

caring for people with learning disabilities

People with learning disabilities (or learning difficulties) have different needs and skills. Some need continuous caring, while others will need less support. Some will **need information** in a different format.

Their carers will often be lifetime carers.

This factsheet lists sources of **advice and support** that can help people with learning disabilities access the same opportunities as other people, and can provide support to their carers.

You may also find the factsheet *Caring for children with special needs* useful.



Borough services

PERSON CENTRED PLANNING

Brent is making efforts to make all its services for people with learning disabilities **person centred**, in line with the government strategy outlined in the white paper *Valuing People – a new strategy for learning disability in the 21st century* (see www.publications.doh.gov.uk/learningdisabilities/access/).

Person centred planning aims to ensure that people with learning disabilities are involved in all decision-making that affects their right to live a fulfilled life as valued members of their communities.

BRENT LEARNING DISABILITY PARTNERSHIP

The **Brent Learning Disability Partnership (BLDP)** is an integrated health and social services unit. It provides a wide range of services for people with learning disabilities, ranging from community assessment through to day and residential services.

The **Community Team for Learning Disability**, based at 36 London Road, Wembley (020 8937 4659 – duty officer, 020 4937 4367 – admin), includes both health and social care professionals. The team comprises care managers, review officers, transitional workers, psychologists, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists (SALT), occupational therapists, a bereavement officer, outreach officers, crisis intervention officers, community nurses, the person centred planning (PCP) coordinator and support staff.

The team provides:

- Assessment of needs including carer's assessments.
- Frequent monitoring and review of each service user's progress.
- Treatment, therapy or other support to service users and their family or carers.
- Information about local services.
- Input to case conferences and other meetings regarding a service user's progress.
- Service evaluation and research.

Team members work very closely with other members of the unit to provide an integrated service.

Care managers can offer advice on a range of practical problems, and have a wide knowledge of specialist services. They can also advise on different ways to obtain services, including direct payments (see the factsheet *Social Services*) and the Independent Living Fund (for further information see the factsheet *Money matters* or contact Brent Carers Centre).



Outreach workers provide support to people with learning disabilities who live in the community, either in shared homes, on their own or with adult placement carers. They can assist with rehabilitation, and help people to develop and maintain daily independent living and social skills. They can also advise on practical, emotional and financial problems.

Day opportunities

Day opportunities offer social contact, activities, independent living training and educational and work opportunities in day centres and in employment and work-related projects. Being in the community and achieving employment is vital for the quality of life and independence of people with learning disabilities.

- **Albert Road Day Centre** (020 7328 0125) is for people with severe learning disabilities. Activities include art and music therapy and independent living skills and users can take part in community activities including horse riding and swimming. The centre includes a special needs unit for people with challenging behaviour and autism.
- **Stonebridge Adult Training Centre** (020 8963 1585) provides general day care for people with learning disabilities. The centre focuses on work experience and employment. Activities include literacy and numeracy, woodwork, craft and artwork.
- **Strathcona Educational Centre** (020 8904 5832) provides social education training for younger, more able learning disabled people. The centre has a dance group and computer room and includes a group that caters for people with challenging behaviour and autism.
- **Day Service Projects** (020 8838 4130) enables people with learning disabilities to become more economically active by providing accredited vocational learning, training in basic skills, numeracy and literacy, confidence building, personal and social development and work experience. Its specialist employment service provides career development skills, vocational profiling, job search assistance, job coaching and travel training.

Residential and respite care

Brent Council runs one residential home and one nursing home for people with learning disabilities.

- **Melrose House** (020 8452 3754) has nineteen permanent and six respite care places.
- **Peel Road Nursing Home** (020 8908 2958) has ten places for people aged nineteen plus with severe, multiple and profound learning disabilities. All people who live at Peel Road require 24-hour nursing care and support.

The **Adult Placement Service** (APS) (020 8937 4129) recruits carers in the community who are able to care for vulnerable adults (including people with learning disabilities) in their own homes. The service 'matches' service users with suitable carers according to their needs and backgrounds. Carers undergo a detailed assessment prior to approval by an independent panel. Placements can provide a stepping stone towards more independent living or be on a longer-term basis.

Transition

Support with the transition from children's to adult services begins in the last year of school. A transition community nurse and social worker will offer assessment and work closely with the young person with learning disabilities and his or her family and networks to facilitate a smooth transition.

Voluntary organisations

There are a number of voluntary organisations that can provide support, advice and information to people with learning disabilities, and their carers.

- **The Big Tree** (www.thebigtree.org) – an online resource with a wide range of information for people with learning disabilities and their carers.
- **Brent Mencap** (020 8451 5278, www.brentmencap.org.uk) – services include the *employment service*, which places people with learning disabilities in paid work and work experience and a *housing advice service* (see 'Housing').
- The **Brent Short Break Scheme** (020 8459 5298, brentscheme@nas.org.uk), run by the National Autistic Society, provides a respite service for carers of people with autism spectrum disorders. Ring for an assessment.
- **Down's Syndrome Association** (0845 230 0372: 10am-4pm, Monday-Friday, info@downs-syndrome.org.uk, www.downs-syndrome.org.uk) – provides information, counselling and support for people with Down's syndrome, their families and carers.

- The website **easyinfo.org.uk** includes guides and tools for making information easier for people with learning disabilities. It is designed for people working with or caring for people with learning disabilities, and for people with learning disabilities themselves.
- **Mencap** works with people with learning disabilities, their families and carers. Its website www.mencap.org.uk includes easy to use pages for people with learning disabilities.
- Mencap's **Learning Disability Helpline** (0808 808 111, textphone 0808 808 8181, help@mencap.org.uk) provides help and advice on anything to do with learning disability, from advice on benefits to help on housing options. It is available 24 hours a day.
- **Powerhouse** (020 7366 6336, www.thepowerhouse.org.uk) is an organisation of women with learning disabilities.
- The **National Autistic Society** (020 7833 2299, nas@nas.org.uk, www.nas.org.uk) runs the Autism Helpline (0845 070 4004: 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday).

Leisure opportunities

Given the right support, people with learning disabilities can enjoy the same leisure opportunities as other people.

LOCAL FACILITIES

There are a number of social clubs in the borough specifically for people with learning disabilities.

- **Brent Mencap** (020 8451 5278, info@brentmencap.org.uk) – runs a number of projects for people with learning disabilities, including Saturday clubs.
- **Neasden Gateway Club** (01908 366412) – leisure and sport activities for adults (aged 18+) with learning disabilities. Sessions on Tuesday and Thursday evenings (6.30pm-8.30pm) at Woodheyes Hall, Woodheyes Road, NW10.

CLUB NIGHTS

Music club nights for people with learning disabilities take place across London. They are often run by people with learning disabilities, supported by staff.

- The **Beautiful Octopus Club** is a nightclub run by people with learning disabilities. Details from Heart 'n Soul (see 'Other activities').
- **Westsidiers** is a club night run by people with learning disabilities for people with learning

disabilities. It happens four times a year at Paddington Arts, 32 Woodfield Road, W9 2BE. For details ring Paddington Arts (020 7286 2722) or Graham on 077085 514511, or e-mail westsiders@padarts.idps.co.uk.

- The **Wild Bunch** (part of Siren Arts and Advocacy) website www.wildbunchclub.com gives useful information about clubbing in London for people with learning disabilities, including a list of club dates.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- **Heart 'n Soul** (020 8694 1632, info@heartnsoul.co.uk, www.heartnsoul.co.uk) is an arts organisation run by artists with learning disabilities.
- The website for **London Sports Forum for Disabled People** includes information about activities for people with disabilities at www.londonsportsforum.org.uk/learningdisability.html
- **Siren Arts and Advocacy** (020 7359 7443, siren@elfrida.com) runs creative projects for people with learning disabilities.
- The **Squidz Club** is run by and for young people (aged 14 to 25) with learning disabilities. Details from Heart 'n Soul (see above).

Housing

- **Brent Mencap** (020 8451 5278) runs three group homes that enable people with learning disabilities to live an independent, but supported life. For information contact teresa@mencap.org.uk
- **Brent Mencap** also manages a **Learning Disabilities Housing Advice Service** (020 8451 5278, robert@brentmencap.org.uk). The advice worker can provide advice about any housing-related matter for people with learning disabilities, their parents and carers. This includes

planning for the future, finding accommodation and making complaints. *NB: The service does not have a stock of accommodation.*

Employment and education

Day Service Projects includes a number of vocational training projects and provide support to help people with learning disabilities to gain and retain employment – see 'Day opportunities'.

The **College of North West London**

(020 8208 5000, www.cnwl.ac.uk) and **Brent Adult Centre for Education** (BACES) (020 8838 0808, www.brent.gov.uk/baces) run a range of further education courses. Contact them for a prospectus and information about support for students with learning disabilities.

Brent Mencap's employment service

(020 8451 5278, www.brentmencap.org.uk) includes work preparation courses, support in the workplace, work experience placements and drama therapy to build confidence, provide experience of working with others and building relationships.

Support for carers

Carers of people with learning disabilities are often lifetime carers. Like other carers, they are entitled to a carer's assessment – see the factsheet

Social services for details.

Brent Carers Centre runs a group for carers of people with learning disabilities who are aged 50 or over, or who have concerns about the long-term future of the person for whom they care. The group meets about every six weeks. It provides a forum for consulting carers about the issues that are most important to them, disseminating and sharing information, and offering and receiving mutual support. Ring 020 8795 6240 for further details.

Remember that other factsheets in this pack may also include information useful to you