



Creating a New Membership Organisation

Introduction

Since 2014 Housing & Support Alliance has been supporting People First England, a self-advocacy organisation for people with learning disabilities. Originally it was intended that H&SA would help PFE become an independent organisation, however it has become clear that this is not feasible.

Instead H&SA and PFE have decided to come together to form a new membership organisation, Learning Disability England. This membership organisation will be made up of three groups: people with learning disabilities, family members and organisations. This is similar to the model used by an Australian organisation called Every Australian Counts which has been able to make big changes because it has brought these three groups together on issues that are important to all of them.

Why are we creating a new organisation?

We want to create Learning Disability England because currently the voice of people with learning disabilities, family members and organisations is fragmented. Large organisations often talk for people with learning disabilities, rather than supporting them to speak for themselves. We believe that people with learning disabilities will not have full equality whilst this is the case.

The purpose of Learning Disability England will be to:

- Bring together people with learning disabilities, their families and organisations who support them so that we can be stronger together.
- Create a group of trained self-advocates with learning disabilities who can talk to the media.
- Have a strong voice in the media and in politics.
- Bring people together to work on things when there isn't enough money or time for everyone to work on it on their own.

It is important that:

- The organisation focuses on the issues that people with learning disabilities say are important to them.
- Only people with learning disabilities talk to the press and to politicians.
- We work alongside other organisations that are doing excellent work such as the National Forum for People with Learning Disabilities and the National Valuing Families Forum.
- The new organisation continues to provide the support and advice that H&SA currently gives to its members.
- We create a system in which all the members of Learning Disability England have a say in what the organisation does.



Next steps

The next step in the process of creating Learning Disability England is to consult with stakeholders (current H&SA members, families and family groups, self-advocacy groups and external organisations such as BILD). We are aiming to consult with over 40 organisations and many more individuals.

Effects for H&SA members

Organisations that are currently members of H&SA will still be able to access the same advice and support when Learning Disability England is launched. Learning Disability England will still run special interest groups, an annual conference and an advice line.

Timeline

The consultation will run from 3rd December 2015 to 15th March 2016. We are aiming to launch the new organisation in June 2016.

Further information

If you would like more information about Learning Disability England please contact Annie at annie.tidbury@housingandsupport.org.uk.