

Interdisciplinary Research

Faculty of Social & Human Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

***'I used to be quiet, now people can't stop me from talking':
What welcoming communities mean to people with a
learning disability living in Southampton & SW Hants***

–Feedback Event & Exhibition–

Tuesday 22 October

Central Hall, Southampton

Please come to our 'Welcoming Communities Event' at Central Hall on Tuesday 22 October from 10am – 4pm.



'Hanging out in town' - Mike

This FREE event is for people with a learning disability, their families, advocates and allies, to hear and talk about what welcoming communities mean to people with a learning disability living in Southampton & SW Hants.

The day promises to be informative and fun; you will have the chance to:

- hear about a research project run by researchers from the University of Southampton with the support of Choices Advocacy
- find out more about what's happening locally and around the country in terms of increasing opportunities for people with learning disabilities,
- have your say about what makes for a welcoming community
- meet other people living with learning disability



'My Allotment' - Billy

**'I used to be quiet, now people can't stop me from talking':
What welcoming communities means to people with a learning disability living in Southampton**

Ed Hall (a human geographer with an interest in improving the lives of people with a learning disability) from the University of Dundee is our guest speaker.



Rachel Mason, a mother of two adult sons' with learning disabilities, will also speak of her personal aspirations for her sons' interaction with their community, the work involved and the wonderful benefits. She is also founding director of two self-directed support tools (*GET 2GETHER Club* and *24/7 grid*) for people with learning disabilities who are eligible for funding and support from health or adult social care.

Leanne Wightman of *Community Catalysts* will also present on the work they do in helping to create imaginative solutions to complex social issues and care needs including the creation of better community connections for persons with learning disabilities. (<http://www.communitycatalysts.co.uk/>)



communitycatalysts
unlocking potential effecting change

A hot buffet lunch and refreshments will be provided (by the University of Southampton)

To book your place please contact Andrew Power at: a.power@soton.ac.uk or 023 8059 9223

If transport is a problem, please also contact Andrew about arranging a lift.

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10.00 – 10.30 **Morning Registration, Coffee & Tea**

10.30 – 10.45 **Welcome, introductions, and 'warm-up'**

10.45 – 11.00 **Opening Address: Learning Disability in Changing Times**

Hillary Linssen, Valuing People Implementation Manager for Southampton to open the day's proceedings

11.00 – 12.30 ***'I used to be quiet, now people can't stop me from talking': A Study looking at what welcoming communities mean to people with a learning disability living in Southampton & SW Hants***

Andrew Power & Ruth Bartlett, University of Southampton

Participants to tell short stories

Discussion – What could make communities more welcoming?

12.30 – 14.00 **Lunch break** Exhibition of Participant's Photographs & Quotes
Raffle

14.00 – 16.00 **Afternoon Session: *Creating Meaningful Lives in the Community for Persons with Learning Disabilities***

14.00 – 14.45 **'Helping people with learning disabilities to belong and contribute: how Local Area Co-ordinators can make a real difference to people's lives'**

Ed Hall, University of Dundee

14.45 – 15.00 **'My personal aspirations for my sons' interaction with their community, the work involved and the wonderful benefits'**

Rachel Mason

GET 2GETHER Club (www.get2getherclub.com) 24/7 grid (www.247grid.com)

Draw for Raffle

15.30 – 15.45 **Community Catalysts**

(<http://www.communitycatalysts.co.uk/who-we-are/>)

Leanne Wightman <http://www.communitycatalysts.co.uk/who-we-are/people/staff/leanne-wightman/>)

15.45 – 16.00 Questions

16.00 Close

Guest Talk

'Helping people with learning disabilities to belong and contribute: how Local Area Co-ordinators can make a real difference to people's lives'

Ed Hall

Most people with a learning disability are very keen to be part of their local communities; they want to make a contribution, be involved in local organisations and activities, and be valued and respected. In short, they want to feel as though they belong. However, this is not always easy. There are many barriers in the way - not enough information about what's going on; other people's attitudes and assumptions; lack of confidence to travel and meet new people; people who run shops and clubs being unfriendly; and sometimes parents and carers being fearful of their family member spending time out and about in the local area. In this presentation, I will talk about an initiative in Scotland called 'Local Area Co-ordinators' (LACs). LACs support around 50 people with a learning disability, working closely with them to learn about their aspirations, and then planning and organising activities and opportunities in the local community. They can help someone to join a local club, travel independently, maybe get a job, meet other people with a learning disabilities, make sure they get the right benefits, give support to families and carers, and many other things. The evidence shows that LACs can help people with a learning disability to get to know more people, do more things, and feel more connected to their local community. I will conclude by making the case for there to be LACs across the UK (there are some in England already), and how this - rather than a focus on personalisation and personal budgets - can make a real difference to the lives of people with a learning disability.

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Speaker Biographies (in alphabetical order):

Ruth Bartlett is a Senior Lecturer in Health Sciences at Southampton and has particular interest in health activism and civic engagement by people with dementia. Her research is focused on using social theories of citizenship and disability to extend thinking in dementia studies and enabling people with dementia to live well at home. She uses participatory methodologies to research the lives of people with dementia and other disabilities and is passionate about engaging the public in research.

Ed Hall is a Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Dundee. His research focuses on disability issues, and learning disability in particular. Recent projects include the role of the creative arts in social inclusion and belonging for people with learning disabilities; personalisation, direct payment and social care and support; and how people with learning disabilities can be supported to take a more active role in their local communities. He has published widely in academic journals and presented at international conferences; however, he is also keen to ensure that people with learning disabilities, and those that support them, hear about his research.

Hilary Linssen is the Valuing People Implementation Manager for Southampton Learning Disability Partnership Board. She is employed to help make Valuing People happen in Southampton. She makes sure that members of the Partnership Board and the Local Implementation Group (the LIG) know when meetings are and that they have all the information in plenty of time to think about it. She meets up with people with a learning disability and family carers when asked to talk about their concerns. She goes out to talk to people and groups to tell them about "Valuing People" and what Southampton is doing and asks them how they are involving people with learning disabilities. She goes to Regional and National meetings to find out what is happening elsewhere.

Rachel Mason is a mother of two adult son's with learning disabilities. As a family carer with 20 years' experience, she a passionate speaker and trainer and has been commissioned into projects to bring a family carer perspective by many organisations including Centre of Welfare Reform, NDTi, Department of Health, Skills for Care, Health care commission, and the Care Quality Commission, amongst others. She is commissioned by Local authorities to support them to introduce personalisation to strategic and operational teams across children's and adult services from a user's perspective. She is also the founding director or two self-directed support tools, get2getherclub (www.get2getherclub.com) and 24/7 grid (<https://www.247grid.com>).

Andrew Power is a Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Southampton. He has over 10 years' experience in disability and care policy research, and previously worked as a researcher at the Centre for Disability Law and Policy in Ireland. His recent work has focused on the individualisation of service delivery to enable people become more independent and included in their community. It includes a particular interest in the roll-out of direct payments and personal budgets and the reform of conventional services to become more responsive and flexible to meet people's requirements.

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Leanne Wightman started her career as a support worker for adults with severe and profound learning and physical disabilities and very quickly became aware of the need to find more innovative and creative alternatives to services available to the people she worked with. Over the past 7 years she has worked towards a better understanding of how this can be put into practice and has built a knowledge and awareness of personalisation, its opportunities and its challenges. Since her time working as a support worker, she has completed a Masters in Social Work and quickly moved to a job as Projects Leader in a third sector micro enterprise. As part of this she has been lucky enough to work closely with a self-advocacy organisation run by and for people with learning disabilities and to which she attributes her understanding of real choice and control and her experience of running truly user led services. She is excited about her role as Micro Market Co-ordinator in Barking and Dagenham and feel that this is a role that fits perfectly with her values as an individual but also with the changing landscape of social care.