



**inclusion  
north**

# **Impact Report**

## **2025**

*Making inclusion a reality through long term system change across the North East, Yorkshire and Humber*

*20 years of system change rooted in lived experience of people with a learning disability, autistic people and family carers.*

*Making inclusion a reality through long term system change*

## Who We Are

Inclusion North is a **regional leader for system change** owned and led by people with lived experience of a learning disability, autism and family carers.

We work both regionally and nationally. Regionally, we support local systems to develop and deliver more inclusive approaches.

Nationally, we contribute to workforce development, policy conversations and infrastructure that enable consistent, rights based practice across places.



## How we are led



Lived experience leadership



Values driven



Collaborative partnerships



System change focus

## Lived experience leadership

**93%**

Advisory Council Members

**50%**

Board Members

**65%+**

Staff identify as disabled or with a long-term health condition, *many with lived experience*

## Impact at a glance

**20** 20 years of inclusion north

**13** regional systemic members & further national reach

**250+** Professionals Trained



**38** Projects Delivered



**388** Involvement fees paid



## What We Delivered

### System Leadership

- Policy influence
- Regional Programmes
- National Representation

### Training and development

- Workshops
- E-learning
- Communities of Practice



### Lived experience Voices

- Advisory Groups
- Co-production
- Storytelling



# National influence: turning lived experience into system change

*Where lived experience is usually consulted late or tokenistically, we changed how national work was designed and delivered.*

## National system roles

- Workforce development and training infrastructure
- Policy and practice conversations
- Accountability and quality improvement spaces
- Applied research and national learning

## What Inclusion North did

- Brought lived experience voices into national decision making spaces
- Designed and supported safe, non extractive involvement
- Advised national partners on reasonable adjustments and inclusive practice
- Built infrastructure so lived experience could shape learning, not just be consulted

## What's changed nationally

- National partners changed how lived experience is built into learning and workforce programmes, not just who is invited
- Reasonable adjustments were embedded into national learning and practice spaces, not left to individual discretion
- Lived experience directly shaped hospital safety learning and workforce approaches, rather than being used as testimony
- Applied research priorities changed – focusing on relationship based care, reasonable adjustments and being listened to

## Thank you to our research partners



## Thank you to our national partners



*Lived experience voices shared with over 1,200 professionals nationally*

# National Impact: Getting People to Hospital Safely

*Inclusion North worked with partners nationally to turn lived experience into practical guidance that helps people with a learning disability access life-saving hospital care.*

## The Challenge

People with a learning disability and autistic people can experience significant distress in hospital settings and may refuse or be unable to agree to go to hospital even when seriously unwell.

Professionals are often unsure how to respond when someone refuses hospital treatment.

## The Guidance

Inclusion North co-developed national guidance with SCIE and lived experience partners.

It explains when and how the Mental Capacity Act can be used to get someone to hospital safely.

## What has changed?

Feedback from families and services shows this guidance has:

- Helped people reach hospital safely when they might otherwise have been left without treatment
- Supported professionals to make clearer and more confident decisions.
- Reduced risk and distress during emergency situations.

## What we Did

Worked with family carers, people with lived experience and professionals **to co-produce national guidance.**

Developed **accessible resources**, including an Easy Read version.

## Why this Matters

**People with a learning disability die younger than the general population.**

Clear guidance helps ensure people receive life saving treatment when they urgently need it.

**Thank you to our partner**



social care  
institute for excellence



# Cross-Regional System Impact 2025

*Embedding lived experience into regional governance, commissioning and strategy across the North East and Yorkshire and Humber.*



## Impact

- Lived experience embedded into statutory Learning Disability strategies across the North East.
- Commissioning decisions for Supported Living informed directly by resident evidence.
- Council-wide Co-Production Framework formally adopted, shaping future practice.
- Sustained lived experience representation within ICB governance discussions.
- Cross-regional Communities of Practice aligning providers and practitioners.

## Regional examples:

### Statutory Strategy Embedded



Learning Disability strategies in North Tyneside and Durham were co-produced and formally published, embedding lived experience into council plans.

### Commissioning Influenced



Resident evidence informed renewal of Independent Supported Living contracts in South Tyneside.

### Co-Production Formalised



Gateshead's "Working Together for Change" Co-Production Framework was adopted into council practice.

### Regional Review Led



Regional review (with Little SENDsations) into access to leisure for children with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

**Embedding lived experience into regional governance, commissioning and strategy.**

# Co-producing cancer screening resources that save lives

## Why this mattered

Cancer is one of the leading causes of early and avoidable death for people with a learning disability and autistic people, as highlighted through LeDeR.

Many people miss cancer screening because information is inaccessible, frightening or does not reflect their needs.

## What Inclusion North did

Inclusion North led the co-production of cancer screening resources across West Yorkshire, bringing together people with lived experience, families, self-advocacy groups and health professionals. We ensured lived experience shaped decisions at every stage.

## What we created

4 Easy Read booklets

4 short mobile-friendly videos



Practical reasonable adjustments checklists

Clear signposting to trusted support



Live a long and strong life

Take the lead in your own health care



## What changed

- Increased confidence and understanding of cancer screening
  - Reduced fear and embarrassment
  - Improved awareness of accessibility among health professionals
- Two participants progressed into paid training and delivery roles, including Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training.

15 participants  
122.5 hours

Thank you to our partners on this project

"This is an amazing example of reasonable adjustments and key health messages."  
- Health professional

# Growing as a Leader



Before joining Inclusion North, I worked as a support worker and a cleaner. When a job came up at Inclusion North, I applied and started working 16 hours a week.

Now I work as a Leadership Coach, helping to deliver training and support other people with a learning disability to grow in confidence and become leaders.

**“I found it difficult at first, but now it’s easier. I’m more confident.”**

Through the training she delivers, Dawn supports people with a learning disability and autistic people to share their experiences, build leadership skills and find their confidence.

**“I like seeing other people grow in confidence and speak up.”**

Dawn’s impact:

- Co-delivers lived experience leadership training, including through our Take the Lead programme
- Co-designs new training and contributes her lived experience to our wider work
- Supports people with lived experience to speak up and share their experiences and grow in confidence
- Trains professionals, sharing insight from her own lived experience of a learning disability

**Dawn Flockton, Leadership Coach**

# Family Carers Challenging the System



**Inclusion North enables independent scrutiny that families trust.**

Through Inclusion North, family carers bring their lived experience into Care (Education) and Treatment Reviews (C(E)TRs), helping ensure the right questions are asked and families feel heard.

Shain, a family carer involved in reviews, explained:

**“Families have often been dealing with the same system for years. When someone independent comes into the room, they know they can challenge things. You can ask difficult questions and say: ‘Help me understand why this hasn’t happened before.’ That independence really matters.”**

This role helps challenge decisions constructively and keeps the focus on the person and their family.

## The impact of this work since 2017

**3, 313**

Care,  
Education and  
Treatment  
Reviews  
Delivered

**21**

Local  
authority  
areas  
supported

**18**

Family carers with direct  
household experience  
have been employed by  
us as Expert Advisors

**“You’re allowed to be the unpopular person in the room if you need to be. Our role is to ask the difficult questions and help unstick things.”**

Our Experts by Experience include people with a learning disability and autistic people who bring their lived experience to regional and national decision making.

**Shain Wells, Expert by Experience**

# Looking ahead: Sustaining change across our region

## Our focus for the next phase

The impact in this report has been built through trust, lived experience leadership and long-term relationships across the North East and Yorkshire and Humber.

At a time of growing inequality, system reform and financial pressure, the need for strong, independent lived experience voice is increasing. Yet much of this work remains dependent on short-term funding and fragile budgets.

Sustaining impact now means investing not just in projects, but in infrastructure.



### Sharing, co-production and voice

Strengthening the role of people with a learning disability, autistic people and family carers in shaping regional and national decisions.



### Learning and leadership

Expanding high-quality training and leadership development that shifts practice, builds confidence and embeds reasonable adjustments across systems.



### Memberships and partnerships

Deepening relationships across health, social care and the voluntary sector to move from consultation to structural change.



### Future and running the company well

Building a financially sustainable organisation with strong governance, clear accountability and the infrastructure needed to hold complex regional work.

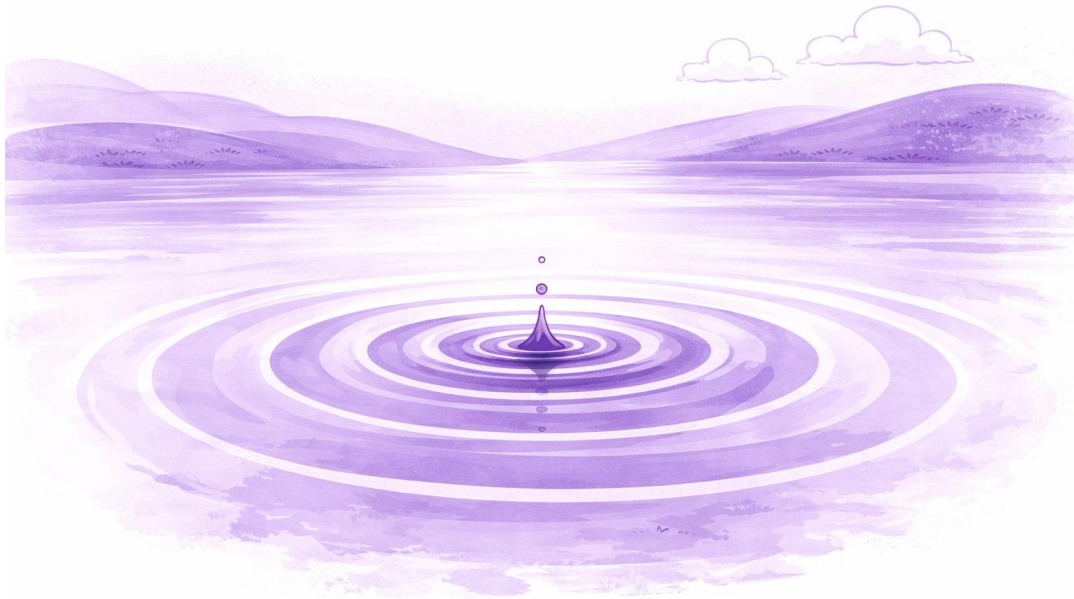
Our role is to be both partner and critical friend — holding space for lived experience while working constructively with systems to improve outcomes.

# Working together for long term inclusion

**People with lived experience must shape the systems that affect their lives.  
Inclusion North exists to make that happen.**

This report shows **what is possible** when lived experience leads.

The challenge now is not whether this work matters - it is whether we will resource it properly.



**There are many ways to work with  
Inclusion North**

**Commission** regional system change and co-production work.

**Partner with us** to strengthen lived experience leadership.

**Join our membership** network.

**Fund** long-term infrastructure for inclusion.

**Together**, Inclusion is not an aspiration. It is a shared responsibility.

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