



Strategic Plan 2016-2020



Foreword from Chair of Trustees

Welcome to our 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, which describes a clear and compelling vision for the future and provides a clear framework within which our strategic objectives can be achieved.

It is an ambitious plan, which will challenge our thinking and how we currently operate, yet it is realistic and builds on the excellent reputation for which we are recognised locally and nationally.

As always the plan incorporates the views of all of our key stakeholders, our staff and, most importantly, the views of service users and carers.



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Introduction

Living Options Devon (LOD) is a well respected disabled peoples user-led organisation (DPULO) which works to ensure that people with disabilities and Deaf people (for whom British Sign Language is their first or preferred language) can live the life they choose.

Set up in 1990, LOD is a registered charity (Charity No. 1102489) and a company limited by guarantee (No. 4925281). Based in Exeter and Barnstaple, our charitable aims have been amended so that we can offer services across the South West and to enable us to share good practice throughout the UK.

Being led and run by people with disabilities and Deaf people ensures LOD has first hand knowledge and understanding of the issues facing services users and so is very well placed to increase the influence and voice of Deaf and disabled people. We do this by providing education, training and services which enable people to live the lives they choose.

Background

LOD's first Strategic Plan was published in 2005 following wide consultation and updated in 2008. Its second Strategic Plan was published in 2012 with support from Pilotlight London; a charity which brings together skilled professionals from the private sector and harnesses their talents to help charities develop their strategic plans. This third Strategic Plan moves us even closer to our overall aims, and takes account of an extremely challenging funding environment. This requires us to review how we can continue to provide much needed services, in new and innovative ways, without relying on public sector contracts.

Our Vision

People with disabilities and Deaf people have the same life chances and opportunities to be active and equal members of society.

The 2010 Equality Act generally defines a disabled person as:

"Someone who has a mental or physical impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."

This includes people with a learning disability, visual and hearing impairment, acquired brain injury, people with dementia and those with a terminal illness.

Persons who are self-defined as belonging to the Deaf community use British Sign Language as their first or preferred language. Deaf people with a big 'D' do not have a disability - their deafness is part of their cultural identity which is recognised by the 2010 Equality Act as a 'Protected Characteristic'.

Our Values underpin everything that we do.

They have not changed

since 1990 and shape our behaviour both as an organisation and as people working with and for LOD.

We believe in a fully accessible society where all people can enjoy freedom of choice and equality of opportunity.

We are User-led in all that we do, enabling people with disabilities and Deaf people to influence and manage our full range of services and projects.

We aim to deliver the highest standards of service to all the people with whom we work.

We operate a culture of open communication, empowerment and development, where individual abilities are respected and people are encouraged to achieve their full potential.

Our Mission

LOD is a disabled people's user-led organisation (DPULO) which seeks to ensure that people with disabilities and Deaf people across Devon and the United Kingdom (UK) have the opportunity to live the life they choose.



Context (environment we work in)

National

The government's sustained reductions in public spending since 2010 have presented major challenges to the Health and Social Care system and the impact of austerity measures on people with disabilities is well documented (Demos, 2010).

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced fundamental changes to the welfare system and is likely to have a significant impact on the incomes and wellbeing of people with disabilities and Deaf people. The key changes affecting people with disabilities and Deaf people are the introduction of Universal Credit which will replace much of the benefits and tax credits system for people both in and out of work and the introduction of the Personal Independence Payment to replace the Disability Living Allowance.

The Care Act 2014, which came into effect from 1st April 2015, is the most significant reform of care and support in more than 60 years. The Act replaces numerous previous

laws and combines them into a single law and coherent approach to adult social care in England. The Act aims to achieve the provision of clearer, fairer care and support; places a new emphasis on individual wellbeing; highlights prevention and delay of the need for care and support; and embeds and extends the personalisation agenda in social care through its focus on people and carers being in control of their care and support.

Local

Devon County Council (DCC)

Between 2011 and 2021 it is estimated that the population in Devon of people over 70 years old will increase by 34%. As a consequence, the growing complexity of individual care needs will bring increasing burdens on the system at the same time as the local authority is



Context (environment we work in)

facing expanding financial restraint (DCC, 2014). DCC's shrinking budget has required the local authority to make some 'tough choices' and reduce some services to the people of Devon, including the closure of many day centres. LOD must continue to work with DCC to ensure that, through our advocacy, engagement and consultation services, disabled and Deaf people are kept informed of changes that may affect them and are aware of their rights and services they are entitled to.

Care Act 2014

DCC have stated that their aim is to ensure people with existing care needs (and their carers) know how the Care Act and the reforms will affect them. DCC have developed plans to deliver the new duties. LOD's Haven Advocacy service supports people who have substantial difficulty in being involved in care and support processes to have their say, represent their interests and get the services they need.

Personal Health Budgets

The NHS 'Five Year Forward View' explains:

- How patients will be empowered to gain greater control over their care, including the option of shared budgets, bringing together both health and social care.
- How the NHS will build strong partnerships with charities and voluntary organisations. It is recognised that the Voluntary and Community Sector provides a range of services whilst being better able to reach underserved groups and are able to advise commissioners on particular needs.
- How the Integrated Personal Commissioning (IPC) Programme is one of the key steps towards delivering the Five Year Forward View. IPC supports the improvement, combination and personalisation of services, building on learning from personal budgets in social care and progress with personal health budgets. It supports people to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence to self-manage through partnerships with the voluntary and community sector, community capacity building and peer support.

The South West area is an IPC demonstrator site so is expanding good practice across the region. LOD have been working with the IPC Forum and Northern Eastern and Western Devon CCG and South Devon and Torbay CCG to raise awareness of Personal Health Budgets and develop the local offer.



Local challenges in Devon in 2020:

- 13,681 (thirteen thousand six hundred and eighty-one) people aged 18 or over are predicted to have a hearing impairment
- 18,869 (eighteen thousand eight hundred and sixty nine) people aged 18 or over are predicted to have a visual impairment
- 48,082 (forty-eight thousand and eighty two) people aged 18 – 64 are predicted to have a physical disability
- 39,733 (thirty-nine thousand seven hundred and thirty-three) aged 65 or over are predicted to have limited mobility and 93,896 (ninety-three thousand eight hundred and ninety-six) people in this age group are predicted to have a long term illness affecting their day to day activities.

(Figures estimated by Projecting Older People Population Information (POPPI) and Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI)).

LOD faces a major challenge to increase the number of people it provides support to and to identify, develop and set up services that continue to meet the needs of the disabled and Deaf population in Devon, particularly in the context of increased spending cuts locally and nationally affecting local communities. As one of the largest DPULOs in Devon, LOD needs to make sure the voice of disabled people is at the heart of any decision making process and our services are more targeted as a result.

Outcomes

As a result of implementing this Strategic Plan Living Options Devon will achieve the following outcomes:

- Decisions which affect people with disabilities and Deaf people will have been made with them, not without them.
- LOD services and projects will be led and delivered by people with disabilities.
- People with disabilities and Deaf people will feel more informed to make choices which meet their needs.
- People with disabilities and Deaf people will feel valued and more confident to achieve their potential.
- More seamless services will be provided for people with disabilities and Deaf people through better partnership and consortium working.
- People with disabilities and Deaf people will feel part of a wider community; helping to reduce loneliness and isolation.



Strategic Targets to be achieved by 2020

In developing our Strategic Plan 2012 – 2015, we talked to people with disabilities, Deaf people and other stakeholders to agree five main strategic targets to ensure that we will achieve our outcomes. These targets have been revisited and further consulted upon in 2016, to ensure they are still relevant and that our service users agree with them.



Strategic Target - Independence and Wellbeing

To reach and support more people with disabilities and Deaf people so that they have the opportunity to live the life they choose.



Strategic Target - Choice and Opportunity

To further promote and support choice, independent living and new opportunities so that people with disabilities and Deaf people can enjoy a more active and fulfilled life.



Strategic Target - Empower and Enable

To enable more people with disabilities and Deaf people to influence those people who make decisions that affect their lives at local and national levels.



Strategic Target - Development and Achievement

To be the preferred partner of choice for others with similar values and encourage two-way sharing of learning to improve quality.



Strategic Target - Involvement and Personalised

To continue to provide services which reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation that many people with disabilities and Deaf people experience in both rural and urban communities.

How we will deliver these targets

We have written a detailed Business Plan 2016 -2021 in which we outline 10 operational aims that are SMART which stands for:

S Specific **M** Measurable **A** Achievable **R** Realistic **T** Time-bound

Our 10 Operational Aims



1 To implement a Marketing Plan 2016-2021 - the plan will set out how we will promote our services and reach more disabled and Deaf people.



2 To invest in the skills development of our Trustees, volunteers and staff - staff, volunteers and trustees will continue to receive training to help them fulfil their roles.



3 To maintain an adequate level of funds in reserve - these are called 'Reserves' and as a charity we need to make sure that we are still able to operate should our income drop.



4 To gain a better understanding of the needs of disabled and Deaf people - we must continue to provide services which meet the needs of disabled and Deaf people.



5 To improve access to services and outdoor space - this may include helping people to access the countryside or working with providers to improve their services.



6 To continue to provide advocacy, information and peer support - advocacy is about supporting people to say what they want, secure their rights and get the services they need.



7 To increase choice and independence through service provision - expanding our services and working with providers to ensure there is choice.

8 To work in partnership to improve services - this may mean working with other voluntary and community groups or organisations and / or public sector organisations.

9 To develop our organisation's resources to achieve our aims - resources refer to our people, premises, finances, information and assets.

10 To become more sustainable and independent of public sector funding - we must find other sources of income and make sure we are not dependent on contracts from the public sector.

LOD empowers people with disabilities and Deaf people to become more influential so that better decisions are made with them, not about them.



Peter's story: "Having been involved in a gymnastics accident whilst at college over forty years ago, I became involved with LOD from its beginning in 1990. LOD has been central to my life for over twenty five years and my role as a Trustee is more hands off but no less rewarding and in its way, very challenging. In my view we have made a big difference to the lives of many physically disabled, sensory impaired and Deaf people and will continue to do so in future".



LOD provides high quality services and projects, which are led and run by people with disabilities and Deaf people.

One example of a free service we offer is The See Hear Centre (SHC). People in North Devon with hearing and visual impairments were not receiving the advice and support they needed as the nearest equipment centre was in Exeter (100 mile round trip with poor public transport). LOD supported a User Advisory Group to find the funding to set up The LOD See Hear Centre in Barnstaple.

Colin started to use the services of the See Hear Centre (SHC) when he suffered severe visual impairment, at the age of 59, and still working. He used the services provided by the SHC to provide equipment and information so he could continue in his career. He also became a member of the Advisory Group to help support the elderly residents of the sheltered schemes he managed. He is now becoming a SHC volunteer as he is now retired and wishes to carry on with this work.

Mark is a member of the SHC Advisory Group. Although profoundly deaf since aged 4 and a half due to measles, Mark has managed to lead a fairly independent social and working life and has been continuously employed as a Chartered Accountant since

qualifying 30 years ago. Increasing demands and changing circumstances made life somewhat harder until he was introduced to the SHC and its "Working Lunch" group 10 years ago, which introduced him to other working people with similar hearing issues. He was able to share his own work experiences and learn from those of others experiencing similar issues, all of which assisted him and others in improving their work-life balance immeasurably. Mark is now fully engaged with the SHC in assisting others to achieve their own personal independence and goals in life.

LOD assists people with disabilities and Deaf people to feel valued and develop their confidence to reach their full potential.



Amanda's Story: I developed a permanent spinal condition almost overnight which completely changed my happy independent life into what I felt was a hopeless one. After attending many medical appointments I had to accept there was no cure. The constant pain day and night and not being able to walk eventually led me into depression.

Years passed while I continued to struggle physically and emotionally then someone told me about LOD. Almost 4 years after becoming disabled I contacted a charity that understood my feeling of uselessness and loss of confidence. I became a volunteer in the Spring of 2013 and in a very short time it not only helped me get back into the real world (instead of hiding away in my bedroom) but also helped me rediscover and improve skills I once had. My level of confidence has continued to grow and I have gained a lot of knowledge and many new skills.

Mostly I have learned that with the right support there is a future after disability. Living doesn't have to end when physical abilities are taken away from you or if you become mentally ill.



LOD Informs people with disabilities and Deaf people to enable them to make choices which meet their needs.



Diana's Story: At the first Living Options Devon (LOD) meeting I attended, I heard about involvement opportunities including being a correspondent for their disability news magazine. I thought I'd like to give it a try and applied. I was required to write 200 words about myself and fill in what, to me, looked like a complicated form, but I still thought I'd give it a go.

I was thrilled to be invited to an interview but also terrified as it was years since I'd had an interview, but it turned out to be a very eventful day for me!

After I was offered and accepted the role, I met with the Editor who talked through my written piece with me - she then gently approached the subject of dyslexia. She explained how my writing appeared to her and showed me a copy of how it should look. It looked the same to me! She asked me if I knew, or thought, that I may be dyslexic. I had no idea but suddenly realised this could explain my struggles through the years, as far back as my schooldays. I'd just thought I was a bit slow in grasping things. My life changed that day, I suddenly understood so much and how my life would have been different if I had known and been helped. Yellow and green paper was my lifeline, making text make sense on the page. I had waited 50 years to find this out!

In my correspondent role I communicated with many groups and learned a great deal about disability and support and also about myself. With the help of Staff at LOD I learned to manage my dyslexia and use a computer. As my confidence grew I got involved in other LOD projects such as the Devon Disability Network. This involvement gave me the opportunity to network with people from across Devon at group meetings, where I learned more about disability issues and how to speak up for others.

The new confident me was even an LOD Trustee for a couple of years! It just goes to show what disabled people can achieve if given the chance!



LOD encourages seamless services for people with disabilities and Deaf people through partnership and consortium working.



Countryside Mobility offers improved access, independence and freedom in the countryside for people with limited mobility.

The scheme, operated by Living Options Devon, works with close to 40 outdoor attractions across South West England and beyond to offer all-terrain mobility scooters (known as Trampers) for hire. Working in partnership with The Wheelyboat Trust, a number of sites also offer access to a wheelchair accessible boat.

The scheme currently has over 1 thousand members with over 5 thousand people experiencing the freedom offered by the scheme since it commenced in 2010. The scheme has been recognised in a range of awards, most recently winning the Access category of the South Tourism Excellence Awards.

The scheme is a true user led project that has been successfully developed by working closely with disabled people.



Claire took her father, **Ronald**, to visit the 'Tamar Trails' in Devon where a Trampler is available for hire and said: "I didn't expect my father to be able to do much more than sit in a chair while he was staying with us for a short break recently. He has suffered with severe back problems for the past two years and walks with very great difficulty. He had to give up driving several years ago and really misses this independence. Most of his days he now spends confined to the house. He enjoyed a very happy afternoon on the tracks exploring the woodland and enjoying being out in the sunshine. I am sure that he experienced the greatest feeling of independence since the onset of his mobility problems." "I myself felt quite proud of the achievements that my father was able to make with the benefit of the scheme, and had never expected to see him enjoying the outdoors again in the way that he used to."



LOD brings people together, creating the widest community for people with disabilities to reduce loneliness and isolation.



Mary's Story - A New Lease of Life at My Fingertips!

After leaving school I qualified as a State Registered Nurse and over the years I worked in a children's hospital and in the operating theatre and after having children, as a Dental Nurse and District Nurse. In all those roles I loved caring for people.

Following health problems my husband and I decided to escape the busyness of London and moved into our lovely Devon cottage. I embraced rural village life and helped set up a clinic for babies and elderly people, I also helped out at the primary school. The babies I helped to look after grew up and became Mums themselves and I then helped to look after their babies.

As the years passed my health deteriorated, I developed Diabetes and Osteoarthritis and breast cancer for the



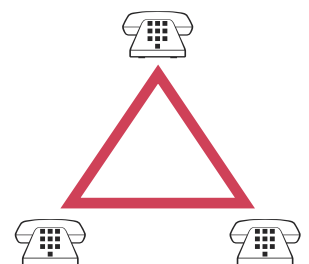
second time. I found I no longer had the energy to continue as before and was drained by the constant pain. I became isolated as I couldn't go out - I missed seeing people and got very depressed.

And then life changed ... I discovered Living Options (LOD) a life saver for me on many occasions. I needed help with my electricity provider and LOD supported me to sort out the problem. I have taken part in telephone conference calls regarding disability issues. Through LOD I found out about Ring and Ride and arranged for them to provide a service to our village which is on-going and a life line for myself and others.

LOD put me forward to Devon Libraries to receive a free computer which they felt I would benefit from. I was worried about understanding the technology but with patience and support soon found each day filled with excitement when checking for emails.

My brother is not able to travel but we can still see each other because I now use Skype, my brother is married to my best friend so I get to see her too! I share all sorts with my daughter and my friends, and my son sends me photos of my grandchildren in emails which is fantastic! I joined Facebook to see my Great Great Nieces and Nephews who are all around the UK and overseas. I Google to check all sorts of things and on Google Earth I've enjoyed looking at places I've lived during my lifetime. I am Dyslexic and Spellchecker corrects my poor spelling - wonderful!

Having the PC turned my world around; took me out of my depression; enabled me to see people again and become far less focused on my pain - which is an added bonus. I was 75 when I got the computer - it just goes to prove you are never too old learn!



What we have achieved so far...

Living Options Devon has a strong track record of high quality delivery of services and empowerment and support. Some examples of work that we are particularly proud of:



✓ Deaf Led Services reach out to an otherwise excluded community enabling 350 Deaf people access to jobs, information and engagement opportunities. Our 'CODA' Club supports Children of Deaf Adults to better understand their own needs and to share experiences with other children in a similar situation. Our Deaf History club provides Deaf people across Devon with the opportunity to explore their Deaf heritage and record and share their findings.

✓ We work in partnership with the Citizens Advice to deliver our 'Welfare Reforms: Positive Options for Disabled People' project. Set up in 2014, the project supports disabled and Deaf people to better cope with the impact of the Welfare Reforms. We use a person-centred planning approach to build people's confidence and increase skills in employability, assertiveness, budgeting and IT.



✓ Our Heritage Ability project is designed to improve access for Deaf and disabled people at heritage sites in the South West. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the project is piloting new approaches to making heritage more inclusive.

✓ We have enabled over 1000 disabled people to enjoy the countryside through provision of Trampler all terrain electric mobility scooters at 40 countryside sites across the South West. The Scheme has won Gold in the Visit Devon Tourism Awards (Access and Inclusivity Category) and Gold in the South West Tourism Excellence Awards. As a user-led charity it was a particular pleasure for one of the two representatives at these awards to be one of our service users and most enthusiastic advocates.



✓ We are funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to provide victim support services to disabled and Deaf communities across Devon. Our specialist service offers support for both reported and non-reported crimes and helps people to overcome the effects caused by crime. We work with other providers to ensure victims receive the best possible support available.

✓ In 2016 we were the winner of Best Employer of Deaf People at the Royal Association for Deaf People's 175th Birthday Honours Awards.



Developing a stronger voice and more user-led services

The services we provide currently fit within three categories.

1. Informal Support Services

These are services which support people with disabilities and Deaf people with issues relating to adult health and social care, for example Advocacy.




2. Universal Services

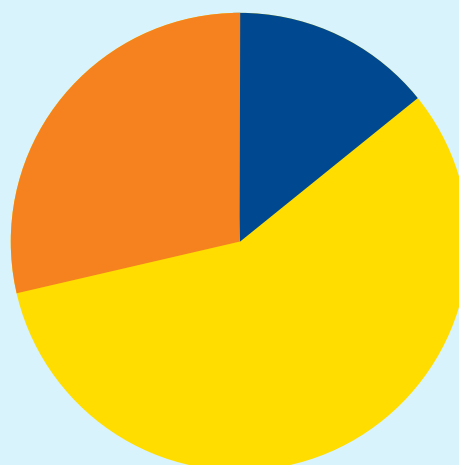
These are services which support people with disabilities and Deaf people in areas outside of health and social care, for example, our Countryside Mobility Scheme is a universal service, providing people with limited mobility the opportunity to access countryside sites.

3. Independent Living Services

These are services, which provide disabled people with support to direct their own care. This is mainly through the use of Direct Payments or Personal Budgets, for example employing a Personal Assistant.

2015

-  1. Informal Support Services
-  2. Universal Services
-  3. Independent Living Services



In 2012 the majority of our services were Informal Support services and our Independent Living Services represented our least support provision. Our Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015 focussed on promoting independent living and providing support to allow people with disabilities and Deaf people to live life the way they choose. This aspiration enabled us to increase our Universal services (see chart above) and although Independent Living Services are still our least represented support provision, recent consultation has shown that our services reflect the needs of the people and communities we support.

Moving forwards this Strategic Plan sets out how we aim to sustain our services and continue to provide them in the longer term. This means that we have to think of new and different ways in which to fund them. We can no longer rely on public sector funding and intend to involve our beneficiaries in creating new plans and ideas. We have developed a Fundraising Strategy and Marketing Plan to help us to make our services more sustainable and to vary how they are funded.



Financial Overview

LOD Income

We have moved towards achieving our objective in the last Strategic Plan which was to increase the level of income from non-public sector sources and donations.

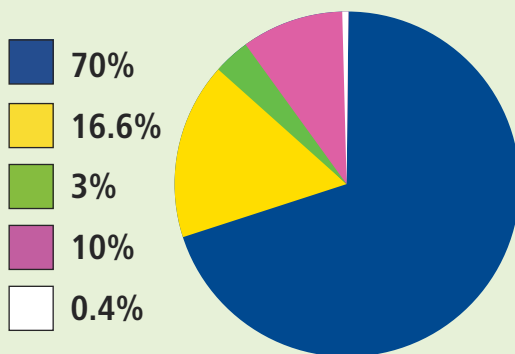
The total income from 2014 / 2015 was £1,504,000 (one million, five hundred and four thousand).

Sustainable income includes income from services, training and room hire.

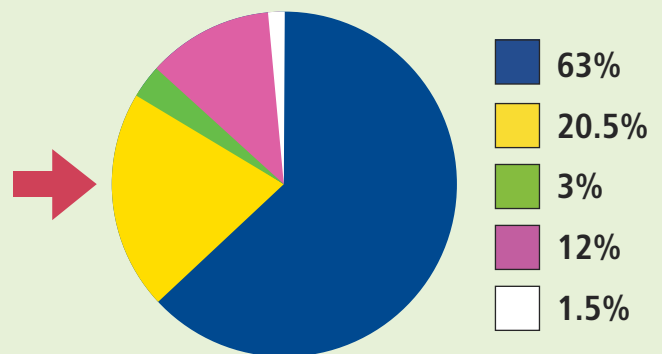
Over the next five years our aim is to become more sustainable and independent of public sector funding.

-  Public Sector Funding
-  Grants, Trusts and Foundations
-  Access to Work
-  Sustainable
-  Donations & Legacies

2015



2020



LOD Annual Surplus and Reserves

Our surplus targets will enable us to comply with our policy of three months of expenditure in reserve by 2021:

Financial Year	Annual Surplus (Before Depreciation)	Cumulative Reserves
2015 - 2016	£5388	£122,226
2016 - 2017	£38,664	£119,210
2017 - 2018	£37,273	£147,443
2018 - 2019	£36,516	£194,599
2019 - 2020	£26,991	£205,630
2020 - 2021	£35,772	£225,442

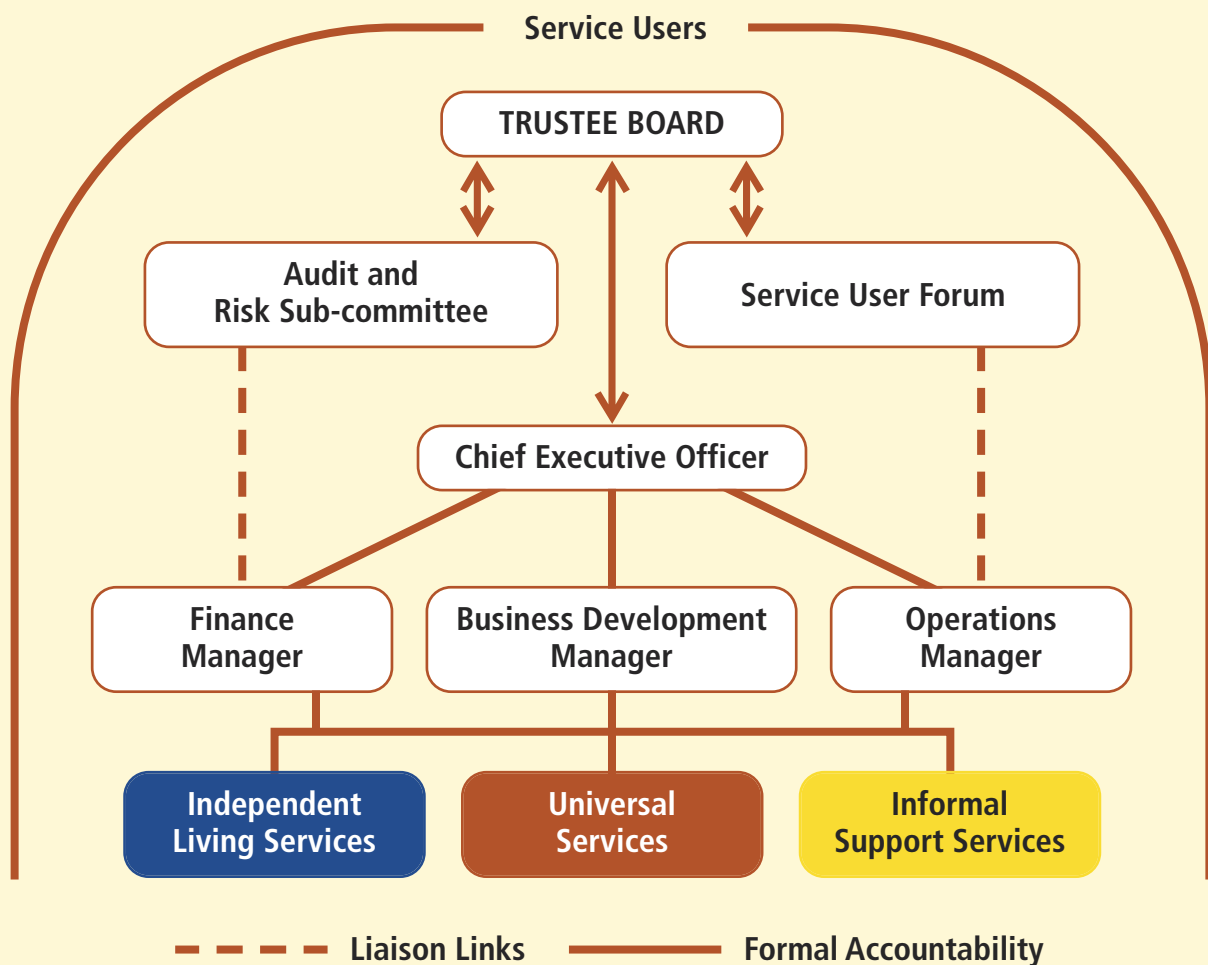
Service users, volunteers, trustees and staff



LOD is governed by a Board of Trustees, 80% of whom have a disability or are Deaf. Our strength is the people who work with us. We have a strong and committed Board, Senior Management Team, staff members and volunteers.

We have grown in terms of numbers over the past few years and have actively invested in our teams to ensure that they have a high level of skills for the role that they perform within the organisation. In the person specification of all the roles within LOD there is a requirement that the person has a commitment to the underpinning principles of the Social Model of Disability. All our interviews are conducted with service user and / or Deaf community involvement in both the process and the decision making.

We offer a range of volunteering opportunities for service users and others. For example: within the Victim Support Service and our Heritage Ability project. We have a range of policies to ensure that these people are properly supported whilst working with us. Due to the skills they develop, a high proportion of our volunteers secure permanent and / or independent roles within the organisation once a suitable vacancy arises.



Monitoring and Reviewing the Strategic Plan

Monitoring

Are we progressing in line with the plan?

How will the plan be monitored?

CEO Board Report to Board of Trustees.
Strategic Framework.

Frequency?

Quarterly at each board meeting.



Peter Swain OBE
Chair of Trustees

Reviewing

Are the strategic aims still the right ones?

How will the plan be reviewed?

Advisory / monitoring group to coordinate consultation exercises with all relevant internal and external stakeholders and make recommendations to the Trustee Board. The CEO will be responsible for supporting the process.

Frequency?

Every four years. The next review process must start December 2019 at the latest.



Diana Crump CEO

Service User Journey 2016

SERVICE USERS

People who benefit from what we do

- Multi-cultural
- Limited Mobility
- Visually impaired
- Hidden disability
- Hearing impaired
- Physical disability
- Learning disability
- Mental Health
- Dyslexia

Members of the Deaf community for whom BSL* is their first or preferred language

BARRIERS

What stops people living the life they choose

- Isolation at home
- Access
- Social exclusion
- Cultural perceptions
- Time and understanding
- Communication
- Discrimination
- Embarrassment
- Lack of awareness
- Society impact
- Lack of opportunities

RANGE OF PROVISION

Support to Access Services

- Support Carers
- PA**
- Professionals

Desire to overcome barriers



* British Sign Language
 ** Personal Assistants
 *** Devon Disability Network

SUPPORT AND SPECIALIST SERVICES

Services we provide

Equality/disability/Deaf awareness Training
Countryside Mobility
See Hear Centre
See Hear on Wheels
Engagement services (including DDN***)
Information and Advice
Peer Support
Accredited training BSL*
Access auditing
Advocacy
Research
Consultancy
Victim Support
Welfare Reform Support
Personal Assistant training and support
Social Events

LIVING THE LIFE I CHOOSE

Stronger Voice

Campaigning and lobbying
Influencing Statutory rights
Society understanding
Raising Awareness

Better Outcomes

Safer environment
Employment
Feeling in control
Increased confidence
Part of Society
Variety of life
Reduced isolation
Quality care
Enjoy life
Empowerment

Choice

Services that meet our needs
Knowing how to access them
One size doesn't fit all

VISION

People with disabilities and Deaf people have the same life chances and opportunities to be active and equal members of society



Empowering: Gathering Service User views in consultation workshops.



Assisting: Deaf people achieve Training qualifications.



Bringing People Together: Wheelchair Dancing at an LOD event.



Providing: High quality Services and Projects - Trammer Training



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LivingOptions



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