

# Living my best life in Stoke-on-Trent 2021 - 2026

**My life**

I am me and I want to be safe, healthy and happy. I want my independence.

Life is about fun, family and friends.

I want the help and support that I need to live my best life.

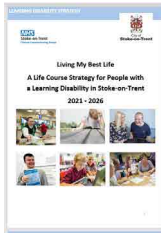
I want to make my own choices and enjoy my life. I want people to listen to me.

A strategy (Plan) for children, young people and adults with a learning disability in Stoke-on-Trent



What my best life is like for me

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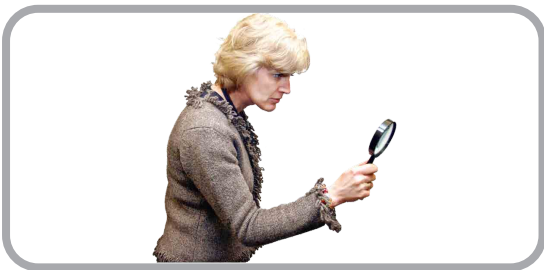
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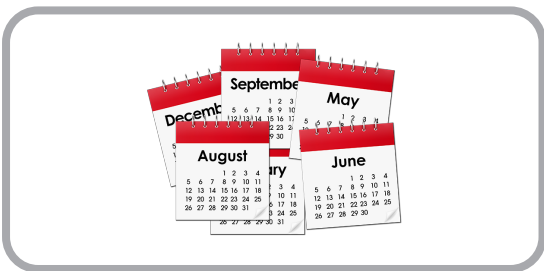
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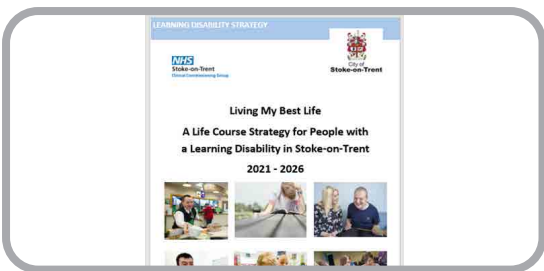
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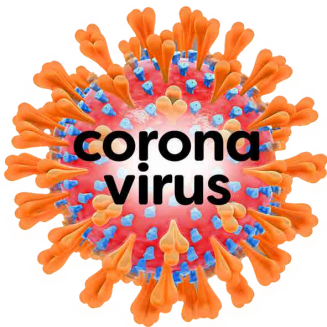
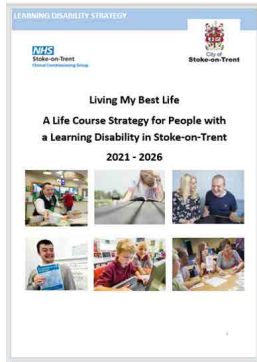


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# Introduction



Living My Best Life is the new strategy (plan) for supporting children, young people, adults and older adults with a learning disability in Stoke-on-Trent from 2021 to 2026.

Living My Best Life was co-produced by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Stoke-on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Group, working together with family carers and people with learning disabilities.

Writing this plan in the Covid-19 lockdown meant having lots of phone calls, video calls and online meetings to find out what people with learning disabilities need to help them live their best life.

By listening to what people with learning disabilities and their families need, we wrote this plan to be person-centred, and based on what people told us is important to them.

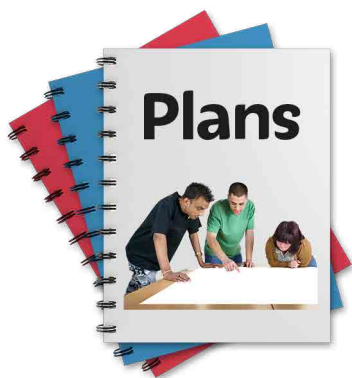
# Introduction



We believe everyone has the right to a good life, to be part of their community and be treated with dignity and respect.



We know people with learning disabilities don't always have the same chances, and are not treated as well as people who don't have a learning disability. That needs to change.



Living My Best Life is the main plan for making that change happen between now and 2026. Lots of different people and organisations need to work together to make sure it does.



Living My Best Life is about making sure health and social care support and services are planned and run so they work well for children, young people, adults and older people with a learning disability.

# Key Principles



Health and social care support and services need to work and help people with learning disabilities live their best life, based on 4 key principles.

These are Community First, Equality, Strengths Based and Person Centred.



Community First means:

- living in the community (where people can)
- access to community activities and community life
- support services that are there when people need help.



Equality means:

- people's needs are understood and reasonable adjustments are made
- equal opportunities and access to health services, learning, employment, housing, social and leisure activities
- equality and diversity being respected and valued.

# Key Principles



Strengths Based means:

- focus on what people can do, not what they can't, thinking about what's strong, not what's wrong
- involvement of families and carers and supporting carers needs.

Person Centred means:

- everyone seen as an individual with their own needs, ambitions and desires
- everyone is treated with dignity and respect and are able to make their own choices
- a flexible approach which means pathways and support are based around the needs and wishes of the person.

# Our Vision and Outcomes



Our vision (what we are working towards) for Living My Best Life is that people with learning disabilities will have a life that looks like this:

‘I am my own individual. I want to be safe, healthy, independent and happy and have opportunities that are enjoyable and fulfilling, having choice and control, help or support where needed and be able to live my best life, which is purposeful and meaningful to me, throughout my life.’

Our outcomes (what changes because of this plan) are based on what people with learning disabilities and their families told us are important. These outcomes are:

- I feel safe
- I am healthy
- I achieve my goals
- I love where I live
- I enjoy my life



# I Feel Safe



I Feel Safe is about everyone with learning disabilities being able to say “I feel valued as a person, cared for and respected by the community” and “I feel understood by the police and courts if I have to speak to them.”



I Feel Safe is about children and young people with learning disabilities being able to say “I am happy and safe at a school as close to my home as possible” and “I am not bullied but know how to ask for help if it happens.”



I Feel Safe is about adults and older people with learning disabilities being able to say “I can get around freely and safely” and “I can take part in activities, and go to places in my community and be with other people.”



Adults and older people should also be able to say “I am not bullied, and don’t experience hate and mate crime but I know how to ask for help if I need it.”

# I Feel Safe



Spending time with people and being part of the community is very important but this can only happen if people feel safe and people with learning disabilities are not bullied or targeted by criminals.



Children and young people with learning disabilities want to be part of their community but parents worry they may not be safe.



There are people living in residential homes who could live independently, having more choice and control over their lives.



People with learning disabilities are using computers, phones and tablets so it's important they get support to stay safe online.

There needs to be more understanding about why people with learning disabilities face problems in staying safe, and how organisations can work together to help and support them.

# I Feel Safe



We are working with Staffordshire Police to help them understand what people with learning disabilities need, and how to communicate with them.



We will make sure people with learning disabilities understand more about their safety, bullying and hate and mate crime, and speak up about them.



We will make sure communities, schools and services are welcoming and accessible to all people with learning disabilities.



Our Safe Places scheme of shops, cafes, libraries and community centres people can go to if they are worried or need some support already helps adults with learning disabilities feel more confident in the community. We will have more Safe Places and they will also support young people from aged 14 and above.

We will make sure there are more choices in housing so people can live where they want to, with the right support in a home where they are kept safe.

# I Am Healthy



I Am Healthy is about everyone with learning disabilities being able to say “I can use high quality health services that are planned and work together in ways that meet my needs” and “I am happy and fulfilled, feeling physically, mentally and emotionally well.”



I Am Healthy is about children and young people with learning disabilities being able to say “I am able to make informed choices about healthy and safe lifestyles as I get older and have lots of chances to be physically active.”



I Am Healthy is about adults and older people with learning disabilities being able to say “I am socially connected” and “I expect to live as long as other people that don’t have learning disabilities.”

# I Am Healthy



People with learning disabilities have worse physical and mental health than other people and they die younger. They are also more likely to have health problems like being overweight or underweight, have epilepsy, have dementia.



People with learning disabilities get worse 'end of life care' than other people because staff don't understand their needs.



More people with learning disabilities need to have their annual health checks and be on their GP's Learning Disability Register. This will help make sure they get the healthcare that is best for them and spot problems earlier on.

More people with learning disabilities need to be taking part in screening programmes (checks to see if they have a disease, like some cancers, that they don't know about) and having their flu jabs.

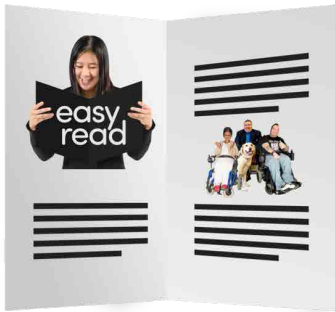


Healthcare services in Stoke-on-Trent will work together to make sure people with learning disabilities are listened to and understood, live longer and get the right support and checks to help keep them healthy.

# I Am Healthy



We will improve the health literacy of people with learning disabilities. This means people understanding their own health, knowing about different health problems and how to stay healthy.



We will make sure the physical and mental health needs of people with learning disabilities are understood and met in ways that are clear, accessible, right for them, and when they need them.



We will support people with learning disabilities and their families to make positive changes in their life to stay healthy. We will support people to eat a good, balanced diet, exercise, stay at a healthy weight and age well.



We will make sure more people with learning disabilities have Personal Health Budgets to give them more choice and control over how their healthcare is planned and the support and services they get.

# I Achieve My Goals



I Achieve My Goals is about everyone with learning disabilities being able to say “I have a past, present and future with people who are important to me.”



I Achieve My Goals is about children and young people with learning disabilities being able to say “I have opportunities to develop my education and skills and am encouraged to make the most of my abilities” and “I get the right support to help me influence and make choices about my life and the future.”



I Achieve My Goals is about adults and older people with learning disabilities being able to say “I can choose to have a job, volunteer and take part in the community” and “I have opportunities to continue developing my skills and make the most of my abilities.”



Adults and older people should also be able to say “I know where I can get help or support to make informed choices about my life” and “I am supported to be financially independent (make my own choices about my money).”

# I Achieve My Goals



Being included and doing well at school are important to children and young people with learning disabilities. They told us they want to do well in life and grow up to be independent and have paid jobs.

Parents told us mainstream schools (not special schools) were the best places for children to be educated but they were worried about their children being included in activities and friendships.

In Stoke-on-Trent, about 1 out of every 6 children have Special Educational Needs (SEN) and need extra help and support at school. Most children with SEN go to mainstream, not special schools.

More than half of the 760 children from Stoke-on-Trent who go to special schools, go to one outside the city. Some of these are just outside the city but some of them are a long way away, meaning they have to travel long distances or stay there, living apart from their families.

Only around 2% (2 out of every 100) adults with learning disabilities in Stoke-on-Trent have a paid job. This is less than in other parts of the country and it will be even harder for people to find paid work after the Covid-19 lockdown as there will be less money around and businesses will close.



# I Achieve My Goals



We will make sure there are more work experience opportunities and career advice for young people who go to special schools.

We will make sure there are more chances and opportunities to do paid jobs or volunteer work for young people with learning disabilities leaving school or college.

We will make sure there are more training, volunteering and work experience opportunities for adults with learning disabilities.

We will support people with learning disabilities to be as financially independent (in control of their own money) as they can be.

# I Love Where I Live



I Love Where I Live is about children and young people with learning disabilities being able to say “I live with family/carers or in another place that meets my needs and where I can grow, be happy and do well.”



Children and young people should also be able to say “I am able to choose who I live with and where I live as I get older.”



I Love Where I Live is about adults and older people with learning disabilities being able to say “I have a choice about where I live, and who I live with. I have different options like living with family/carers, living independently or in supported living.”



Adults and older people should also be able to say “I have as much independence as I choose” and “I feel safe, cared for and live somewhere I can be happy and do well.”

# I Love Where I Live



Too many children and young people with learning disabilities live in residential homes or schools outside Stok-on-Trent. This costs a lot of money and makes it hard for them to be with family, friends and be part of their community.



There are more adults living in residential homes or moving around a lot than in other parts of the country. Moving a lot can be worrying and stressful and makes it harder for people to make friends and be part of the community.



Parents told us they worry about where their children will live when they get older, and what will happen to their children when are no longer able to care for them.



We have more housing choices now than in the past. Shared Lives matches carers with an adult with a learning disability who lives or goes for short breaks with them. Apartments at Abbots House mean people can live independently with support to be part of their local community.

# I Love Where I Live



We will make sure young people get the support they need to be as independent as they can be when they become adults.



We will make sure carers have support when they need it, and for as long as they need it.



We will keep working to make sure there is more choice in the kind of housing we can offer people with learning disabilities. We will look into ways for people with learning disabilities to own their own homes and live independently with community support.

# I Enjoy My Life



I Enjoy My Life is about everyone with learning disabilities being able to say “I have a wide range of social and leisure opportunities and activities to choose from” and “I have friendships and relationships that are good for my wellbeing.”



I Enjoy My Life is about children and young people with learning disabilities being able to say “I am able to connect with friends in person and online.”



I Enjoy My Life is about adults and older people with learning disabilities being able to say “I am able to make my own decisions even if other people think they are unwise or risky.”

# I Enjoy My Life



People of all ages with learning disabilities want to live happy, fulfilling, and interesting lives, either with their families or living in the community. They want enjoyable things to do, with friends and get the right support for them.



Sometimes people just need some social care support to help through difficult times or a crisis. Sometimes people need support for longer.



Parents told us they want their children to meet other people, go out and do activities and make friends but they want to know they will be kept safe from bullying.



People with learning disabilities told us they want the same chances in life as everyone else.

# I Enjoy My Life



We will check on and review short breaks and activities for with learning disabilities of all age to make sure they are person centred, fun, interesting and help people to learn new skills and meet others.



We will support people to have more chances to make friends and have places to go.



We will make sure people of all ages get the support they need to stay in touch and connected with others using digital technology (smartphones, tablets, computers, and the internet).



We will work to make sure people get advice and support about issues like housing, employment, and health so problems can be dealt with at an earlier stage.

## Other Big Ideas



When we were working on the outcomes for Living My Best Life, we found there were 3 other big ideas or cross-cutting themes that are important to making sure people with learning disabilities get the right support and services.

These big ideas are:

- Working together and Staff Training
- Supporting Adults with Learning Disabilities who are Parents or Carers
- Advocacy and Speaking Up

We will ask teams from different services to share information and work together and we will make sure all NHS staff have learning disability training.

Staff will support people in person centred ways, using their own skills, knowledge, training and experience to make sure people with learning disabilities get the right services and support for them.

We will have staff teams from different services (like health, education and social care) all working together to find out what people need and plan their support with them from an early age.



## Other Big Ideas



We don't know how many people with learning disabilities in Stoke-on-Trent are parents or carers but we think the number is growing.



Sometimes it is hard for children to get social care support so we don't always know they need support until they are older and already have children of their own.



We know there are some people who have never been diagnosed (officially told by a doctor) as having a learning disability but they might need extra support with caring for children and other family members.



Parents and carers told us services should stop worrying so much about if someone has been diagnosed with a learning disability and work with the whole family on getting the support they need so the family can stay together.



We will make sure there is more support for people with learning disabilities who are caring for children, young people or their own parents.

## Other Big Ideas



Advocacy and speaking up are about supporting people to understand and make choices and decisions about their own lives.

In Stoke-on-Trent, we have independent one-to-one advocacy for children, young people, adults and older people with learning disabilities.

We also have group, self-advocacy for adults and older people with learning disabilities. We plan to make self-advocacy stronger by including children and young people as well.



Strong advocacy and self-advocacy help us check how well things are working for people. They also help us understand where there are problems and changes need to be made.

We will make sure people with learning disabilities understand and can speak up about:



- bullying, hate crime and mate crime
- their physical and mental health
- their hopes and dreams
- what they want to do with their lives
- what they want to do and what they enjoy in life
- being parents or carers.

# Checking the Plan is Working



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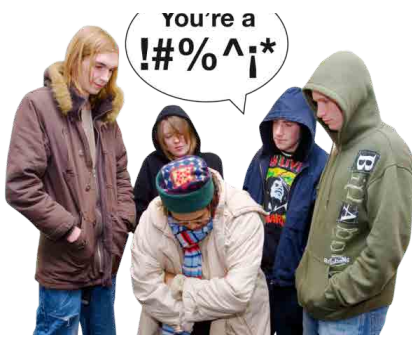
We will make sure Living My Best Life fits in with, and links to other city council and NHS plans for Stoke-on-Trent, as well as government plans about disability, care, and support.

The new Learning Disability Partnership Forum (a newly launched group that is taking over from the old Learning Disability Partnership Board) will have meetings to check on the outcomes in this plan.

We will find out how things are working by listening to people with learning disabilities. We will speak to the people we support, and we will listen to what self-advocacy groups have to say about peoples' lives.

We will do a big 'baseline' survey every 2 years where we ask people questions about their lives to see if things are changing and getting better for them.

# Checking the Plan is Working



We will find out if things are getting better on the 'I Feel Safe' outcome by looking at reports of bullying and hate crime and by checking the numbers of children and young people in schools outside the city.

We will also check on the number of Safe Places in Stoke-on-Trent to find out if there are more places that can offer people support.

We will check on 'I Am Healthy' by looking at lots of numbers and reports on healthcare for people with learning disabilities. We will check on reviews and reports written when someone dies and look at the number of people having annual health checks, flu jabs and screenings.

We will also look at information on reasonable adjustments, how people are cared for in hospital and the number of NHS staff having learning disability training.

We will check on 'I Achieve My Goals' by looking at the results of school tests and exams to see how young people are doing in education.

# Checking the Plan is Working



We will check on how many apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities there are for people with learning disabilities. We will also look at how many people have paid jobs and ask people if they feel they can do what they want in life.

We will find out if 'I Love Where I Live' is making things better for people by checking that people are able to choose where they live and check that people are living in homes that are right for them and aren't being moved from place to place.

We will check how many children are living in homes or schools outside the city, away from their families. We will also ask people if they are able to get out and about in their local community.

We will check on 'I Enjoy My Life' by looking at the number of Changing Places toilets (specially adapted toilets with extra equipment and space) in the city.

We will also look at the number of Safe Places and ask people if they are enjoying their lives in Stoke-on-Trent.

# What the Future Should Look Like



As people with learning disabilities live longer, they need more support from services that have had their budgets (money) cut down over the last few years.



This means health and social care services need to find better ways of working to support more people with less money.

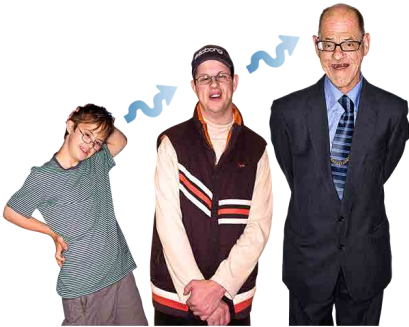


Services will need to use technology, work well with other organisations and work to spot problems early on, especially for children and young people.



Services need to look at what people can do, not what they can't do, and support them to be as independent as they can be.

# What the Future Should Look Like



Children, young people and their families have told us they want choice and support at any age so we will move away from the idea of 'transition' (where things change as people move from children's to adult's services) and look at ways to support people at any point in their life.

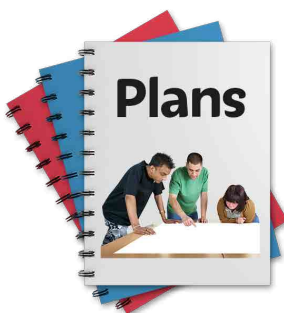


As people with learning disabilities live longer, we need to think and plan ahead about their support needs and how they might change in future.

Support needs to be about the person, but also needs to work for their family, parents and carers, too.

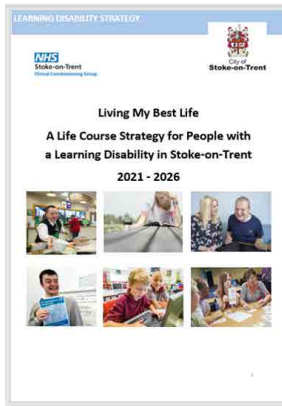


Co-production takes time and effort but it is very important. People with learning disabilities, parents and carers have to be part of planning changes and checking on services.



All the changes we need to make can't all happen at once. We will write action plans on making changes happen.

# Information, Contacts and Credits



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The full version of Living My Best Life has more details about health and social care support and services in Stoke-on-Trent.

You can download the full version of Living My Best Life, here:

[https://www.stoke.gov.uk/downloads/download/891/learning\\_disabilities\\_strategy](https://www.stoke.gov.uk/downloads/download/891/learning_disabilities_strategy)

For comments or for more information, please email:

[commissioningandpartnerships.sp@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:commissioningandpartnerships.sp@stoke.gov.uk)



This clear information summary (short version) of Living My Best Life was written by Reach.

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