



**Evaluation of the Lewisham People's Parliament on
'My Activities'**

October 26th 2018



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Background



This report gives feedback on the Lewisham People's Parliament on 'My Activities' on October 26th 2018. It gives information on who came, what was talked about in the workshops, what changes people would like to see and how people evaluated the parliament.

The activities that people with learning disability do is a common subject raised at self-advocacy meetings. We wanted to find out what people with learning disability think about the activities they do now and what they might like to do in the future.

Aisha chairs the parliament

The parliament was chaired by Aisha, one of our six elected people's parliament reps.

To set the scene for the day we invited guest speakers who would help people to 'think big' about what they could do.

Our first guest was the My Lewisham group who are supported by Nexus. They gave a great presentation about all of the activities they do including going to festivals and evenings out at nightclubs. The group members are also journalists and they write reviews and reports about the activities they do. My Lewisham really helped people with learning disability think about some of the exciting things they could do.

Our second guest was Joe from Go Anywhere, Do Anything in Lambeth. They are a group that matches people with learning

disabilities with volunteers who have the same interests. They support lots of people to do a whole range of different activities both during the day and in the evening. Joe told everyone how the project works and the positive effect it has had on people's lives and their self-confidence.

The final guest speakers were from Magpie Dance who are based in Bromley. They have been working for many years to support people with learning disability to be included in the arts and culture. They run lots of dance classes that help people to develop their skills, confidence and ability to express themselves.

All of the guest speakers helped to get people ready to think about what activities they do and what new things they would like to try.



People listening to the guest speakers at the parliament

How many people came to the parliament?

Learning disabled people were asked to sign in and register for the parliament as they arrived. People were asked their age and gender when they signed in.

People were also given a coloured name badge so they would know which workshop to go to.

The attendance at this parliament was slightly below our average number of 56. As usual there were fewer women than men and most people were in the 25 – 64 age range.





Numbers of people at the parliament

Ages	Numbers at parliament
Age 18 -24	4
Age 25 - 64	44
Age 65+	2
Total	50
Gender	Numbers at parliament
Female	21
Male	29
Total	50

What did people think about the parliament?

At the end of the workshops, people with a learning disability were asked to say what they thought of the parliament using smiley face stickers. People were asked to choose a sticker and place it on a flip chart.

39 stickers were put on the flip chart. This means that 78% of people with a learning disability put up a sticker. 37 people said the parliament was good (95%) and 2 people said the parliament was bad (5%).

Stickers	Number of stickers
Yellow smiley face (good)  =	37
Red sad face (bad)  =	2
Total of all stickers  +  =	39

The workshops and what people said

There were four workshops at the ‘My Activities’ parliament. Each workshop covered the same questions but they were facilitated in different ways. For the first time at a people’s parliament we had a dance based workshop, run by Magpie Dance. This was the latest in our attempts to run workshops that are more accessible to people with higher support needs.

The dance based workshop was very popular and noisy! It was a good way to engage people and would be something that we would consider doing again.

The questions asked in the workshops were:

- **What activities do you do now that you like?**
- **What activities would you like to do that you don’t do now?**
- **What gets in the way of you doing the activities that you want to?**

Below is a summary of all the answers and comments that were given by people with learning disability in the workshops. Because people gave such a wide variety of answers they are grouped together under 7 different headings to save space.

What activities do you do now that you like?

Arts

- Singing x 3, Heart N Soul x 2, Allsorts at the Albany (Heart N Soul) Drama, Music, Dancing x 2, Drumming x 2, Theatre, Playing guitar, Music, Shows, Films

Sports and fitness

- Sauna, Gym x 2, Aerobics, Yoga x 2, Swimming x 2, Zumba, Taekwondo, Archery, Jogging, Trampoline, Diving, Horse riding, foot massage

Social activities

- Hanging out with friends, Mencap gateway club x 2, Going for coffee, Bowling x 2, Going out clubbing, Going to the pub, Men's group, Disco, Dancing, have a drink with friends, helping at Mencap clubs, eating out, Monday club (Mencap).

Outdoor activities

- Gardening, Going to the park x 2, Nature/parks

Trips and travel

- Blackpool, Going to a different country, Going on holiday, Airport, Seaside, Trains, Bus ride, Go in the car, Holidays

Technology & Leisure

- Watching TV x 2, iPad, Computer Games, Cinema, Library, Shopping x 5

Other

- Volunteering, Crosswords, Aromatherapy, Colouring, Going to see colleagues/going to work

It comes as no surprise that people with learning disability enjoy a similar range of leisure activities as non-disabled people. Popular themes are artistic interests, sports & fitness, socialising and travel amongst other things. In the next part of the workshop we asked people what activities they would like to do in the future. We have grouped the answers into the same 7 headings. Some people drew their answers instead of writing them or saying them out loud.

What activities would you like to do that you don't do now?

Arts

- Radio presenter, be on film, stained glass window, crafts, Dance x 5, Music x 3, Drumming x 2, Theatre (Lion King),

Sports and fitness

- Swimming x 2, bungee jumping, skiing, archery/crossbow x 2, darts x 2, exercising, rock climbing, diving, Tennis, Football, Basketball x 2, Badminton, Cricket, Horse riding, hockey

Social activities

- Bowling, Dancing at a club in London, Make new friends, Go to other places, Stay out late at pub, Cinema x 2

Outdoor activities

- Camping

Trips and travel

- Going on holiday – I haven't had one for 4 years, Holidays abroad, travel the world, new places, Grand Canyon, fly a plane, drive a school bus, steam train, buses, going on a plane again, more adventure activities, Go to the seaside with xxxxx, Go on holiday to Brazil, Go on a cruise around the world, Seaside

Technology & Leisure

- Computers, Go on a Lewisham Speaking Up outing like Joe said (volunteer matching project), Colouring x 2, Drawing

Other

- Learn to communicate better, Go to Brockley Centre (adult education,

It was interesting to note that people with learning disability want to get involved in more activities in the four main areas of artistic interests, sports & fitness, socialising and travel. Again this is probably very similar to the areas in which non-disabled people would say they want to do more activities.

Travel was noticeable as being something that people aspired to, with several people having dreams of travelling to various places around the world. It was concerning to note that one person who lives in supported living said they hadn't been on holiday for 4 years. We will be following this up as an individual case with the person's support provider.

In the final part of the workshop we asked people what got in the way of them doing more activities. We asked what stops you doing

the things you dream about. The barriers that people spoke about are listed below.

Support needs

- Need to go with someone
- Sometimes you don't want to do things on your own
- Need staff support
- Need extra support
- Need more support staff
- Support to travel
- Some people would use a buddy/volunteer scheme if there was one in Lewisham

Money

- No money to go on holiday
- No money for staff to go on holiday with me
- Council cutting support and money
- Not enough money
- Need money to do things

Information

- It is hard to find places to do some things – like archery
- More information about what is on offer

Safety

- My mum gets worried when I go out
- Fear and safety
- Getting home safely

Other

- Not having transport
- The weather

People with a learning disability were quite clear about what stops them doing more of the activities that they would like to do. The two biggest issues were not enough staff support and a lack of money.

This is not surprising given the levels of austerity that social care has undergone in recent years. People with learning disability are financially squeezed in several ways. Support hours for people with milder learning disabilities have been cut leading to a focus on key support tasks like paying bills rather than 'fun' activities. In addition many of those who do get support now have to pay towards the cost, which some people see as a penalty for being disabled. To make matters worse, changes to the benefits system have seen some people with learning disabilities being moved off disability benefits altogether.

Whilst some people are doing some exciting activities, many people would like to do more. What we need to bear in mind is that engaging in enjoyable activities of our own choosing is good for our overall wellbeing. When we speak with our friends, family and colleagues how many of us talk about our interests, hobbies, holidays and days out. People with learning disability have the same right to meaningful activities as everyone else. We must make sure that the ability of people with learning disability to take part in activities is not reduced so far that people miss out on the wellbeing benefits.

What will happen next?

The Lewisham People's parliament reps will be asking to meet with people to tell them about what was said at the 'My Activities' parliament.

We will also be asking to meet with service providers and commissioners in Lewisham to ask them what they plan to do about the things raised in this report.

We want to let everyone know that people with learning disability have a right to be listened to and a right to a good life.

If you would like to discuss this report or have any questions please contact us: martin.stitchman@lsup.org.uk 020 8692 1862



Marsh (Martin) Stitchman, November 2018

Lewisham Speaking Up self-advocacy coordinator