

# Agreeing together -

## a contract for the future

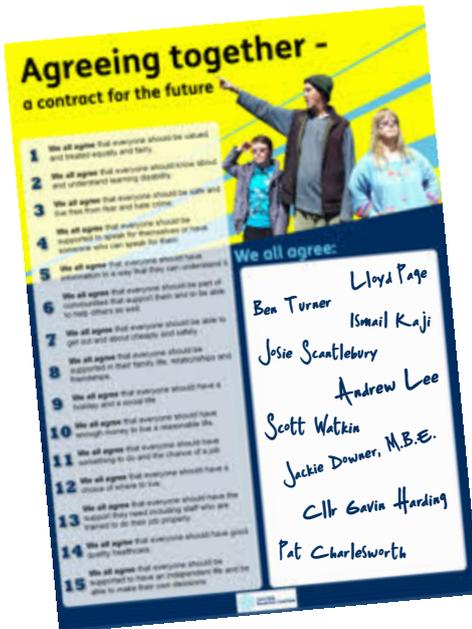


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P, Sally G, L, Gavin H, Scott W, Ben  
T, Pat C, Josie S, Anthea J, Sue B, Vanessa S,  
Xanthe B, Alexis C, Anthony H, Real Life Options, Coman K, Dan J, Dave R, Eve B, Jaime G,  
Jane L, Laura B, The National Forum for People with Learning  
Difficulties, Peter H, Rossanna T, Sarah R, Sense, Sarah C, Pasca L,  
National Family Carer Network, Tricia S, United Response, Liz H, David

**Learning  
Disability Coalition**

# Agreeing together – a contract for the future



Agreeing together is a set of 15 agreements. In this report 9 leaders with a learning disability tell us why they are so important.

There is nothing exceptional about the agreements. They are the everyday rights that everybody should expect. But for people with a learning disability these everyday rights are not always respected.



That is why it is important that we all sign up to say that we agree. The 15 agreements can be used to make sure that these everyday rights happen for everyone.



Copies of the agreements can be downloaded to be signed at:

[www.learningdisabilitycoalition.org.uk](http://www.learningdisabilitycoalition.org.uk)

# The Learning Disability Coalition



The Learning Disability Coalition has campaigned for better funding for social care for people with learning disabilities since 2007.



During the last 5 years people have told us what is going well and what needs to change to make sure that people with learning disabilities can live the lives they want to lead.

Many things have changed and are better. Some of the suggestions made by advocacy groups and in reports like, *A Life Like Any Other*, *Valuing People* and *Valuing People Now* have been taken up. But not everything is good.



Some people do not get the support they need. Some people are living in poverty and have nothing to do. It is very difficult to get a job. Many have experienced hate crime.

The Learning Disability Coalition asked people with learning disabilities what needed to change to make things better for them over the next ten years.

**Agreeing Together** is what people have said needs to happen.



If we all agree; people with learning disabilities, campaigners, supporters, organisations, councils and councillors, MPs and other decision makers, we can make sure that these changes are made.

# Andrew Lee says



It's really important that everyone signs up to 'Agreeing Together'. The more people that sign up, the more it will help individual politicians to say,

“We agree and we haven't lost interest. It is really important”.



Every organisation, every person, schools, pupils can sign it – anybody and everybody can sign and at any point in time.

When a group of organisations came together to form the Learning Disability Coalition it was because they all agreed that social care was such a mess.



It is because of the work of the LDC that the organisations involved will be able to say to politicians that they have the actual statistical evidence and can't be ignored.

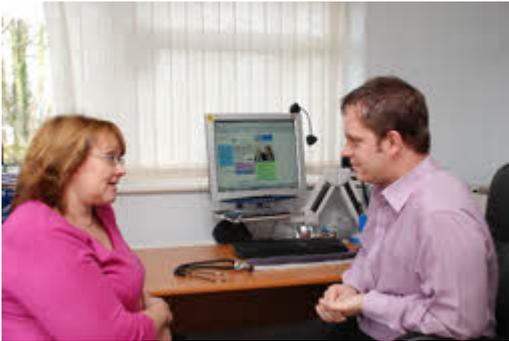


The longer that they do nothing, the bigger the challenge is going to be.

The issues facing social care now are similar to the issues facing the NHS when it was formed.



I think that in the 21st century, there needs to be a politician brave enough to do something with social care and quality support that will relieve pressure on the NHS and other services that support people in a crisis.



If there isn't support to help someone live independently, go to their GP for example, they will end up in hospital and there will be bed blocking.



Without reform to social care, the NHS will collapse too. We all need to agree together to make changes to make things better for people with learning disabilities.



**I've signed**

*Andrew Lee*

**Co-chair of the  
Learning Disability Coalition**

**1** We all agree that everyone should be valued and treated equally and fairly.

**2** We all agree that everyone should be safe and free from hate crime.

**3** We all agree that everyone should know about and understand learning disability.



## Councillor Gavin Harding says



People with learning disabilities without services are now more vulnerable than they have ever been. In a bigger society they are seen and not heard.

People are vulnerable in the community and we need to keep a check on people living on their own not having people preying on them.



We need to make sure that people with learning disabilities are getting the right support so that they are not victims of hate crime or mate crime.



We need people in communities checking out for others so that people are not vulnerable to abuse and isolated.

Personalisation is not really working out well. Local authorities are setting their criteria in a way that is leaving people without support.



We don't want any more deaths or murders of people with learning disabilities.

I've signed

*Cllr Gavin Harding*

**4** We all agree that everyone should be supported to speak for themselves or have someone who can speak for them.

**5** We all agree that everyone should have information in a way that they can understand it.



## Scott Watkin says



I first got involved in local self advocacy with my local partnership board because I wanted to fight to make sure that people with learning disabilities had a voice.

People should be at the centre of the work of partnership boards, but it's not easy.



Local authorities tend to go their own way and don't always listen to people with learning disabilities.

My local authority made decisions which made life much more difficult for people with learning disabilities and their families.



This is what inspired me to work as an advocate for people with learning disabilities at a national level.

Local self advocacy groups are in the best position to make information accessible for people with learning disabilities.



Accessible information makes our voice stronger, but without it people are isolated and aren't able to contact their local authorities about things like housing and council tax.



Local authorities need awareness training and need to know where they can go to make their information accessible.



Self advocacy groups are facing lots of cuts in funding because councils are prioritising other things.

It can be difficult for local advocacy groups to work together because they are competing for the same business.

It's so important that we all work together – it can be challenging, but there are lots of bigger challenges ahead and we will be stronger if we work together.



I've signed

Scott Watkin

**6** We all agree that everyone should be part of communities that support them and to be able to help others as well.

**7** We all agree that everyone should be able to get out and about cheaply and safely.



## Ben Turner says



Both of these agreements are very important for me as a deafblind person with a learning disability. Without the right support and communication, I become isolated, depressed and frustrated.



I have to have my own support workers or no-one can communicate with me. In shops I am sometimes ignored when using sign language that people don't understand.



Having support from people who understand me and can communicate with me means that I am a very happy person who can be involved in making decisions on every aspect of my life and now I look after my house and myself.

I find it expensive to go out in the evenings as I need a taxi. Although I am confident moving around my home, I cannot cross roads on my own.



I will always ask for help on unfamiliar routes or where it is difficult to move around because I know there are hazards for me.



I am a very sociable person, but have never had a friend because I don't meet any people who can communicate with me.

I would like to live near some more deafblind people who have a learning disability and who could communicate with me.



I am lucky that I was brought up in a village where everyone knew me and I also live in a village now. A smaller community is easier for a deafblind person with a learning disability.

As people get to know me they become less anxious about saying hello and interacting with me.



**I've signed**

**Ben Turner**

**8** We all agree that everyone should be supported in their family life, relationships, and friendships.

**9** We all agree that everyone should have a holiday and a social life.

**10** We all agree that everyone should have enough money to live a reasonable life.



## Pat Charlesworth says



No one would want a life without ever having a holiday; that would be wrong. So we have to make it possible for people with learning disabilities to save to have one, even if not every year.



Friendships and relationships haven't always been taken seriously by professionals. People have been separated and are not supported to keep in touch. Relationships are as important as food and water and we need it taken seriously for everyone.

It's a good job people are taking this into their own hands in some places, and organising clubs, meets and dating.



We also have the right to a family - of course protecting children has to come first. But, wherever possible, children are best with their parents. Being placed with others is expensive and doesn't always work. It would be better to spend money on preparing and supporting parents to be good enough.



Having enough money to live on is important. Everyone has to take their share of the cuts, but disabled people should not be cut more than anyone else.

I've signed

**Pat Charlesworth**

**1 1**

**We all agree that everyone should have something to do and the chance of a job.**



## Ismail Kaji says



Having a job is very important to everyone. It helps with your confidence and it's good to have control of your own money and your career.

Education and college are really important in finding a job – getting a job is the reason to go to school and doing work experience is a good way to know what work is all about.



There are very few people with learning disabilities who have a job. It's not good enough. People with learning disabilities should get the right opportunity and support if they want a job and if they can work. Employers need to give people a chance and be willing to adapt to people's needs.



It's really important to me to have a job as I have a family and it is my responsibility to look after them and make sure that all the bills are paid.

Being a parent and having a job are big responsibilities and can sometimes be challenging to balance, but both are really important to me.

I've signed

**Ismail Kaji**



**12** We all agree that everyone should have a choice where to live.

**13** We all agree that everyone should have the support they need including staff who are trained to do their job properly.



## Jackie Downer says



People need a choice of where to live, in a group, with friends, with a partner or by yourself.

Living on your own independently can be great, when you don't want to share with others, it means having your own key, doing what you want and choosing your own support.



But it can have its downside, people can get isolated and lonely.

Everyone needs support. People need people. In today's world we need to learn to support each other better.



Staff need to believe in the rights of people with learning disabilities as people. They need to let us take risks, but only after making sure we know the risks we are taking!

Staff need to know what they are doing. For some, it is just a job and that is not good enough; for us they are a lifeline.



It is vital they are trained, but they also need to come with the right attitude, we need to be treated properly, free from abuse. We need the respect we deserve.

I've signed

**Jackie Downer, M.B.E.**



## Lloyd Page says



It is important to be healthy and eat plenty of fruit and vegetables – sometimes it's OK to eat crisps though. People with learning disabilities should be going for annual health checks too because they help to prevent problems.



I think that all doctors and nurses should have guidance on how to support people with learning disabilities. And people with learning disabilities should have hospital passports.



These have been developed by St George's Hospital and other hospitals. Hospital passports explain what kind of food and drink people like and can have their name and contact details. They should be everywhere.

I help to train doctors and nurses about learning disability because 75% of GPs don't know about learning disability. I tell them about things like communication and why it's important to have information in easy read.



I've signed

*Lloyd Page*

# 15

We all agree that everyone should be supported to have an independent life and be able to make their own decisions.

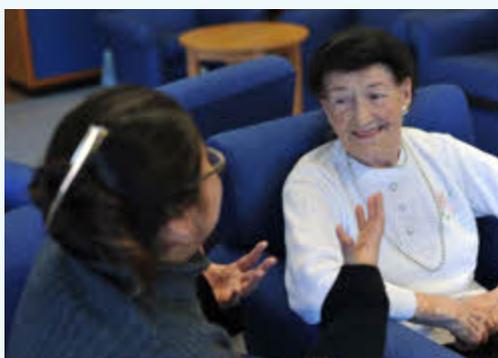


## Josie Scantlebury says



Independence means freedom and being able to go out by yourself or go shopping or choosing where you live and who you live with.

Sometimes it's off and on having a choice because people don't always treat us as they should.



Having a voice is really important because it lets us be heard and spreads awareness. People need to listen to us and not look down to us. It's about having choice, opportunity and respect. It's important that parents, family and friends understand about learning disability.



I think that lots of people with learning disabilities need more support, especially people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. We need the Government to listen more and stop the cuts.

We need to be accepted in the world – if everyone agrees to keep the 'contract for the future' and all these things change, then things will be good.



Now is the chance to make a move. People don't think we can do things but they need to get a grip. If anyone can do it we can do it.

I've signed

**Josie Scantlebury**

## Call to Action



Agreeing Together is a call to action. The agreements take forward what has already been achieved by campaigners over many years. Agreeing Together is for everyone to sign, individuals and organisations.

If we all agree we can make sure the future for people with learning disabilities is one that really means people are able to live the lives they want to lead.



Before the general election in 2010 all the main political parties talked about fairness. The new Government said it wanted fairness and dignity and respect for disabled people. But lots of people have had cuts to the support they receive. Many people do not have any support at all.



Because Valuing People Now was stopped people are worried that lots of the things it talked about, personalisation, health, housing, work, education and getting a life, relationships and having a family, advocacy and feeling safe would get forgotten. These important things are in Agreeing Together.



By talking about Agreeing Together and getting many people to sign, more people will understand learning disability. This is an opportunity to change communities so that they become more open and supportive, enabling people with learning disabilities to make their own contributions to society.



**We've signed,**

*The Learning Disability Coalition*

**LDC members are:**

Association for Real Change (ARC); BILD (British Institute of Learning Disabilities); The Down's Syndrome Association; Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities; The Hesley Group; Mencap; National Autistic Society; People First; Real Life Options; Sense; The National Forum for People with Learning Difficulties; National Family Carer Network; Turning Point; United Response, Voyage.

**Written by:**

Andrew Lee, Gavin Harding, Scott Watkin, Ben Turner, Pat Charlesworth, Ismail Kaji, Jackie Downer, Lloyd Page, Josie Scantlebury with Anthea Sully, Rachel Bowen and Andrew Holman.

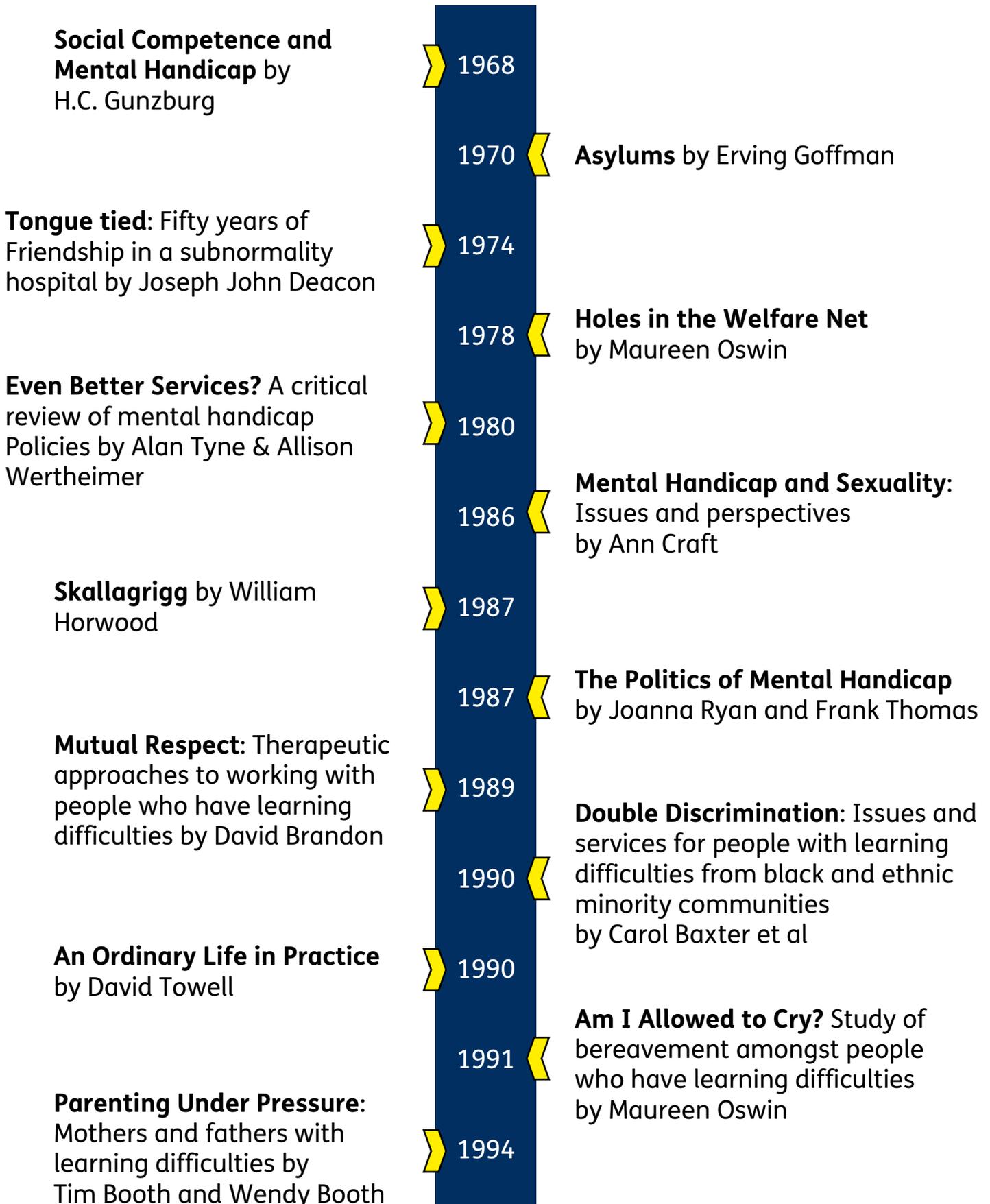
**With thanks:**

To the many individuals and groups who sent in their ideas for 'Agreeing Together' and also to

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## What to read

Very many people have helped the move to better community living over the last 40 years. Here are some of the works and people that have helped us along the way.



	1995	<b>I'm Not Complaining, But....</b> by Ken Simons
<b>Empowerment in Everyday Life</b> by Paul Ramcharan et al	1996	
	1996	<b>Learning to Listen</b> – Positive approaches and people with difficult behaviour by Herb Lovett
<b>Community Care and the Law</b> by Luke Clements	1996, 2000, 2004, 2007, 2011	
	1998	<b>Forgotten Lives:</b> Exploring the history of learning disability by Dorothy Atkinson et al
<b>Innovations in Advocacy and Empowerment for People with Intellectual Disabilities</b> by Linda Ward	1998	
	2001	<b>Valuing people:</b> A new strategy for learning disability for the 21st century by Department of Health
<b>Nothing About Us Without Us</b> by Andrew Holman et al	2001	
	2005	<b>Secret Loves, Hidden Lives?</b> Exploring issues for men and women with learning difficulties who are gay, lesbian or bisexual by David Abbott and Joyce Howarth
<b>Exploring Experiences of Advocacy by People with Learning Disabilities</b> by Duncan Mitchell et al	2006	
	2007	<b>Death by Indifference</b> by MENCAP
<b>Services for People with Learning Disabilities and Challenging Behaviour</b> by Jim Mansell	2007	
	2008	<b>Good Times, Bad Times:</b> Women with learning difficulties telling their stories by Dorothy Atkinson et al
<b>Estimating Future Need for Adult Social Care Services for People with Learning Disabilities</b> by Eric Emerson and Chris Hatton	2008	
	2009	<b>Valuing People Now:</b> a new three-year strategy for people with learning disabilities By Department of Health
<b>People with Intellectual Disabilities: Towards a good life?</b> by Kelley Johnson et al	2010	
	2011	<b>Scapegoat</b> by Kathryn Quarmby
<b>Social Care in Crisis the need for reform</b> by the Learning Disability Coalition	2012	
	2012	<b>Agreeing Together</b> - A contract for the future by the Learning Disability Coalition

## Agreeing together – a contract for the future

- 1** We all agree that everyone should be valued and treated equally and fairly.
- 2** We all agree that everyone should know about and understand learning disability.
- 3** We all agree that everyone should be safe and live free from fear and hate crime.
- 4** We all agree that everyone should be supported to speak for themselves or have someone who can speak for them.
- 5** We all agree that everyone should have information in a way that they can understand it.
- 6** We all agree that everyone should be part of communities that support them and to be able to help others as well.
- 7** We all agree that everyone should be able to get out and about cheaply and safely.
- 8** We all agree that everyone should be supported in their family life, relationships and friendships.
- 9** We all agree that everyone should have a holiday and a social life.
- 10** We all agree that everyone should have enough money to live a reasonable life.
- 11** We all agree that everyone should have something to do and the chance of a job.
- 12** We all agree that everyone should have a choice of where to live.
- 13** We all agree that everyone should have the support they need including staff who are trained to do their job properly.
- 14** We all agree that everyone should have good quality healthcare.
- 15** We all agree that everyone should be supported to have an independent life and be able to make their own decisions.



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Wednesday Comet Group, Tracy R, Tom B, Anthony W, Kelly F, BILD (British Institute of Learning Disabilities), David H, Mrs Taylor, Listening to People group, Salford, Lancashire, Michael, John, Bobby, Self Unlimited, Percy Road, Penywern Road, Brackenbury Road, Anleigh Place, Voyage, Aidan, Gary, Gary, Andreas, Rachel, Daniel, James, Justin, Keith, West People First, Dawn, Veronica, Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities, Samantha, Ricky, Kyle, Belinda, Sally, Ashley, Peter, Trish, Peter, Carole, Tamara, Eileen, Helen, Mary, Ruth W, Michael P, Sally G, Hackney People First, Andrew L, Gavin H, Mencap, National Autistic Society, Scott W, Ben T, Pat C, Ismail K, Jackie D, Lloyd P, Josie S, Anthea S, Rachel B, Andrew H, Sue B, Vanessa S, Xanthe B, Alexis C, Anthony H, Real Life Options, Coman K, Dan S, Dave R, Eve B, Jaime G, Jane L, Laura B, The National Forum for People with Learning Difficulties, Peter H, Rossanna T, Sarah R, Sense, Sarah C, Pasca L,