK has one of the highest employment levels in Europe, but disabled people, especially people with learning disabilities are excluded from work and their unemployment has grown. The failed Work Programme and cuts to social care have made things worse.



Advocacy - Advocacy for people with learning disabilities has been slashed. Between 2009-13 advocacy was cut by 15%. In 2011, in just one year, 23 self-advocacy organisations closed. Cuts to legal aid have also made it harder for people to protect their basic rights.

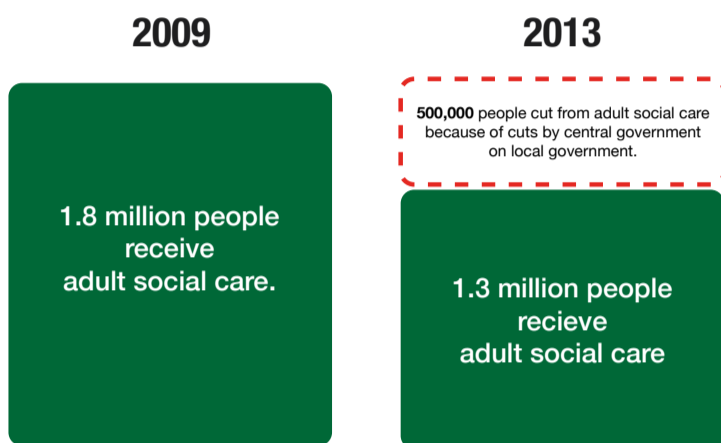


Housing - High house prices may benefit the wealthy, but they do not benefit people on lower incomes. The Bedroom Tax and other cuts have made independent living even harder to achieve. Only 15% of people with learning disabilities have a home of their own.

Social care crisis

Basic support cut

Adult social care is in crisis and deeper cuts are coming



In only four years adult social care has been cut by 30%. This is despite the fact that every study has suggested social care should in fact be growing.

The cuts are experienced in many different ways:

- Personal budgets are slashed
- Charges - the disability tax - increased
- Eligibility levels raised
- Re-assessments used to cut costs
- Lower salaries, worse terms & conditions
- Minimum staffing levels and hours
- 5 minute visits

The reason that cuts have fallen in social care is that local government funding has been slashed by about 30% and social

care is the biggest thing local government does.

In practice this is a false economy:

- People miss out on the chance to contribute to their community, find work or help others.
- People end up in crisis, hospital or in expensive ATUs.
- Without support some people may even get in trouble and end up in prison.
- Families struggle, without support, leading to heartache, breakdown or even suicide.



Join LDA England

Let people know how you feel - join LDA England. It's free to join. Individuals, groups and organisations can all join:

www.bit.ly/joinLDA

What's next?

On 2nd April LDA England will mark all the political parties. We will publish the results and encourage people to use their vote:

www.bit.ly/LDA-judge

Bad policies

LDA England has published a full list of 50 bad policies that harm the lives of people with learning disabilities:

www.bit.ly/wrong-list

Survey results

The full results of the survey will be published in the coming weeks. For more information go here:

www.bit.ly/LDA-results

www.learningdisabilityalliance.org | #LDVote

Lots of people helped to make the Parliamentary Launch of LDA England possible including: Claire Bates, Lauren Bushby, Simon Cramp, Rhianon Gale, Henry Iles, Tim Keilty, Liz Kendall, Sarah Maguire, Vicki Raphael, Anna Wojnilko and Care Management Group, Certitude, Choice Support, Dimensions, Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities, Imagineer, Jan-Net, Local Area Coordination Network, Lifeways, New Prospects, North West Training & Development Team, Pathway Associates, Pavilion Publishing, Photosymbols, Real Life Options.

The LDA England Newspaper was edited by Dr Simon Duffy, Director of The Centre for Welfare Reform www.centreforwelfarereform.org and voluntary coordinator of the Learning Disability Alliance England with layout assistance from Henry Iles of www.henryiles.com.