

An illustration of a woman with short brown hair in a bun, wearing glasses and a white top, sitting at a desk with a laptop. The background is a warm orange color. A framed picture of a woman is on the wall behind her.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

BEING SEEN, BEING HEARD

LDE

Learning Disability England

O N L I N E 2 0 2 6

KIND SPONSORS:



Being seen and heard in local and national decisions



Creating a Shared Vision for 10 Years Time

10:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Welcome from the Trustee Co Chairs Lisa Hopkins and Jodie Williams and creating a shared vision for 10 years' time.



There's More to Me Than A Learning Disability!

10:30 AM – 10:50 PM

East Sussex Learning Disability Partnership Board Involvement Matters Team

--Break--



National Policy and People with a Learning Disability

11:05 AM – 11:20 PM

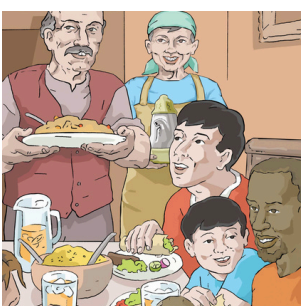
Tabitha Jay from the Department of Health and Social Care



How we are influencing policy

11.20 AM – 11:30 PM

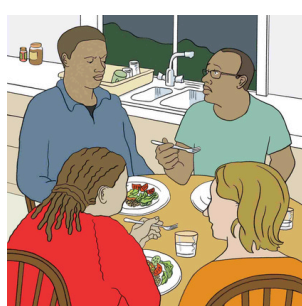
Anup Upadhyaya from My Life My Choice and Kate Lawson from Sense



Families Influencing Policy

11.30 PM – 11:40 PM

James Coney



Lunch and chat

12.30 PM – 1:30 PM

Join this optional, informal session to chat with other attendees and of course eat lunch!

MORNING AGENDA

AFTERNOON AGENDA

Being seen and heard in our communities



Welcome Back

2:00 PM – 2:10 PM

From the Rep Body Co-chairs Kate Chate and Jack Marshall



Being Heard now and in 10 years' time

2:10 PM – 2:25 PM

Learning Disability England



Creating Inclusive Employment Models

2:25 PM – 2:55 PM

BeMix and Advonet

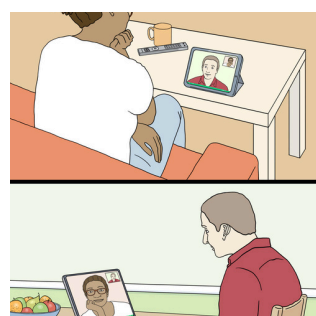
--Break--



Beautiful Lives: How We Got Learning Disabilities So Wrong

3.05PM – 3:30 PM

Stephen Unwin



The What To Do Platform

3.30 PM – 3.45 PM

Community Integrated Care



Conference Closing

3.45 PM – 4.00 PM

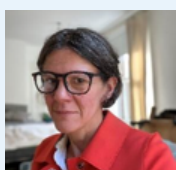
Co-chairs will wrap up the conference and speak about a shared vision for 10 years time

NATIONAL POLICY AND PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY
TABITHA JAY



Tabitha Jay will cover current national policy for people with a learning disability.

SPEAKER/S



Tabitha Jay is Director of Mental Health and Disabilities, Women's Health and Maternity in the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). Tabitha took up her current role in June 2025, leading strategic work across mental health, disabilities, women's health and maternity services at DHSC.

WORKING TOGETHER TO INFLUENCE POLICY

KATE LAWSON



Kate Lawson will speak about influencing and shaping national social care policy with people at Sense. This includes supporting disabled people and families to share their experiences directly with the Casey Commission and influence the future of social care.

SPEAKER/S



Kate Lawson has spent many years working in policy, research, and advocacy with different charities and government bodies. She is a strong advocate for co-production, believing that people affected by a policy should shape it.

WORKING TOGETHER TO INFLUENCE POLICY

ANUP UPADHYAYA



Anup Upadhyaya will share how she is part of work at My Life My Choice that makes sure people with a learning disability are heard in local and national decisions.

SPEAKER/S



Anup Upadhyaya is a campaign Champion for self-advocacy charity My Life My Choice. She has been a trustee, is an Oliver McGowan Tier Two trainer and has led on getting positive support stories for our new Save Our Support campaign. If she could pick any other job for herself it would be Queen of England, and her first decree would be to throw a yearly summer feast for the whole country.

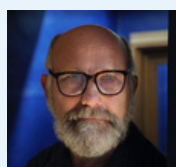
BEAUTIFUL LIVES: HOW WE GOT LEARNING DISABILITIES SO WRONG

STEPHEN UNWIN



All you see is not all there is about a person. We must look beyond what is happening and look at who the person is, and value them as fellow humans. This is what Stephen Unwin explores in his latest book. For his session he will introduce the book and talk about his inspiration and it's main points.

SPEAKER/S



Stephen is an experienced theatre director and playwright. He is the father of Joey and the author of BEAUTIFUL LIVES: HOW WE GOT LEARNING DISABILITIES SO WRONG.

THERE'S MORE TO ME THAN A LEARNING DISABILITY!

EAST SUSSEX LEARNING DISABILITY PARTNERSHIP BOARD INVOLVEMENT MATTERS TEAM



The Involvement Matters Team will talk about their campaign to raise awareness of the issues that affect people with a learning disability in their communities, including learning disability hate crime and discriminatory abuse, with the aim of challenging stereotypes and attitudes. This will involve sharing their video/s and speaking about their lived experience.

SPEAKER/S

The Involvement Matters Team are self-advocates with a learning disability and the reference group for East Sussex County Council. IMT work together with the East Sussex Learning Disability Partnership Board, playing an essential role in communicating the views of people with a learning disability .



Sonia is the joint chair of the East Sussex Learning Disability Partnership Board, a member of The Involvement Matters Team, a member of the National LeDeR Staying Alive and Well Group and a Special Olympic Gold medalist.



Dominic is an Adult Social Care trainer, an Arts Connect Ambassador and a member of The Involvement Matters Team (IMT).



Jeanette is a Project Manager at East Sussex County Council who is passionate about co-production, particularly in Commissioning and has been working with IMT for over 10 years.



Emma is Commissioning & Inclusion Officer at East Sussex County Council who cares deeply about the rights of people with a learning disability and she co-ordinates the work of the Involvement Matters Team.

CREATING INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT MODELS

BEMIX



Bemix will be sharing how they approach building a diverse and effective team in their organisation and how they are ensuring co-production is at their heart and the voice of people with learning disabilities is being heard in decision making.

SPEAKER/S

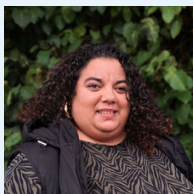
Natasha Corcoran works for Bemix and is a lived experience expert who is Autistic.

Sammy Lamb works for Bemix and is a lived experience expert with a Learning Disability.

ADVONET



Their session will focus on Inclusive Employment with discussion on building an inclusive society, accessible hiring practices and support for employers.



Courtney and Imogen both work for Asking You. Courtney is a Trainer and Imogen is the Learning Disability Projects Team Leader.

FAMILIES INFLUENCING POLICY

JAMES CONEY



Bemix will be sharing how they approach building a diverse and effective team in their organisation and how they are ensuring co-production is at their heart and the voice of people with learning disabilities is being heard in decision making.

SPEAKER/S



James Coney is a News Project Editor at the Sunday Times and dad of Charlie. For the last five years he has been in charge of investigations and campaigns for the Sunday Times. His youngest son Charlie was born in 2012 and at the age of two was diagnosed with global developmental delay.

THE WHAT TO DO PLATFORM COMMUNITY INTEGRATED CARE



This session will introduce What To Do, Community Integrated Care's free, co-produced accessible experiences platform that offers fully adaptable activities for people who draw on social care across the UK. It will explore how creative, active and inclusive sessions are reducing isolation, building confidence and skills and creating meaningful moments of joy for individuals and communities. Drawing on real impact and partnership-driven design, the session will highlight how What To Do is helping shape opportunities that truly reflect what matters most to the people we support.

SPEAKER/S

Sophie Mahar is Partnerships and Community Projects Delivery Manager at Community Integrated Care.