

What we wanted to learn:

- We wanted to learn about older people who have learning disabilities.
- We wanted to find out what life is like for them in their communities.
- We wanted to know what is important for them to **age well in the right place**

Ageing well in the right place means:

- when people can grow older in places where they feel safe and welcome.
- they are supported to make their own choices
- They have opportunities to enjoy themselves, work, and make friends.

What we did:

- We interviewed 80 older people with learning disabilities.
- We asked them about their lives and places they have been to and lived in.
- They told us about places and times when they were included and not included.
 - We studied what they told us and made four **themes**



Theme 1: Being Seen, Heard and Valued

- It is important to be seen as community members like everyone else.
- Paid work, volunteering, and helping neighbours make them feel useful, valued, and proud.
- Being included means being invited to social events, earning money, and being treated as an equal.
- People do not want to be treated as fragile.

“I just feel that it’s really good and because I’ve got a learning disability myself, then I’m paying something back.” - Joe Bloggs,



Theme 2: Being Out and About

- Everyday public places like streets, buses, parks, and town centres are important to them.
- Being in these places helps them feel like they are part of the community.
- But, these places can also feel unsafe.
- Sometimes people are bullied or ignored.
- Because of this people sometimes avoid going to these places.

“I like town [...] Just like, people that you know, it’s like ‘ah, I remember you’. That’s, that’s a good one, you know.” - Rita



Theme 3: Growing Older

- They did not have opportunities to make many choices when they were younger.
- They were often told what to do and how to act.
- As people grow older, they try to be as independent as possible.
- They continue to keep active, go out to meet friends and do activities, and volunteer or work.
- They want to work together with support to complete tasks and make their own choices.

“25 years I’ve been part of this company. [...] I love it. Would not leave here for anything. It’s lovely.” - Peter



Theme 4: Support and Services

- Day centres, advocacy groups, and supported living services are very important places.
- These places help people get support, make friends and learn new things.
- But some places do not give the right support.
- Sometimes they are not listened to in their own homes or supported to go out.
- People have to do the same activities as everyone else, even when they do not want to.

“So, why are the public not allowed in, it’s silly we’re getting like years ago. [...] It’s like we’re getting kept hidden from them.” - Rebecca

Take Home Messages:

Older adults with learning disabilities build meaningful lives through places, familiar centres, neighbourhoods, homes, and community spaces where they are known, supported, and able to contribute.

Inclusion works best when systems protect what already works in people’s lives and adapt to them, instead of expecting people to adapt to increasingly complex services and expectations.