

Members making a difference
in a very different year



We exist to bring people together and solve problems

**Impact Report
2020-21**





As a membership organisation, Learning Disability England brings people and organisations together to create a movement for change where people with learning disabilities, families, friends and paid supporters come together on an equal basis.

In a year like no other, this report tells the stories of how members, the Rep Body, Trustees and the staff team worked together to listen and respond to the impact of Covid while keeping other priority work going.

The positive impact Learning Disability England has made over a very different year would not have been possible without its members. Thank you to everyone who shared something, worked with others or joined in to help others through Coronavirus



Jordan Smith,
Self Advocate Co Chair



Wendy Burt,
Family and Friends Co Chair



Scott Watkin, BEM,
Paid Supporter Co Chair



"As one of the 31 founding organisations of Learning Disability England (LDE), I've been proud to see the impact that they have made. Being part of LDE helps us to amplify our voice. It also provides opportunities for the people we support. Every voice makes a difference and we'd love to see more like-minded organisations and individuals involved"

Paid supporter organisational member



Watch what other members

have to say!



Some facts and figures:

136
organisations

759
Members at
March 2021

623
individuals

“Learning Disability England’s principle of 1 member 1 vote, regardless of size, means each member has equal influence” *Family member*

“We feel that we have a louder and stronger voice when we work with Learning Disability England and they keep us connected with what is happening” *Self advocacy group member*

“The chance to attend the APPG was a good opportunity to listen and give feedback to the key people who have been involved in Transforming Care” *Family member*

spoke up and fed back in

500+
organisations, groups and individual members

90+
meetings

to share ideas and shape policy



Evidence sent to 3 government consultations or parliamentary inquiries:

- The Life after Covid House of Lords inquiry
- The Social Care Taskforce Learning Disability and Autism advisory group
- The Disability Strategy



2 members with lived experience took part in 2 All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) evidence sessions.

“Very useful. Excellent to have legal perspective on current situation so can apply to work environment”
Paid supporter organisation member



2800+
people attended
12
webinars.



Topics including; Covid law and guidance and annual health checks

“Congrats on the breadth and depth of LDE's vision and the work it supports. I must recommend it to different folks every month!” *Partner organisation member*

Visits to the website grew

142%

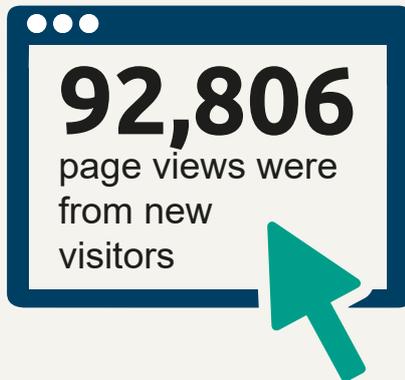
by Nov 2020



73% of

92,806

page views were from new visitors



160K+

new website visitors by March 2021



“The Coronavirus Hub was a lifeline for me. I knew where to find accessible information I could trust and understand. And activities to join in with to cope with lockdown on my own” *Person with learning disabilities*



42 weekly newsletters

+



4 special focused ones

→



2,000+ sent every week

→



Connecting and informing people

Responding to Covid

Members told us they wanted 3 things:

- Help to stay strong and resilient
- Speak up, campaign and share solutions
- Stay informed and in touch



Self-Advocacy and Family Peer Support Sessions helping people to stay informed and in touch

Learning Disability England held fortnightly zoom sessions for self-advocacy, family and community organisations from the start of the first lockdown.

Members generously shared ideas, learning, solutions and resources with each other.

Some members of the group talked about why these sessions were so important.

Thanks to the Department of Health and Social Care for part funding these sessions.



“I found it so useful to find out what people in other areas were doing to engage with people at this time. It prompted us to add activities for people to do at home”



“Self advocacy groups from right across England are talking and sharing ideas thanks to these sessions. This has helped us all become more resilient. It is a huge step forward for us all and is already leaving a long-lasting legacy”



Do Not Attempt Resuscitation: Our Right to Live

Members told us stories about where Do Not Attempt Resuscitation Notices (DNARs) were being used inappropriately.

So members came together to gather some rapid research.

We worked in partnership with the British Institute of Human Rights on the DNAR evidence inquiry they led. And developed a toolkit in partnership with Turning Point to help people challenge decisions.

Member's views fed into the government's review of DNAR and the Mental Capacity Act Forum led by Baroness Findlay.

Member spokespeople contributed to media pieces and wrote blogs on the impact of not working with people on treatment decisions, demanding change.

A follow up rapid research snapshot showed a large drop in the use of inappropriate DNARs.

“To be able to share experiences and in particular, learn from the way other people are doing things is amazing. It has already begun to inform our work and helps ensure we can share knowledge and resources in a supportive way”
Individual member

“The knowledge has helped us support families and clients during hospital admissions during the pandemic” *Paid supporter organisation member*



"We are pleased there is going to be an inquiry.

But we need action now to stop DNARs being used wrongly for good.

That's why Learning Disability England is working with the British Institute of Human Rights to do a human rights analysis of the experiences of people with a learning disability, their families and paid supporters."

Patricia Charlesworth, self advocate and LDE spokesperson

Making Progress on Members' Priorities

In spite of Covid, members continued to come together using technology and make progress on the 4 priorities they had set:

- Helping make self advocacy stronger
- Housing choices – making sure people know about different options
- Influencing funding decisions and understanding how it impacts people's lives
- Being part of the future social care thinking and design



Find out more about Learning Disability England's priorities and how they are set here

Big Housing Conversations

Members worked together with Housing LIN (the Housing Learning and Improvement Network). Findings from workshops with people who have ideas and experiences on housing choices were used as the basis for our joint report called 'Finding our own way home', which was also shared with policymakers.



Read the full report here



Read the easy read summary here



Watch Jodie talk about the difference finding the right home has made



“Self-advocates and support workers commonly said how exciting it was for self-advocacy groups to be connecting up and forming a national network to support each other and develop a national presence”

Independent academic evaluator

Sharing to be stronger together

Learning Disability England held 3 meetings where 130 people from self-advocacy groups shared projects and work that they were proud of.

A further 189 people watched the session recordings.

The Sharing Good Practice events contributed to groups sharing best practice and becoming more aware of what other groups were doing.

This has helped to strengthen self advocacy nationally.

With thanks to RTR for funding this work.

“I’m a parent. For the first time in our life, we don’t feel alone.

Today has been so powerful for us”

Family member

How Creating Connections helped tackle loneliness and isolation

People with learning disabilities, autism and sight loss often face barriers to being included in both the real and digital world.

Members told us the pandemic had made this worse, leading to feelings of isolation, anxiety, and mental health challenges.

Learning Disability England worked with SeeAbility on the Creating Connections project, helping people with learning disabilities to grow digital skills and confidence to help them keep connected.

We used our networks and experience in bringing people together to identify 24 locally-based peer-led groups and connect them to the project.

Our contribution made sure the project built on existing local knowledge and experience and met local need.

With thanks to the National Lottery and The Office for Civil Society for funding this work.

“Learning Disability England has a talent in bringing people together to share knowledge and cooperate in new ways. It is thanks to their skill in connecting people that the project has had such a profound impact on so many people’s lives in so many different regions” *Paid supporter organisational member*

“My phone buddies are always reassuring me, saying it will end and it won’t be like this forever. I would have liked to have gone on the news, because I would have said so many positive things” *Person with learning disabilities supported through the project.*



Annual Conference 2021



One year on:
Staying Strong,
Getting Stronger

The 2021 conference was held online because of Covid. It focused on members and partners sharing examples of how we as a community could stay strong through the rest of the pandemic. And continue to get stronger as the country comes out of it.



850+
places used



speakers
from **20**
organisations



6 formal
sessions



3 lunchtime
catch-ups



“What a fabulous day! Thank you for inviting me to join you and all the brilliant presenters to share my/our experience, it really was a privilege! You made great use of technology to bring everyone together whilst staying physically apart”
Speaker



“I had the best time ever – I learnt a lot of stuff thank you” *Member with learning disabilities*



“OMG! That was AMAZING. Like at a club with a gifted disco DJ, we were carried along to a banging crescendo. I am so fired up now. And excited. Lord knows how many hours you have all put in, but each one was worth two more – such a great experience, platform and community” *Family member*

Learning Disability England is strong because of its members.

Add your voice by joining the others working for change today!

Join us

