



Changing Attitudes towards People with Learning Disabilities

IncludeAge Inclusion of diverse older people in community and public places and virtual spaces

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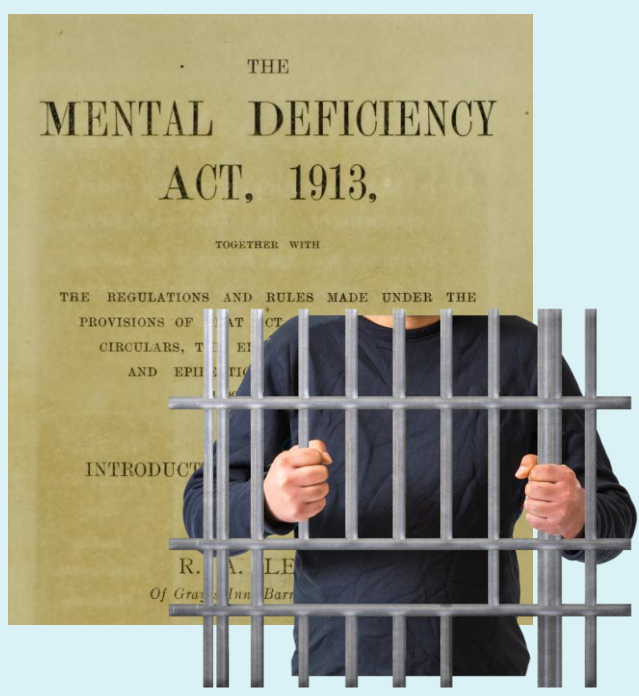
Early 1800s: Living in the Community

- People with learning disabilities lived in their local community.
- They helped with simple jobs and family work.
- People in their community knew them.
- **People were included in community life.**



Mid to Late 1800s: Industrial Change and Institutions

- Work changed. Factories became a more common place for work.
- Some people with disabilities could not work in factories.
- Society began to describe them as a “burden” or “unproductive.”
- Asylums and workhouses were built for people with learning disabilities to live in.
- Many people were sent to live there, often for life.
- **People were taken away from their families and lost control of their lives.**



Early 1900s: Fear, Shame, and Separation

- In the 1900s, attitudes to people with learning disabilities became more negative.
- Offensive words like “idiot” and “imbecile” were used in society and in the law.
- This means people were labelled and treated as less valuable.
- The Mental Deficiency Act 1913 was used to put people in institutions by force.
- Life in institutions was strict and controlled. Many people never left.
- **People lost their freedom and independence for most or all of their lives.**



Mid-1900s: New Understanding

- After World War II, people began to ask questions about institutions.
- Research showed institutions caused harm rather than helping..
- People were happier, felt safer and learned new skills in small, home-like places.
- Families, parents, and organisations started to speak out.
- **People wanted better care and fair treatment for people with learning disabilities.**



Late 1900s to 2020s: Rights and Inclusion

- Large institutions were closed.
- People with learning disabilities are recognised as equal citizens.
- People with disabilities have the same human rights as everyone else.
- The Equality Act 2010 protects people with disabilities.
- It is against the law to treat someone unfairly because of their disability.
- The Social Model of Disability is used.
- **This means society must change, not the person.**



Choice and Control Today

- People have choice and control.
- People are supported to make their own decisions.
- This means people are supported to make decisions about where they live, who supports them and how they live their lives.
- People are listened to.
- **People have more independence and their views, wishes, and rights matter.**



Take Home Message

- In the past, people with learning disabilities were kept away from society.
- Today, people are more included in communities and have rights.
- Attitudes have improved, but continued respect and support are still important.

