

Discovery Summary Report:

Housing, Health, Community and Employment



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In 2017, Discovery performed an internal quality review of the services that had recently been transferred from Somerset County Council. They rapidly responded by approaching and commissioning the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) to offer an independent, honest and transparent appraisal of the current support arrangements and to highlight any historical issues and challenges arising from the required transformation work that Discovery were carrying out.

NDTi met with people and had conversations to understand the views of the people being supported, their families, friends and staff. This document summarises our findings and recommendations.

Thank you to all the people who took time to meet with us and share their experiences and hopes for the future.



Staff Changes

People have concerns about changes to staffing. In particular:

- Changes in staff roles are making people feel unsettled, and sometimes affecting how well people feel
- Agency staff and new staff can't support people to do the same activities or go out as easily
- That long term relationships and trust will be lost between people and the staff that support them
- That staff have the right level of personal knowledge about the people they support

Recommendations:

- **Start doing personalised recruitment, involving the people supported and their families.**
- **Greater transparency about how Discovery manage this period of transition and staff turnover and what is needed for each individual and service for safe vs quality support.**
- **Make sure information in support plans, health files and communication passports is up to date and detailed enough to inform the reader without additional verbal information.**



Language

The language that we use is powerful and can empower or limit people. It can set the tone for how people are involved and supported and who makes decisions. Some staff describe the support they provide using out of date language and views that are not consistent with Discovery's ambition for people to live better lives as part of their communities.

Recommendations:

- **To help staff develop to ensure they have up to date knowledge about what personalisation means and can communicate with people respectfully.**



Paperwork

People benefit from records that promote communication and high-quality support. They inform decision making and help individuals to meet outcomes. There is some inconsistency with how accurate records are kept and read by staff which can impact on having a more personal understanding of the support people receive.

Recommendations:

- **Training and support for staff to keep clearer and more accurate records that can be easily accessed and understood by all staff.**
- **Help people to be more ambitious and explore their hopes and dreams, supported by good plans.**



Best Practice

Applying best practice means learning from the experience of others. Very few staff are aware of this and check their work against national standards. This is limiting Discovery's ability to continuously improve the support provided.

Recommendations:

- **Actively embed shared learning and up to date examples of best practice within staff development**
- **Ensure people supported and their families are included in the learning process to deepen our understanding as an organisation**



The Balance between Choice and Duty of Care

Most staff understand the Mental Capacity Act and how it is designed to protect and empower people to make their own decisions, but there are still some staff who do not fully understand how to support people to do this.

Recommendations:

- **Review the training and monitoring processes on the Mental Capacity Act to make sure staff are maximising people's involvement in decisions about their lives.**
- **Make sure systems, like quality monitoring, service review and staff development, help sure that balance between choice and duty of care is maintained.**



Health

We heard that some people get good support to stay healthy. We were pleased to hear that most people we met are supported to have an annual health check.

We found that there are some things Discovery can do better to help people to be well:

- Staff need to have an improved understanding of the Mental Capacity Act to support decisions about access to health services such as screening, ensuring they have information they can understand to be involved in those decisions.
- Support people to be involved in food planning, shopping and preparation.
- The majority of people supported that we talked to do little or no exercise. This needs to be addressed to help people to be and stay healthy and active.
- Sometimes health services for people with learning disabilities aren't good enough. It is important that staff understand how to help people complain when the support they get from health services isn't good enough.

Recommendations:

- **Make sure that staff know the process to follow when the people they support encounter poor health service: Challenge, Complain, Document and Change**
- **Raise awareness amongst our staff and the people they support about helping people make informed decisions and best interest decision making for screening.**
- **Support people to be more active and involved in buying and cooking their own food.**



Housing

Because of historic housing arrangements, many people have not chosen where they live or who they live with and are not aware of their rights. Some people were not listened to when they'd asked (with words or actions) for changes to their living arrangements. Lots of people's houses have offices in. We didn't expect to see this where people have their own tenancies and homes.

Recommendations:

- **Support people to have better choice and control over where they live, their independence and their access to money.**
- **Work with Somerset CC to help people move if they are not happy where they are living or who they are living with.**
- **Review the use of offices and office equipment in people's homes.**



Community Involvement

Being part of the society in which we live is what gives meaning to many people's lives. It brings a sense of belonging and enjoyment, it provides activity and occupation that, amongst other things, help to ensure our mental wellbeing and brings relationships and connections. Many people supported by Discovery are connected to their communities based on their disability or the people that support them, rather than their own interests, friendships and aspirations. Many were unaware that they could choose to spend their time differently.

Recommendations:

- **Include people's life wishes and aspirations into their support plans to help them explore full and happy lives within their communities.**
- **Share best practice examples so that staff are able confident in supporting people to be more connected with their communities.**
- **Help people understand their support hours and what choices they have about how they are used.**
- **Work with people to identify clear outcomes that they can be supported to work towards.**



Employment

Paid employment is the most socially valued activity in our society. Amongst other things it brings income (which in itself then improves life opportunities), relationships and self-esteem. Aspirations about employment were extremely low. There were fears that working would reduce the support time that people were entitled to and perhaps lose day activities and therefore become worse off. There is a widespread perception that work wouldn't allow people to be paid, feel safe, be happy or be supported.

Recommendations:

- **Support people to feel more confident in having work aspirations. Share examples and stories of the people who have found paid employment and the effect it has had on their lives.**

Resources

- NDTi Inclusion Web
<https://www.ndti.org.uk/resources/useful-tools-top/the-inclusion-web>
- NDTi Real Tenancy Test
https://www.ndti.org.uk/uploads/files/The_Real_Tenancy_Test,_NDTi_September_20101.pdf
- Scottish Human Rights – PANEL approach
<http://www.scottishhumanrights.com/rights-in-practice/human-rights-based-approach/>
- The Challenging Behaviour Foundation
<http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/information/policy-and-best-practice.html>
- Gov.uk reasonable adjustments
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reasonable-adjustments-for-people-with-learning-disabilities>
- Social care resources
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-healthcare-access-for-people-with-learning-disabilities>
- A picture of health
<http://www.apictureofhealth.southwest.nhs.uk/>
- Restraint reduction network and resources
<http://restraintreductionnetwork.org/benchmarking-tool/>



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