

# Our Lives, Our Opportunities report

## Rapid Improvement Event

for Physical Disability and  
Sensory Impairment services  
in East Lothian. February 9, 10, 11.

Current statistics state:

- Total East Lothian population (Jan 2011) – 92,830
- 21% are disabled = estimate = 19,494
- 60% of these people (11,696) will have 2 or more impairments
- We can estimate (assuming only 1 disabled person/household) of those 19,494 – over 8,000 experience poverty

Refs: Scottish Public Health Observatory; Public Health Information for Scotland Report *Dimensions of Diversity – Population Differences and Health Improvement Opportunities* - January 2010. NHS Health Scotland. Scottish Public Health Observatory website, CHP Profiles.  
[www.scotpho.org.uk/home/comparativehealth](http://www.scotpho.org.uk/home/comparativehealth).

The Physical Disability Joint Planning Group initiated a consultative process to look at how disabled people access day opportunities in East Lothian.

This was a three day event where all stakeholders were invited to plan and shape what future day opportunities and networks might look like.

To inform this process, East Lothian Community Care Forum piloted a Community Action Research (CAR) project led by service users and carers asking people with a physical disability or complex need in our communities what they wanted from day service change.



There was a consistent message from everyone questioned as part of the CAR project. What really mattered was:

- spending time with people you enjoyed being with
- doing something that you enjoy and that is valued by others – this included opportunities to access learning/education and employment and leisure and cultural opportunities such as personal shopping, going to the theatre/museum etc.,
- having really good support from staff and professionals
- Doing something that keeps you healthy such as accessing facilities such as hydrotherapy pools, swimming pools, exercise classes and sporting activities
- Having accessible information about all services, groups and support available in East Lothian

### Day 1:

The first part of the programme defined the outcomes people wanted. From the work done at this session there arose the following outcomes for day opportunities in East Lothian:



1. I can access work opportunities
2. I can be as independent as possible
3. I take part in community life
4. I can access education and learning
5. I have the social life that I choose
6. I can manage my health
7. I feel safe
8. I get good quality support when I need it
9. I get support to continue in my caring role (family or unpaid carer)

## Day 2:

The second part of the process mapped out areas of current service provision, and what is good and what is not so good.

This work shaped day opportunities and networks to embody the following principles.

- There is no one good model for day and community service change, and that the aim ought to be achieving good outcomes for people, rather than focussing on a building as the main aspect of the service, or on one model to meet everyone's needs.
- Many existing community and day services are uniquely placed organisations that have great potential to work effectively with wider communities, in order to develop flexible and responsive support. This has a positive impact on the lives of the people they serve and on the wider community itself.
- Community or day opportunities can be for the enjoyment of the wider community, and should not segregate people solely based on age or disability.



## Day 3:

The final day clarified that:

- Whilst people with intensive care needs will require centre-based day care, we need to plan a much wider range of support options. The majority of these options should aim to support people to take their places in the community.



- Modern day services will move towards providing the support that enables people to make all sorts of connections, with all parts of their community, both mainstream community facilities and specialist services.
- People want to make relationships with friends and peers, with other people who need support like them - and with people who don't need support.
- We will make sure that in future people are supported to access a range of opportunities in response to their interests (e.g. social links, employment support), either through signposting to and brokerage of other available support, or by providing support directly that enables these outcomes to be achieved.
- It is also important to acknowledge the very real aspirations to gain paid employment that many people who need support are expressing. The government requires that as many people as possible who wish to work should be supported to do so.

