



**The Voice of Learning Disability
in the
London Borough of
Richmond upon Thames**

**Our plan for
April 2024 to March 2025**

What is in the plan?

Part 1: About us

page 3

Our organisation and our people

Part 2: What we know

The people of Richmond borough

page 6

Part 3: What we plan to do this year

The important things we want to do in 2024/2025

page 10

Part 4: Looking to the Future

2025/26 and Beyond

page 12

Extra Information:

The money we will have and how we will spend it

page 14

Part 1: About us

Our Organisation and our People

This Plan is about what we do now and what we plan to do in the year April 2024 to March 2025.

How Richmond Mencap started

Richmond Mencap started in 1959. Since then, we have worked with and for children, young people and adults with learning disabilities and their families in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. We became a registered charity in 1984 and became a company limited by guarantee in 2003. We are an independent organisation but are affiliated to the Royal Mencap Society (National Mencap), supporting their work and campaigns. We also get helpful information, advice, and support from them.

What we want

We want children, young people and adults with learning disabilities and their families to have the same opportunities as everyone. We want them to:

- Be able to choose how they live their lives
- Have the opportunity to do things that others do
- Be respected for who they are
- Have the support they need to do what they want to do

Why we do, what we do

- We want to make sure people with learning disabilities have the information they need to make choices about how they live their lives.
- We run groups and activities, so that children, young people, and adults with learning disabilities can spend time with their friends and make new friends too
- We also run groups and activities to give family carers a break from their caring role
- We help people with learning disabilities to speak for themselves and to tell other people what's important to them, because we know it's

important for people with learning disabilities to have their say and be listened to.

How we will work and what we will do

We will:

- **Support people with learning disabilities** to speak for themselves. Listen to children, young people and adults with learning disabilities and their family carer's and speak out on their behalf
- **Provide information and help** – and tell people about all the services and activities that they may like to know about or that they might need help from
- **Help to meet the needs and wishes** of children, young people and adults with learning disabilities and their family members by offering different activities and opportunities
- **Help all people in Richmond** borough to be **more aware of** and understand about learning disabilities
- **Help** children, young people, and adults with learning disabilities to have **greater choice** about how they live their lives and make sure they are treated fairly

Our people

Our Executive Management Committee

We currently have seven people on our Executive Management Committee and one who is observing (Lisa Train) with the view to being accepted as full members at the AGM (Annual General Meeting). Five of these are family Carers. The people on our committee are:

Teresa Jones:	The Chair (In charge of the Committee)
Richard Poxton:	The Vice Chair (Helps the Chair)

Tony Holdsworth:	The Treasurer (Looks after our money)
Philip Moshi	Trustee
Prisca Cox	Trustee
Denise Carr	Trustee
Lisa Train	Observing

The committee oversees the work of the charity and looks after the organisation. They help with the running of the charity doing things like managing our money, raising money to help us do all the things we do and attending meetings and events on behalf of Richmond Mencap.

Our Staff

We have 1 full-time staff member who is:

Laura Turner: Chief Executive Officer

We have 4 part-time staff members, these are:

Paula Russell: Projects Leader

Ally Cutting: Projects Officer

Owen Jones: Projects Leader

Victoria Armfield: Finance Officer

We also have several sessional staff who work on all our different activities and projects throughout the year.

Our Volunteers

We have about 20 volunteers who work with us in different ways, like volunteering at activities and fundraising fairs, helping in the office or on the different activities and projects we do. We have all sorts of volunteers, including students, parents and carers, people with learning disabilities and other people who are interested in what we do.

Part 2: What we know

The people of Richmond upon Thames borough

Our Members

Our members include children, young people and adults with learning disabilities, their family members and others who take an interest in what we do. At our main meeting every year, called our AGM, all our members can come and vote on important decisions we need to make as a charity.

Children and Young People

There are over 4,000 children and young people aged up to 25 years with SEND living in Richmond. About 1,600 of these have an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP), with the remainder receiving SEN Support at school; additional support in early years; or post-16 education provision at college or via a vocational pathway (e.g., supported apprenticeship). The number of children and young people with additional needs, and the severity of those needs, is increasing, resulting in longer waiting times for certain services (e.g., emotional wellbeing and mental health services). There are no specific database of children and young people with learning disabilities. In June 2021 OFSTED/CQC reported serious concerns in the effectiveness of identifying children and young people's special educational needs/disabilities; effectiveness in meeting the needs of such children & young people; and effectiveness in improving outcomes. A "Written Statement of Action" was required to be submitted to the inspectors jointly by the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group because of "significant areas of weakness in practice" concerning transition. The SEND Futures Plan was updated to reflect these actions and a new Workstream 6 was established to monitor implementation of the Written Statement of Action and provision for young people in transition. In addition, the Council secured a financial "safety valve" agreement in March 2021 with the Dept of Education for £20million additional funding by 2024/5, with the aim of reducing the SEND deficit to zero by 2025 (payment of £4million was agreed for 2021/22).

Implementation of the SEND Futures Plan is overseen by the SEND Partnership Board: Richmond Mencap is represented on the Board and

on Workstream 4 (Early Intervention and Transition) and Workstream 6 of the SEND Futures Plan.

Our membership includes over 150 families with children/young people with learning disabilities. The services we provide for children/young people and family carers include our half term and weekend activities for young people, and our carer's newsletter.

Adults

The Council's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Vulnerable Groups was published in November 2021. Five pages are devoted to Learning Disabilities covering identification & diagnosis, levels of need, transition, current services, and accommodation; and ten pages cover Autistic Spectrum Disorder. There is also a separate section on carers. Again, there are no specific databases of adults with LDs or Autism in Richmond: there are national estimates; a voluntary GP register; and the Council's data on adults receiving services.

Population estimates in the JSNA suggest 3,840 adults with LDs in Richmond by 2030; 3,980 by 2040 and 4,090 by 2050 – a gradual increase (extrapolating from 2008 data), due to an aging population and longer life expectancy. There is some evidence that there is a significantly lower prevalence of milder learning disabilities in Richmond or they are not registered as such with their GPs.

Over 480 people over the age of 18 receive services from the LD Team, including nearly 200 receiving Direct Payments. The majority live in residential care (a legacy of the closure of Normansfield Hospital in the 1990s) or supported living.

The Richmond Learning Disability Strategy (2023-2028) (the Big Plan) focuses on the rights of people with LDs and their families; supporting people with a LD to live as independently as possible; promoting choice and control; and ensuring that people with a LD are enabled to participate in the wider community. Implementation of the Plan is

monitored by the Learning Disability Partnership Board, on which Richmond Mencap and our WTG are represented. In addition, a major re-commissioning of residential/supported living services is planned, and transition services are to be strengthened, dovetailing into the work being done in children's services.

The services we provide for adults include self-advocacy groups, technology training groups and workshops, a job club, social groups and leisure opportunities, a drama group, summer activities and information, advice, and guidance.

Carers

It is difficult to know exactly how many family Carers of children and adults with learning disabilities there are in Richmond borough. Although, based on the numbers above, there are probably more than **2,000** children/young people and adults caring for/supporting a family member with a learning disability.

Part 3: What we plan to do this year

The important things we want to do in 2024/25

Our most important areas of work this year are:

1. Wellbeing

Increasing mental and physical wellbeing and resilience for our members through the support, information, advice, and activities we offer

2. Loneliness and isolation

Increasing opportunities for social interaction and the reduction of loneliness and isolation

3. Developing the organisation

Continuing to develop Richmond Mencap to ensure we are serving our members and using our resources in the best way

4. Family Carers

Ensuring we are supporting family carers with information, advice and guidance as well as through providing much needed respite through our activities

5. Outreach

Extending our reach to ensure we are engaging with, and helping those who need us and proactively trying to reach further potential beneficiaries

We will also:

- Carry on delivering all our activities and services, including employment, and make sure they are as effective as can be.
- Find out more from carers, parents, and family members about what we could offer that would help them in their caring role.
- Listen to people and improve the way we work by:
 - Holding events to ask people what they think about us.
 - Use online feedback forms and surveys to find out what people think
 - Look at everything we do very carefully to find out what we can do better.

How we will find out how well we did

We will ask people what they think about what we do. We will ask children, young people, and adults with learning disabilities what they think, and we will ask their family carers too. We will talk to our staff and volunteers too and see if they have ideas for how we can improve. We will ask them what they like best about Richmond Mencap, what things we could do better and what other activities they would like us to do.

We will tell our funders what we are doing and what people think about what we do. This helps our funders to see how we have spent their money and to see that we have used their money to help people with learning disabilities.

Part 4: Looking to the Future

2024/25 and Beyond

The trustees are responsible for looking at what we do and thinking about the future. Things are always changing and sometimes it gets difficult for small charities like us who need to find money to do our work. So far, we mostly get enough money coming in each year and we make sure we spend the money we get very carefully. The Trustees want to make sure that Richmond Mencap can keep doing our important work.

Some of the things that are changing now might have a big effect on services for people with learning disabilities. Such as:

- The Cost-of-Living crisis we are currently experiencing, which is impacting on costs across the board for individuals and organisations resulting in increases of up to 20% on standard day to day items (e.g., phone bills) and huge increases in energy costs. We also raised our staff pay rates to support them with this, so will expect to see higher staff costs going forwards.
- Nationally, there is a big funding problem in children's SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) services. Though some additional funding has been provided by the Government, this is not keeping pace with demand. Richmond's children's services, which are run by AfC (Achieving for Children) are facing cuts and we are worried about how this will affect children and their families.
- Both the NHS and local councils are continuing to experience severe pressure on their funding allocations in the face of rising costs and increasing demand (much of it pent-up during two years of the Coronavirus pandemic). This means that they are always looking for ways to save money and increase efficiency. We need to make sure that people with learning disabilities get the services they need from both Richmond Council and the Richmond part of the Southwest London NHS Clinical Commissioning Group – and that they, their carer's, and their representatives are listened to when plans are being made affecting them and their health, wellbeing, and quality of life.
- The new Integrated Care Systems (ICS) that replace the CCG structure and were set up in 2022. We need to ensure that the voices of people

with learning disabilities and their families are heard loud and clear in these new structures and that they work to reduce health inequalities and promote healthy and happy lives. Attending the Community Voices meeting is a key part of this.

The CEO and Trustees go to lots of different meetings and events. This helps us keep up to date with what’s happening for people with learning disabilities in the borough. The Executive committee meets regularly to talk and plan for the charity and they make sure they look closely at important things. They talk about important questions and topics like:

- Have we got good up to date policies which make sure we do things properly?
- Are we doing everything we can to reduce risks, keep people safe and report safeguarding concerns?
- Do we look after our money carefully to make sure we can pay for everything we do?
- Are there other people and organisations we could work with to offer better opportunities to people with learning disabilities?

We need to make sure that we are as ready and prepared as we can be for what might happen in the future. We do our best to know what is happening by reading, going to meetings, and talking to people so we can make good plans for the future.

Laura Turner

Chief Officer, March 2024

The money we expect to have from April 2024 to March 2025 and how we plan to spend it:

The money we expect to have	£
London Borough of Richmond	51,476
Grants from other Charities	78,660
Charges to Clients	7,000
Fund raising and donations	1,100
Interest	2,000

Total money received **140,236**

How we plan to spend it	£
Salaries and Staff Costs	107,752
National Insurance	2,987
Pensions	5,110
Activities/Transport	7,000
Room Hire	6,000
Eastbourne Expenses	1,575
Office Costs	45,131
Food/Training/Vol Expenses	3,190
Christmas/Summer Party	2,000
Total money spent	180,745