



The voice of learning disability

**Annual Report
2020-2021**

Richmond Mencap work with children, young people and adults with learning disabilities and social communication conditions including autism and Asperger's, as well as ADHD and other additional needs.

Our vision is clear:

- * **we want every child with a learning disability to have the best start in life, with the right family support to build resilience and capability in the early years.**
- * **at transition, we want real inclusion and opportunities for education, employment, care & support for our young people to live the lives they want to live and play a part in their local communities**
- * **and for adults, we want every person with a learning disability to have a fulfilling life that is determined by their wants and ambitions, not just their needs.**

In Richmond, we have over 450 adults with learning disabilities known to services and here are about 200 adults with autism known to services some of whom have a learning disability as well. In addition, there are over 1,200 children with a range of special educational needs and disabilities in the borough

A Learning Disability is a reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday activities – for example household tasks, socialising or managing money – which affects someone for their whole life. People with a learning disability tend to take longer to learn and may need support to develop new skills, understand complicated information and interact with other people.



Since March 2020, and the first Lockdown for Coronavirus, things have changed dramatically for Richmond Mencap and all the people we support.

All our face-to-face services came to an abrupt halt; all our members, supporters and funders were advised; and key staff started working from home delivering a telephone helpline, visiting service, regular Zoom activity calls, video befriending sessions and special monthly e-newsletters for children & young people, and for adults. This has continued ever since, with so many special Mencap events and fundraisers cancelled.

Eventually, some limited services were resumed for children and young people, but by 5 November 2020 England was in another national Lockdown for 4 weeks to 2 December. Through 2021, things have gradually improved and with the amazingly successful rollout of

the Covid-19 vaccinations we are forever hopeful that we can arrive at a new “normal” that will better support people with learning disabilities and their families in Richmond upon Thames.

Sadly though, our long-time trustee and former Chair – Richard Jeffries – died on 2 May 2021. See our tribute to Richard in this report – and watch this space for further information on an annual Award which we are planning in his honour.

Throughout all this, our staff have remained positive, flexible and creative; our Working Together Group has continued to meet and work on-line; and our funders have been very supportive as we have all adapted to circumstances. My thanks go to them all and to my fellow trustees for their unfailing support. Our goals remain the same:

- * to ensure that every child with a learning disability has the best start in life
- * at transition, to ensure real inclusion and opportunities
- * that every adult with a learning disability can enjoy a fulfilling life.

We are the voice of people with learning disabilities in the borough and we are ready for whatever 2022 brings.

Denise Carr,
Chair, Richmond Mencap

LAURA TURNER, CEO



The impact of a global pandemic on a local charity is not to be underestimated! Overnight our services completely changed and we quickly created brand new projects to attend to the needs of those who we work with.

Our staff worked tirelessly to provide as much online, telephone and in person provision that we could. Our main objectives were to keep everyone safe and bring some fun into their days. I can safely say we succeeded! We have demonstrated how incredibly creative, adaptable, and resilient we really are. I would like to say a huge thankyou to all our staff, volunteers and trustees, no matter how little a part they played. The smiles they brought to our members were even more important than ever this year, and they should be so proud of the difference they made.

Laura Turner

When Richard Jeffries retired as the Director of Social Services at Richmond Council in 1997 he was much in demand – but happily for us he lost no time in getting personally involved with 3 local groups supporting people with learning disabilities and their families in the borough: Richmond Mencap where he served as a trustee for over 22 years, including 13 years as our Chair; the Richmond Gateway Club which provides weekly activities for people with learning disabilities; and the Friends group at Normansfield Hospital in Teddington, which later under his leadership became The Normansfield & Richmond Foundation –

providing grants to individuals with learning disabilities in the borough and the groups which support.



Richard was a regular at all the Mencap fundraising events and celebrations like the Christmas Party and he ensured that our Mencap holiday bungalow in Eastbourne provided a good base for holidays – even enjoying going there himself to check up on things. But he also shepherded our charity through all the changes of the last two decades – knowing that though so much progress had been made, there was still so much more that needed to be done to protect the rights of people with learning disabilities and support them to take a real part in their local communities.

His vision of supporting people with learning disabilities and their families made him a doer, a campaigner and a role model for staff and volunteers. **A real gentleman!** with a wealth of knowledge and expertise which helped us all and a kind and caring nature which made everything seem possible. He leaves all 3 charities in safe

hands and his legacy will continue to benefit the people he cared about so passionately.

Richard did so much and is fondly remembered and very sadly missed by all who knew him. We will think of him as we continue this important work.

Faye Byrne of The Gateway Club remembers Richard as the Chair for over 20 years, first when the Club was based at Normansfield and now at Linden Hall, Hampton. He was always there on Tuesday evenings to open up and greet members on arrival. His broad knowledge of people, procedures, requirements and Club governance meant that meetings were always well prepared and ran smoothly. He was a great supporter of our key fundraiser – a Fun Run around Richmond Park – in all weathers, seeing people off and waiting for the very last person to return, and was delighted with its success. Richard had great compassion and care for members, volunteers and leaders, and mentored those who needed help. He was a huge presence in the life of Richmond Gateway is sorely missed – a truly Christian man.

Lydia Hansbury, of the Normansfield & Richmond Foundation remembers Richard as a trustee from 2001 to his death (and as Chair from 2003-2017). He was a very caring man with a real understanding of the many issues affecting people with learning disabilities and their families locally. He always gave very careful consideration to every grant application received by the Foundation and his views were highly respected by his fellow trustees. He did so much for the local community and is sadly missed by all who were privileged to have known such a gentle, caring and kind man.

With our second year of lockdowns and COVID, we have been working hard to make sure everyone has had a good time!

We have been keeping up our weekly befriending calls to all our older members from the Meeting Place and other activities. We chat to them on the phone and make sure they have everything they need, and we even send out a Funmail with puzzles and jokes to keep them entertained indoors.

Our Power Hour Zooms have also been a regular activity for many of our adult members: On Wednesdays we do drama games and play battleships; on Thursdays we ran Taekwondo lessons and meditation to exercise the mind and body; on Fridays we had chats and dancing; and every Sunday we have been running our Mencap Disco. The zooms have been so popular that we are still running them now.



During the holidays, we ran a nature-filled HOP Club every Thursday, Friday and sometimes even a Sunday! HOP Club was held at a private nature reserve called Pensford Field, where young adults got the chance to see friends and do some fun activities. We also arranged special guests to come in and meet our members of HOP Club. We had some local bee keepers, a forest expert and even an animal petting zoo come to visit us. We managed as well to do a riverside walk to the local pub and arrange a trip to Kew Gardens for everyone who came to HOP Club. Have a look at our pictures to see what a fun time we had.



For the last few months, we have been playing games and quizzes over the internet with children in Richmond Borough. Our younger members have had a chance to meet new faces, get to know our staff and have a laugh or two as they chat with their new friends.

We have also been lucky enough to use Pensford Field to run activities outdoors for our younger members during the weekends, holidays and half terms.

Some of our favourite things to do at Pensford Field included Hide & Seek, arts and crafts, and making giant bubbles.

Take a look at our photos to see what we made!



The Working Together Group, our self-advocacy group, has been very busy this year to make Richmond Borough a better place for people with a learning disability.

Our “**Treat Me Well**” campaign continues to be led by the Working Together Group and is a regular part of their work. **Treat Me Well (TMW) is Mencap’s campaign to work with the NHS to improve the way people with a learning disability are treated in hospital.** Since the **Richmond Health and Care Plan 2019-21**, we have been working to ‘**deliver the TMW campaign across Richmond health providers**’. This includes making training videos and delivering virtual workshops with West Middlesex Hospital to train their nurses and doctors on reasonable adjustments and how to help people with learning disabilities.



We’ve also welcomed lots of new members on board. We now have an **Online Working Together Group** and an **Offline Working Together Group** who help out in different ways. The Offline Working Together Group meet up every Tuesday now on Twickenham Green, and have helped train staff at Richmond College, write up questions for surveys and help the local council on how to make Richmond a better place.

Our Online Working Together Group meet up online as a group, and have helped build and deliver a massive housing project for the council to engage with residents in homes across Richmond about their thoughts on their homes and what they would like in the future. We are now working with the Council on finding different ways to help people with learning disabilities in Richmond.

We’ve been working very hard this year, but we know there’s still a lot more work to do to make Richmond the best place possible for people with a learning disability!

Summary of the Financial Results to 31st March 2021

	31/03/2021 £
Income	153,080
Expenditure	(150,402)
Surplus and increase in reserves	2,678
Funds carried forward (£130,000 property, £190,168 other assets of which £100,000 is highly restricted)	320,168

Thank you to our funders



Hampton Fund



The Barnes Fund
SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY OF BARNES

Normansfield & Richmond Foundation

Services we have offered during Coronavirus



We set up a telephone befriending scheme for anyone who wanted to have a chat and a laugh during the lockdown.



We offered a doorstep delivery service for anyone who needed a delivery or any other help that we could safely carry out.



We emailed children, young people, adults and families with some funmail – a regular roundup of fun straight from the Richmond Mencap Team.



“Power Hour” group activities at least three times per week each for children and young people and adults, via video call. We did drama, quizzes, dancing and all sorts of fun.

Services to change the world around us and raise awareness



Working Together Group – self-advocacy group for adults with learning disabilities



Better Together Group – forum for sharing information and gathering opinions from adults with learning disabilities



Something to Say – drama group focusing on issues for change and drama for increasing self confidence



Campaign work – Treat Me Well campaign and our safety campaign to help people feel safer in their communities

Services to increase connectivity and increase confidence

◆ Children and young people’s services:



Periodic Discos and Parties – fun opportunities to connect with peers and dance and play games improving social skills along the way



Weekend day trips – afternoon activities to exciting and new locations encouraging adventure and confidence in trying new things



Transition Social Group – a peer group for social skills learning and problem solving for teams



Adult’s services:



Meeting Place – weekly social group for isolated people with learning disabilities



Job Club – sixteen week course to help attendees work towards being job ready



Wii & Pizza Group – monthly social drop-in for young adults to play board and computer games to encourage teamwork



Summer Holiday Programme – three weeks of summer activities and trips for young adults to stay connected with their friends and explore their community



Residential Holidays – three yearly holidays for adults with learning disabilities always including one festival camping weekend



Regular Parties and Discos – Parties and events for our members including regular events in Barnes, and not forgetting our ever popular Christmas Party with a DJ and the Katie Rayment Dance Trophy – attended by nearly 150 people each year.

Services to increase awareness and support for family carers, professionals and the wider public

- ◆ **Information, advice and guidance** – support and advice over the phone/email for people needing help, support and signposting
- ◆ **Periodic carers workshops** – periodic information workshops on specific issues in consultation with parents
- ◆ **Monthly activity list for adults activities** – a monthly calendar bringing together activities for people to access from a range of providers
- ◆ **Subsidised holidays** – our Eastbourne bungalow is let for short term holidays to carers and families at a low rate
- ◆ **Newsletter** – quarterly newsletter with updates on our work, which includes a ‘Carers Corner’ providing the latest information from around the Borough



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