

# Being a Member of Inclusion North



# INTRODUCTION



Inclusion North exists to make inclusion a reality for all people with a learning disability or autism and their families. Inclusion means everyone living good lives as valued members of society.

We work to change society so that everybody can have a good life. We raise awareness of the barriers to inclusion for people with a learning disability or autism and their families, and work to remove them.

One part of our work is our membership programme for Local Authorities. This booklet explains Inclusion North membership and how to make the most of membership benefits.

Membership is open to local authorities in the North East, Yorkshire and Humber.

If local authorities outside this area are interested in becoming members of Inclusion North, they should contact us for more information. In some areas Clinical Commissioning Groups have also become our members.

**Please contact us for more information.**

# WHAT IS MEMBERSHIP?



We work with local areas in the North East, Yorkshire and Humber. Local authority areas join Inclusion North as members through a yearly subscription.

We work with members on local projects to increase inclusion for people with a learning disability or autism and their families. Through our membership scheme we are able to support regional work around bigger issues that affect everyone.



Members buy an annual subscription. The benefits of membership are

- Members get **Vouchers** to use to design work in their area that tackle things that are a local priority
- Members get access to **Our Offer** - a series of small projects looking at the important issues facing people with a learning disability or autism and their families today.



Being a member of Inclusion North brings wider benefits such as

- Being part of a bigger inclusion movement in the region – we are stronger together
- We help to connect people across the region, so people can learn from what others are doing
- We link members to good practice locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
- We produce updates, reports and resources that are free to members
- Support to think and work in a rights-focused way
- We connect members to people with a learning disability or autism and families in their area and help develop good partnership working
- We share the outcomes of members' work to raise their profile
- We strengthen local capacity by working with people-led organisations to help them stay strong

## OUR OFFER EXPLAINED

Our 3-year offer to members is organised under 4 themes

- 1 Creating inclusive communities
- 2 Supporting people and families to stay strong and speak up
- 3 Connecting people together
- 4 Keeping people informed



These themes come from our work with people with a learning disability or autism, families, carers, the organisations that support them and communities. We listen to what people say are the most important issues facing them today. We then design a series of small projects that aim to address some of these issues.

Every April we will talk to our members about Our Offer and the bits that are most relevant to local people in their area.

We update members half way through the year so they can stay in touch with what has been happening.

## CREATING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES



- **Talking Travel** – a key part of inclusion is being safe in the community and being able to join in with the things that are going on. Travel can be a major barrier for people with a learning disability or autism.

To help address this, we facilitate a Talking Travel project in each region. This brings people with a learning disability or autism together to talk about the issues. We then connect them to travel companies and others who can help find the solutions together.

## SUPPORTING PEOPLE AND FAMILIES TO STAY STRONG AND SPEAK UP



- **Families Listening Project** - Inclusion North recognises and values the role families play in the lives of people with a learning disability or autism.

We were told by family carers that they do not feel listened to, their support networks are reducing, and they are becoming more isolated.

The aim of the Families Listening Project is to listen to families and capture their stories. We will then use them to bring about greater understanding from local areas and to influence change, so that families feel listened to and to see the value in their experience of being heard.

- **Supporting Tomorrow's Leaders Graduates to develop** – Tomorrow's Leaders is a leadership development programme for people with a learning disability or autism.

There are around 50 people who have completed the course with us. To support them to continue to learn and develop as leaders, we run four sessions for Tomorrow's Leaders graduates each year.

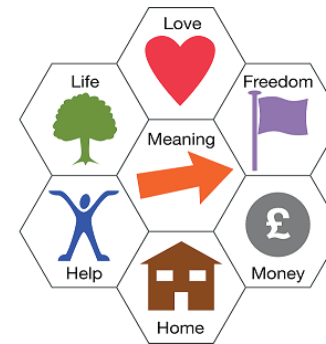
The sessions are co-designed by the graduates based on what their priorities are. We try to connect graduates into work that is happening in their area so that they can influence at a local level.

- **Women's Health** – we know from the LeDeR Annual Report that people with a learning disability can die far younger than other people.

Men with a learning disability can die 26 years earlier and women can die 29 years earlier. We know that usually women live longer than men. This is not the case if you have a learning disability.

In response to this, we are developing work to promote the health of women with a learning disability or autism.

## CONNECTING PEOPLE TOGETHER



- **Citizen Network** - this is a global non-profit co-operative movement, formed to create a world where everyone matters – where everyone can be an equal citizen.

Inclusion North are a key partner and we employ the England Co-ordinator.

Our involvement enables us to learn from partners all over the world about the ways in which people are making inclusion a reality. We use these connections to bring creative thinking to our work with members.

## KEEPING PEOPLE INFORMED

- **Bulletin** – we publish an easy read bulletin every fortnight that contains important information for everyone to stay up to date with what is happening locally, regionally and nationally
- **Policy update** – we create a policy update every month for health, social care and education colleagues to support them to stay up to date with changes in policy
- **Reports and resources** – we write up key pieces of work to share the learning with partners and share this through social media

## MAKING THE MOST OF MEMBERSHIP VOUCHERS



Each member area gets given a number of vouchers to use to design work in their area that tackles things that are a local priority. Each voucher is worth two days of our time, and we work with members to decide how best to use their vouchers each year.

Here are some examples of how areas have used their vouchers in the past:

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

We have worked with Family Carers to help them in ‘planning for the future’ – for what their son or daughter’s life will be like when they are no longer around.

For many this is one of the most difficult things to think about. We have worked with families as a group to develop their strength and resilience.

We have used resources such as the Together Matters ‘Thinking Ahead’ guides, we have invited in key professionals, offered ideas and information and supported the development of emergency plans.

## PARTNERSHIP WORKING

We often get asked to facilitate partnership meetings to support colleagues from diverse organisations to work together effectively on a shared goal.

We develop team work, overcome any barriers that exist, unpick some of the language that not everyone understands, and help to find solutions if things get stuck.

## CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

A frequent use of vouchers draws on our knowledge, expertise, networks and relationships to carry out consultation and engagement exercises with children, young people, adults and family carers on behalf of members.

This has included consultation with children and young people about future services, gathering feedback on a vision and mission statement from a user group and running engagement sessions on future service strategies with people with a learning disability or autism.

## TESTING IDEAS

We have supported members to test out a range of new ideas or pilot projects. We can run engagement sessions to capture local people's views and ideas, run co-production sessions to build solutions and then develop project plans to help to implement new ways of working.

We support people with a learning disability or autism, families and organisations to work together to make new projects a success.

We support partnership working across different organisations.

## DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS



We have used our knowledge of supporting people with a learning disability or autism to become leaders to run leadership courses for member areas.

This can be used to support the development of leaders locally, focusing on the needs of the local area.

We explore the history of people with a learning disability or autism, considering what it takes to be a leader, hearing from those in leadership positions locally, exploring policy and politics and using this to enable each learner to develop a project for change.

## SUPPORTING PARTNERSHIP BOARDS

Learning Disability and/or Autism Partnership Boards offer people and families the opportunity to influence decisions, question actions and get involved in developing solutions for the future.

We have worked with a number of Partnership Boards to help them in a range of ways including to review their practice, to evaluate how effective they are being, to develop their annual work plans, to train self advocates to contribute effectively to the Board or to take on the role of Co-Chair.

## RESEARCH AND MAPPING

We undertake research and mapping for our members to provide them with the information they need to shape their thinking and make decisions.

This could be for example mapping what support and services exist in a particular area, or researching what type of accommodation people live in.

We usually start at a very local level, but then have the advantage of being able to draw on our regional and national connections to give some context or comparison to what we find out.

## WORKING WITH PRISONS

We worked with one member to establish and facilitate an Independent Network Group – this was a group made up of people who support people with a learning disability in the prison system. The Network was the first of its kind in the area and brought together officers from across four prisons as well as people providing community support.

The work looked at how well agencies were working together, and the journey people took through the criminal justice system, the support available and what could be improved.

## HELPING GET MORE PEOPLE INTO EMPLOYMENT

We can support members to identify and overcome the barriers that people with a learning disability or autism face when trying to find a job. Through running the Expert Hub, we have a wealth of experience of employing people with a learning disability or autism and the challenges they face in making this work for them.

We use our knowledge around accessible recruitment, reasonable adjustments, permitted earnings and other work place issues to make it easier for people to get and keep a job.

## FACILITATING CO PRODUCTION

We have worked with many members to facilitate co-production sessions.

Co-production recognises everyone's skills and assets and brings everyone together on an equal basis to find solutions to problems or new ways of working.

Everyone is valued equally whether they bring lived experience or professional experience to the group.

There are lots of tools that can be used to make co production really creative and effective.

We have brought people together to think about what a new service should be like, to plan a tender process and to develop a safeguarding guide.

## THE EXPERT HUB



Our Experts are people with a learning disability or autism and family carers who use their lived experience to support organisations and services with their work. They are carefully recruited and undergo full checks and training. They are employed by Inclusion North and follow our policies and procedures.

Experts provide a very professional service and they receive ongoing training and support to ensure they have the skills they need to undertake the work. They take part in Care and Treatment Reviews and also do other work. The more experienced Experts help with the recruitment and training of new Experts.

Our experts have skills and experience in delivering training, speaking at conferences, being part of focus groups, interviewing for new staff and many other things.

Experts can be booked through our website  
[www.inclusionnorth.org](http://www.inclusionnorth.org)



