

A joint commissioning
strategy for
Learning Disability Services
in Buckinghamshire
2008 – 2011



Summary Version

Developed in partnership by:

Buckinghamshire Learning
Disability Partnership Board

Buckinghamshire Primary
Care Trust

Buckinghamshire County Council

Buckinghamshire 
Primary Care Trust



Summary Version of the joint
commissioning strategy for
Learning Disability Services in
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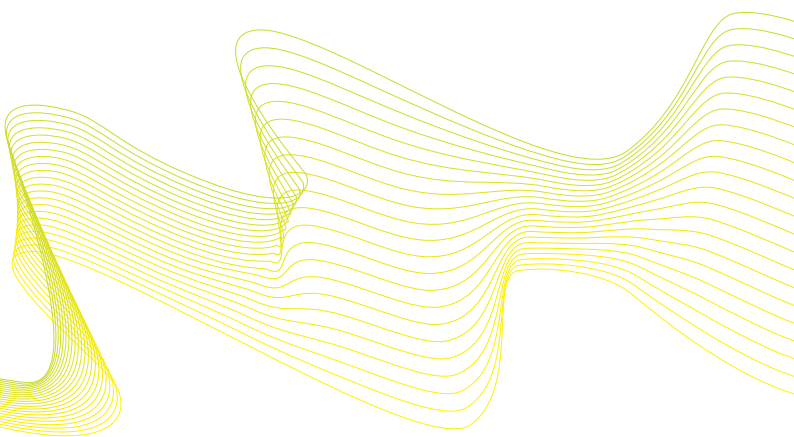
Introduction

This strategy identifies five major changes to local learning disability services that are to be implemented over the next three years. These shifts will help to deliver the requirements of the 2006 White Paper 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say' which set a new direction nationally for the entire health and social care system. In particular, they will promote good health, quality of life, full involvement in the community, choice and control, freedom from discrimination, economic well-being and personal dignity.



The picture in Buckinghamshire reflects the national position. We have progressed in making services more person-centred and developing alternatives to traditional forms of service provision, but this still affects a minority of people with a learning disability, rather than the majority. The big issues that this strategy still needs to address are:

- **Too many people are still placed in out of county residential care and specialist health placements with costs growing above the rate of inflation.**
- **Traditional buildings based day services with high unit costs and insufficient supply of support to enable people to gain paid employment.**
- **There is not a fit for purpose assessment and treatment pathway for people with challenging behaviours and mental health needs, with people continuing to be inpatients who are fit for discharge.**
- **Making a reality of self-directed care and personalisation in the context of significant in-house provision and block contracts.**
- **Ensuring equality in access to mainstream public services including health, housing and leisure services.**



Whilst we are not saying that the following services will meet everyone's needs we expect to see, through the delivery of this strategy, the following movements in the way we commission services.

- **Residential care to locally based support in people's own homes.**
- **Building based day services to a range of options including employment, self- directed care and newly modernised services for people with complex needs.**
- **Inpatient learning disability services to specialist community health services with a strong partnership with mental health services.**
- **Direct Payments for the few to individualised budgets for the most.**

Before looking in more detail at how these, and other shortcomings, are to be addressed, it is important to understand the current context. So, the first section of this summary describes briefly the current policy context, the financial and demographic background and the case for change. Anyone wishing for a deeper understanding, including the comprehensive mapping of services, should consult the full strategy on the Buckinghamshire County Council website www.buckscc.gov.uk - click on Social care, Adults, Commissioning strategies.

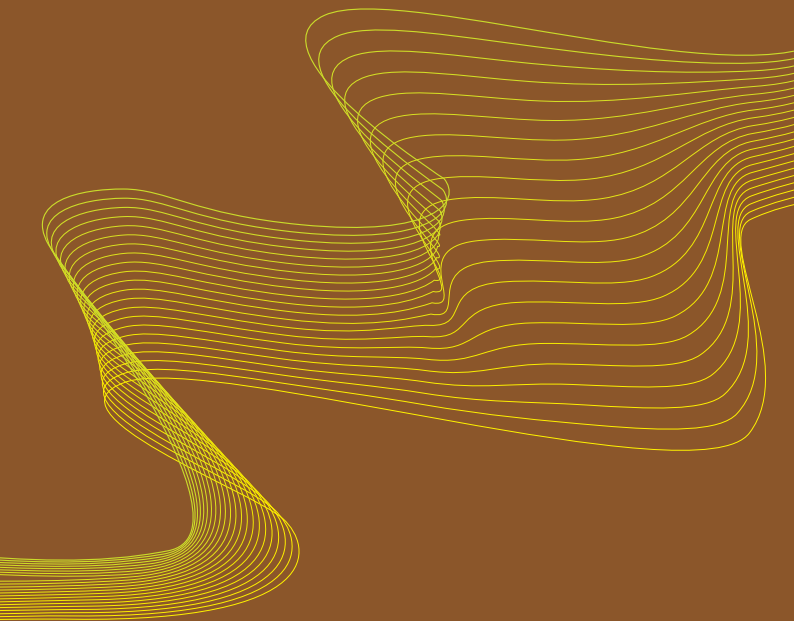
The context

Local and national policies

Demographic challenges

Financial challenges

The case for change



Local and national policies

Learning disability services in Buckinghamshire have changed and improved in recent years with an emphasis on building services around the needs of service users and carers and supporting individuals to live life to the full in the community with support. These developments have been given further impetus by the new strategic framework for Adult Social Care in the county, 'because Every Adult Matters' (bEAM). Under bEAM, services will be commissioned for the whole community that promote:

- **Timely access to services for those people who are eligible.**
- **The minimum intervention necessary.**
- **The safeguarding of vulnerable people.**
- **Independence and control.**

These changes reflect national policy. In December 2007, the Department of Health published a consultation document entitled 'Valuing People Now'. This built on the 'Valuing People' White Paper of 2001 and concluded that there has been good progress for people with learning disabilities in some areas but that many crucial challenges still have to be tackled. Among other things, it picked out four 'Big Priorities' for action which feature heavily in the present commissioning strategy. They are:

- **Personalisation.**
- **What people do during the day (and evenings and weekends).**
- **Better health.**
- **Improving people's housing situation.**

Demographic challenges

Both locally and nationally, the population of people with a learning disability is growing much faster than the general population.

Whereas a decade ago, one might have expected three people per thousand to have a learning disability, that figure has now increased to ten per thousand (Emerson and Hatton, 2005). This is because of:

- **The survival beyond the neonatal period of increasing numbers of children with severe and complex needs.**
- **Decreasing mortality rates in the older age range.**
- **A higher prevalence rate among some immigrant population groups, such as those originating in South Asia.**
- **A clearer understanding that many people with moderate disabilities are not known to services.**

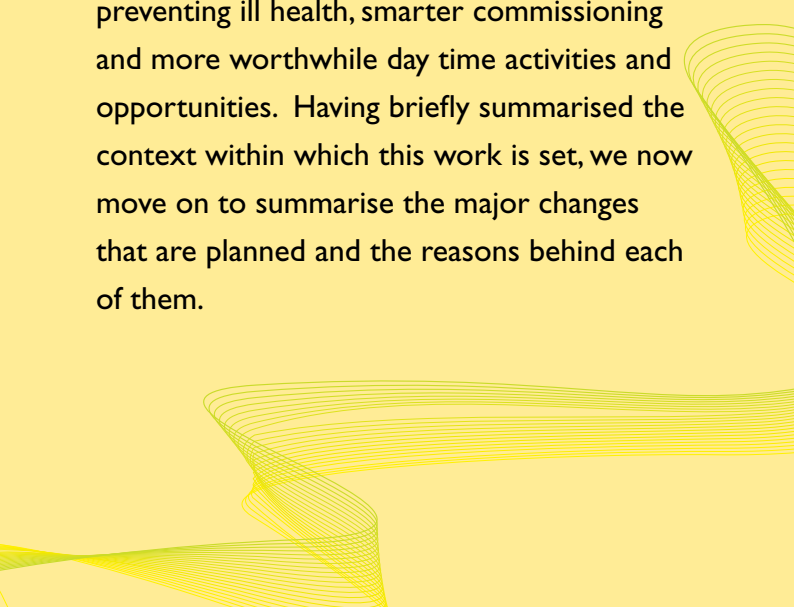
Financial challenges

This means that the people requiring services, as well as increasing in numbers, will be experiencing needs for services that are both highly specialised and designed to match individual needs. As a result, the increases in cost to Local Authorities of providing services for this care group were estimated at £800 million in the period 2005-2011.

In Buckinghamshire, the PCT is operating within tight financial controls to ensure our services are affordable within the national allocation. Adult Social Care, on the other hand, operates within the context of a medium term financial strategy that seeks to deliver a low council tax increase with high quality services. As a result, each of the service areas has been asked to modernise services to achieve efficiency savings and manage pressures within budget.

The case for change

These demographic and financial pressures strengthen the case for the major strategic changes that are outlined in this commissioning strategy for people with learning disabilities. There needs to be a shift away from residential care to supported living, greater use of direct payments, far fewer out of county placements, a greater emphasis on preventing ill health, smarter commissioning and more worthwhile day time activities and opportunities. Having briefly summarised the context within which this work is set, we now move on to summarise the major changes that are planned and the reasons behind each of them.



Five Major Strategic
Changes

Choice and Control

**Improved Housing and
Support**

Better Health

Meaningful Days

Making it Happen



Choice and Control

Direct Payments are supported by the Council as a way to ensure that people with a learning disability are able to gain access to high quality cost effective services that are flexible and responsive to their needs. They are an essential part of the adult social services vision that wants to give people with a learning disability more choice and control over their own lives. At present, however, Direct Payments only account for about 1% of adult social care learning disability expenditure.

Increasing the number of people in receipt of Direct Payments is a key objective of this strategy and so Buckinghamshire is now going to establish individualised budgets for people with a learning disability in a phased way over the duration of the strategy. This will start in 2008/09 with a pilot for young people with a learning disability in transition and people with a physical or sensory disability. Further, clear targets will be set by 2009/10 for the total numbers of people receiving an individualised budget.

Improved Housing and Support

Health and Social Care currently invest over 60% of their total budgets for learning disability in accommodation and support. The current model of care is particularly expensive because there is an over-reliance on out of county placements (which typically cost 25% more than their in county equivalents) and because residential care in Buckinghamshire tends to be expensive compared to other, similar authorities.

This strategy therefore proposes a continued shift away from residential care in favour of supported living units so that, by 2011, 70% of all social care accommodation and support will be delivered through a supported living model. This will help to deliver the White Paper outcomes (described above) of greater personalisation and full involvement in the community. It also complies with the national target to close all campuses by 2010.

Better Health

People with a learning disability have greater health needs than the rest of the population and often find it hardest to access the services that they need. Their life expectancy is far shorter than average, they experience higher rates of some of the more common chronic conditions, they have poorer mental health, they are less likely to receive blood pressure checks and they have very low cervical and breast cancer screening rates. In Buckinghamshire, these health needs will be addressed in several ways, for example:

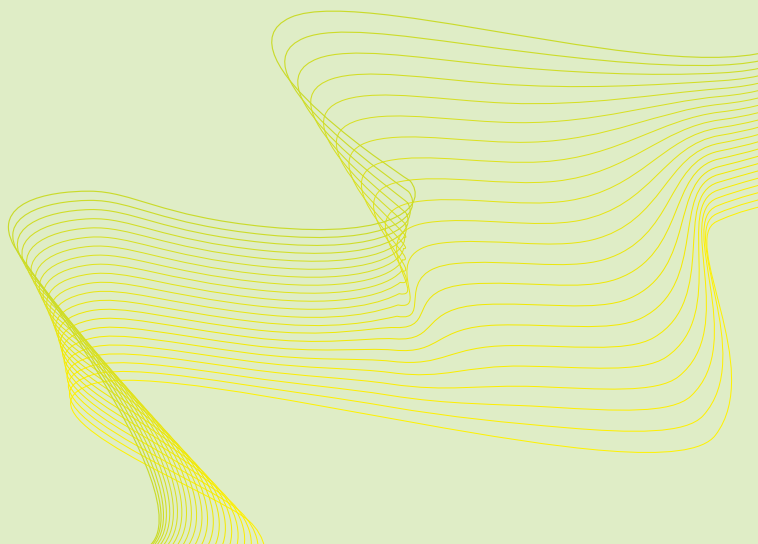
- All people on the GP practice based learning disability registers will be receiving annual health checks by the end of this strategy.
- All NHS providers will be required (through their Service Level Agreements) to provide their full range of services to people with learning disabilities and to ensure that they are not spending longer in hospital for assessment and treatment than is necessary.
- Local services, including specialist services, will be developed so that the number of out of area treatments is reduced by half over the course of this strategy, compared to the March 2007 baseline.

Meaningful Days

The Local Authority largely provides Day Service Provision for people with learning disabilities in Buckinghamshire. There are services on 17 sites across the county. Many of the day services are housed in large institutional buildings that are no longer fit for purpose. The model of service promotes segregation and is not flexible in terms of operating hours, location and transport arrangements, or being able to provide personalised services based on individual choice. In short, it is time to move away from the traditional approach.

This strategy prioritises the transformation of existing in-house and externally purchased day services to support people to live the lives that they want as equal citizens in their community. This will be a major programme of work and a key priority of the whole strategy. The shift will require less segregation and more flexibility.

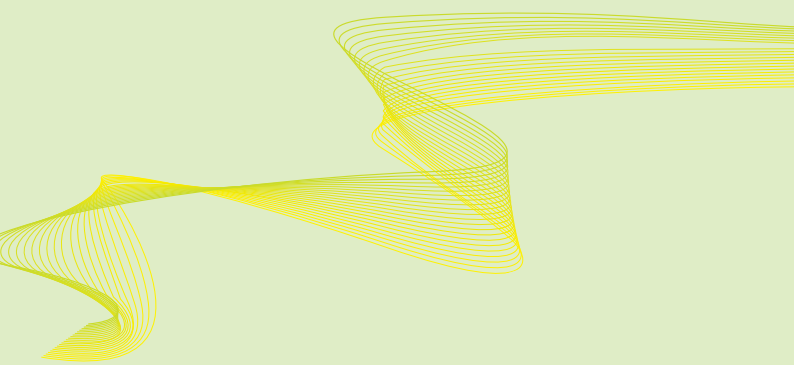
It must also ensure that people have access to a range of opportunities (including job opportunities) provided throughout the week (not just during office hours). Finally, these changes must be balanced against the respite needs of informal carers and the wider family.



Making it Happen

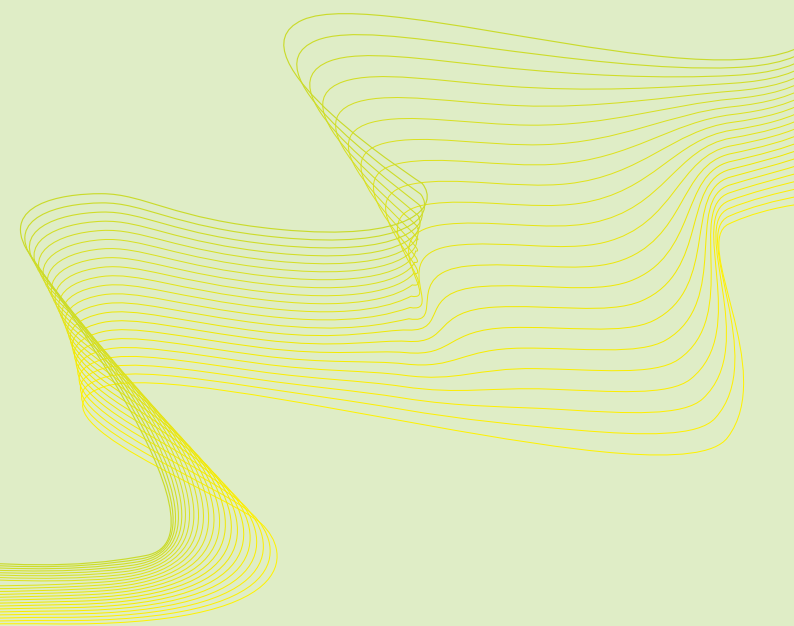
The strategic changes outlined above require local and national leadership and support, better commissioning and effective mechanisms to evaluate progress. The fifth major change within this strategy is therefore to put in place the structures and processes that are necessary to deliver the desired outcomes. Locally, leadership will come from the Learning Disability Partnership Board and this strategy will form the core of its work plan. The Board will need to develop tighter working practices and will be accountable to the Local Strategic Partnership through the Adult Commissioning Board.

With respect to improved commissioning, Buckinghamshire has now in place integrated commissioning models across the major joint service areas. These will draw upon the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment that is currently being undertaken and will embed good practice (in line with the World Class Commissioning model) throughout the commissioning cycle. This includes effective and timely monitoring of progress, drawing heavily on the experiences of those who use our services and their carers.



Conclusions

Progress has been made in improving services for people with learning disabilities but, nationally and locally, it has been too slow. The demographic and financial challenges, and the importance of the task, require greater urgency. This commissioning strategy will be judged by its success in moving away from traditional, segregationist models of care and support, to deliver a more proactive, safe service built around opportunities and the needs and wants of each individual.



For more information phone 0845 3708090

and ask for:

Adult Social Care

Commissioning & Service Improvement

Strategic Commissioning Team

or email adultcare@buckscc.gov.uk



You can also access the full version of the Commissioning Strategies by visiting our website at www.buckscc.gov.uk - click on Social care, Adults, Commissioning strategies.