



Our Impact Report 2017- 2019

Our mission

Living Options Devon (LOD) seeks to ensure that people with disabilities and Deaf people have the opportunity to live the life they choose.

Message from the CEO and Chair of Trustees

We are proud to present our 2017 - 19 impact report. The report provides an insight into our work and is our opportunity to let you know some of what we have achieved over the past year and a half to improve outcomes for people with disabilities and Deaf people who use British Sign Language.

We are very fortunate to have a committed and supportive group of trustees and a dedicated team of staff and volunteers. Together with our partners, funders and supporters, we have really made a difference.

Diana Crump, CEO

Andrew Barge, Chair of Trustees



We are a user-led organisation:

78% of our Trustees, 70% of our volunteers and 1/3 of our staff have disabilities or are Deaf meaning we have first-hand understanding of the issues facing disabled and Deaf people.

Our key achievements 2017-19



We engaged and supported **12041** people with disabilities and / or Deaf British Sign Language users



We worked with **226** service providers to improve accessibility



We delivered Disability and / or Deaf Awareness training to **241** people

Over **700** people took part in consultations about issues affecting their lives



We provided training to increase skills and confidence to over **500** people with disabilities and Deaf people

We formed partnerships with **13** organisations to improve accessibility



Our Highlights 2017-19



Our Heritage Ability project won the National Lottery Heritage Award 2018.

In 2019 we were charity of the year for Exeter's shopping centre, Princesshay.



Our project Deaf Get Active and Volunteer won the Contribution to Inclusive Sport award at the Devon Sport Awards 2019.

We hosted an accessible family event 'Ability Fest' in Exeter's Northernhay Gardens in 2017.



Our Projects and Services 2017-2019

Devon Advocacy Consortium

The **Devon Advocacy Consortium** (six charities including Living Options Devon) provides an independent, statutory advocacy service for people over the age of sixteen in Devon.

Countryside Mobility provides safe, enjoyable access to the South West's most scenic locations for anyone who has difficulty walking, through an off road mobility scooter hire scheme.



Heritage Ability works in partnership with heritage sites across the South West to improve access for people with disabilities and Deaf British Sign Language Users.

In partnership with Active Devon, the **Deaf Get Active and Volunteer** project is enabling Deaf British Sign Language users to become more active by working with sports providers to create more accessible sport / activity opportunities and developing new volunteering opportunities.



The **See Hear Centre** and **See Hear on Wheels bus** provides equipment, information and support services for people with sensory loss.

The **Time to Talk** project helps disabled people and Deaf people to feel less lonely and / or isolated by providing a peer support telephone and webcam support service and opportunities for volunteers to learn new skills, whilst supporting others in their local communities.



Living Options Devon are accredited to deliver **Victim Care Services**. We are funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to provide victim support services to disabled and Deaf communities across Devon.

Deaf Led Services offer a **peer support and information service** including a Job Club for Deaf people, helping Deaf British Sign Language users prepare for and find employment.



We are the lead agency for the **Devon Engagement Service** which provides a central point of contact for Devon County Council; the new Devon Clinical Commissioning Group and South Devon and Torbay CCG. We engage Devon residents in the development of local health and social care services and aim to reach those affected by any proposed changes.

We provide, **Training courses** in Disability and Deaf Awareness, Best Practice Accessible Information, British Sign Language (BSL) Level 1, Reasonable Adjustment in the Workplace, Accessible Formats. **Access Auditing Services** - to help your customers access your service including premises, website, marketing materials, mystery shopping. **Advice & Consultancy** - Expert advice and support on all aspects of disability related issues, support and adjustment that can lead you to become an inclusive provider and Disability Confident employer.



The Deaf Together project provided training and peer support opportunities for Deaf people and the opportunity of regular meetings with service providers to give feedback on access for Deaf people. This project finished in December 2018.

Living Options Devon and the Citizens Advice Bureau worked together on the **Welfare Reforms** project, offering help, advice and training for disabled and Deaf people to manage benefits, seek work, budget get



My Future My Way enabled service users and their families to make informed decisions about what support, services and resources they need so they are leading decisions made about their care and support. This project finished in October 2018.

Some of the problems we are trying to address



Disabled adults are more likely to report poor mental health and wellbeing than non-disabled adults.¹



Over a quarter of disabled people say that they do not frequently have choice and control over their daily lives.²



Disabled people are more than twice as likely to be unemployed as non disabled people.³



The proportion of disabled people with no qualifications is nearly three times that of non disabled people.⁴



Across Great Britain, in 2012-14 there was a 45% increase in the % of disabled people who reported having difficulty accessing services in the areas of health, benefits, tax, culture, sport and leisure.¹

49%

of disabled people surveyed by SCOPE said that they feel excluded from society. Just 23% said they feel valued by society.⁵



Scope has found that nearly half of disabled people are chronically lonely.⁶

1 in 3

disabled people say there is still a lot of disability prejudice. Two thirds of disabled people said they have stopped doing something they wanted to in the last year due to other people's attitudes.⁵

What are we doing about these problems?

engagement **training** **consultation** **improving access**
support **advice** **enabling independence** **volunteering opportunities**
information **community events** **campaigning** **advocacy**
signposting **promoting user led ethos** **research** **employment support**
counselling **partnership working** **peer support**

How does this help? (Our interim outcomes)

- Peoples wellbeing will improve
- People will live more independent lives
- People will feel more informed to make choices which meet their needs
- People will have increased skills and confidence
- Decisions which affect people will be made with them, not without them
- People will feel part of a wider community, helping to reduce loneliness and isolation
- Services and projects will be led and delivered by people with disabilities and Deaf people
- Accessible services will be provided for people
- People will feel valued



What are we aiming for? (Our long term impact)

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

The following pages tell you more about how we worked towards this vision in 2017- 2019 and some of our achievements for each of the interim outcomes.

1 Being disabled in Britain: A journey less equal: EHRC, 2017
2 ONS Opinions Survey, 2011
3 Facts and Figures 2018, Papworth Trust, 2018

4 The Disability Perception Gap. Scope, 2018
5 Independent. Confident. Connected Scope, 2018
6 Nearly half of disabled people chronically lonely'. Scope press release, 2017

People's wellbeing will improve

What we have achieved:

Over 4500 people with disabilities and Deaf people were provided with emotional and / or practical support.

More than 5000 people were enabled to enjoy visits to countryside and / or heritage sites.

Examples from 2017-2019

- Alongside our partners on the Devon Advocacy Consortium, we provided **independent, professional advocacy** to 2705 people.
- In partnership with Active Devon, we have worked with sports and activity providers to **create accessible sport and physical activity opportunities for Deaf people**. 149 local Deaf people have got involved in sports / physical activities.
- We provided emotional and practical support to 29 **victims of crime**.
- The See Hear Centre provided emotional and practical support to 1278 people to **help them cope with their sensory impairment**.
- 94 services users, families, friends and carers took part in **person-centred planning sessions**. Participants learned about the principles of person centred planning, explored their skills and considered what is working well in their life and what their goals were.

“Countryside mobility has improved my life beyond measure”. (Countryside Mobility service user)

I feel very calm. I think the exercises look after me. My wellbeing is better. I always feel better after yoga”. (Deaf Get Active participant)

“I had no idea that a seemingly simple piece of equipment could change my life so positively”. (See Hear Centre service user)



82% of people who responded to our surveys stated that their wellbeing has improved as a result of our activities and services. (Total responses 547 people)

People will live more independent lives

What we have achieved:

Over 1750 people were provided with information, advice, training or support to help them remain or become more independent.

More than 5000 people were enabled to visit countryside and heritage sites independently.



Examples from 2017-19

- ◆ We provided one to one coaching and support to 23 Deaf people to help them **prepare for and find employment**.
- ◆ We worked in partnership with 20 Heritage sites to introduce accessibility solutions such as BSL film clips and large print information, enabling people to **visit heritage places independently**.
- We delivered **training sessions to Deaf people to support independence** including Person Centred Planning, Access to Work, 'Speaking Up', and accessing public services.
- We delivered training and produced an on line resource to help people with **recruiting Personal Assistants**.

"It was so good to be out in the countryside under my own steam, a revelation, fantastic scheme. It gave me back my independence and revived my spirits." (Countryside Mobility)

"I feel like I'm making progress and feeling more informed. I needed help getting onto the first rung of the ladder as it were now I'm there I feel more confident." (Welfare Reforms)

"The course definitely made me think about things I would like to achieve particularly in the areas of independence and social life." (My Future My Way)

80% of people who gave us their feedback stated that our services and projects had increased their independence. (Total responses 419 people)

People will be more informed to make choices which meet their needs

What we have achieved:

We provided just under 4000 people with information, support and advice.

“I learned so much. These are areas that I wasn't sure and now I fully understand.”
(Deaf Together Project)

Examples from 2017-19

- 1278 people with a sensory impairment and their families were provided with information and advice about **equipment and support to help them with their daily lives.**
- We provided advice and support to 122 Deaf people to help them understand their **rights and responsibilities with regard to housing.** Information was spread wider through the use of Deaf friendly easy read information and BSL Video clips (481 views).
- 68 people were provided with information about **benefits and welfare reform changes.**
- Over 200 Deaf people participated in regular forums attended by a range of local service providers to receive **information about local services and access for Deaf people.** Deaf people have made changes in their lives as a result of information they received, such as challenging Access to Work decisions and changing pension arrangements.
- Our **Time to Talk** telephone and webcam support service provided 175 people with information and advice on a range of issues including: accommodation; local support groups or activities; equipment for people with disabilities; and voluntary opportunities.

Was surprised that there were things that could help me with my disabilities. Opened up different equipment and services available.”
(See Hear Centre)

“It definitely helped me! I will be able to transfer that knowledge to my life.” (Volunteer)



85% of people who gave their feedback stated that our services had helped them to feel better informed. (Total responses 530 people)

People will have increased skills and confidence

What we have achieved:

We provided training to over 500 people with disabilities and Deaf people.

We provided opportunities for over 370 people to increase their skills and confidence, for example through volunteering, attending peer support groups or receiving coaching and support.

Examples from 2017-19

- Through the Journey to Employment programme we delivered eight 12 week **peer support /confidence building programmes** covering topics such as planning and employability skills, financial awareness and funding opportunities.
- 215 service users provided with **training to enhance independence** including lip reading training, computer, tablet, mobile phone training and 'Skills for Seeing' training.
- Our Deaf Engagement Forums gave 236 Deaf people an opportunity to gain experience of **speaking up** and **sharing their views** in a supported environment.
- My Future My Way volunteers were provided with **opportunities to use their new skills to present at local events, strategic meetings**, groups and roadshows to share their experiences of personalisation and promote person-centred working.

71% of respondents told us they have learned new skills.

68% of respondents told us they feel more confident. (Total responses 366 people)



“I would not have thought I could run meetings before. This has been really good for my confidence.” (Deaf Together volunteer)

“Talking to groups again was a big step. Now I've done it, I feel a lot more confident and less nervous.” (My Future My Way volunteer)

“I feel more confident because I feel I am in control of any situation that may come up.” (See Hear Centre service user)

“I knew I could do it but it forced me out there.” (Volunteer mystery visitor)

Decisions which affect people are made with them, not without them

What we have achieved:

Alongside our partners on the Devon Advocacy Consortium, we provided over 2500 people with advocacy support, empowering them to say what they want, be involved with decisions and secure their rights.

“I felt that they really listened to us. feels promising that the service at the hospital will improve for Deaf people.”
(Deaf Together service user)

Over 770 people took part in consultations about issues affecting the lives of people with disabilities and Deaf people.

Examples from 2017-19

- Alongside our partners in the Devon Engagement Service, we provided people with disabilities and Deaf people with 138 opportunities to give their **views about local developments and services**.
- We supported people with disabilities and Deaf people to take part in **regular meetings for Health and Social Care agencies** such as the local Joint Engagement Board; Health and Wellbeing Board; Safeguarding Adults Board and Commissioning Involvement Group.
- Representatives from local services (for example GP practices, police, law firms and local councils) came to our **Deaf Engagement forums to consult with Deaf people**.
- **94** people learned about person centred planning, empowering them with **ideas and information about how to get the care and support they need**.



“As a collective voice we can influence commissioners to ensure that disabled people are treated as individuals and that each person's issues is different and systems need to be adapted for individuals.”
(My Future My Way volunteer)”

78% of respondents told us they have “felt listened to” by service providers.

(Total responses 214 people)

People will feel part of a wider community; helping to reduce loneliness and isolation

What we have achieved:

We provided support or services to help people feel less isolated and more a part of their wider communities to over 6500 people.

Examples from 2017-19

- 175 people used our **Time to Talk service**, either by contacting our support telephone and webcam service, attending one of our Chat and Share groups or receiving personal counselling.
- 200 Deaf people attended Deaf Together forums which were a chance to share experiences and views / **meet new people and provide peer support**.
- One of the key benefits of the Countryside Mobility Scheme identified by members has been that the all-terrain mobility scooters provide members with **the opportunity to spend time with friends and family** whilst enjoying an outing together.
- We provided people with a hearing impairment advice about equipment which **enables them to keep in touch and communicate with others better** e.g. telephone amplifiers, hearing aid support, neck loops.

“Some Deaf people feel lost or lonely or lacking in confidence. I saw the project help people like that particularly. It brings people together to support each other.” (Deaf Together volunteer)

“Friendliness of people in a similar situation. Good to be able to chat.” (Time to Talk participant)



“The monthly meetings really help me. As I live alone and don't have visitors it enables me to spend time with people and have a chat.” (See Hear Centre Support group)

“There's lots of activities we do to keep fit and also just socialising and meeting new friends. Its really nice to be social.” (Deaf Get Active participant)

65% of respondents told us that our services have enabled them to enjoy spending time with other people or they feel less lonely / isolated. (Total responses 530 people)

Services and projects will be delivered by people with disabilities and Deaf people

Living Options Devon ensures all our services are led by people with disabilities and Deaf people

- **78% of our Board of Trustees are people with disabilities**
- **Our projects and services are led by steering groups which include people with lived experience**
- **One third of our staff team are people with disabilities or Deaf British Sign Language users**
- **We involve volunteers who have lived experience in our work. 70% of our volunteers have disabilities or are Deaf.**
- **We always consult our service users on the development of new services to ensure they are based on their priorities and needs.**

Mark has had a hearing loss in both ears since he was five years old. Around 15 years ago, Mark joined the See Hear Centre Advisory group and has been involved ever since.

The Advisory Group meet quarterly with the Manager and team. Mark and the rest of the Group listen to progress updates about the See Hear Centre and offer advice as to how things could be improved.

Mark feels his lived experience of hearing loss helps him to be able to offer this support and guidance.

Mark enjoys the feeling of involvement with the Advisory Group, feeling valued and that people want to hear what he has to say. He feels the group can make a difference and their views are taken on board.



Accessible services will be provided for people

What we have achieved:

Through providing consultation opportunities, training, access audits and partnership working we strived to make services and places more accessible.

Examples from 2017-19

- We have worked with 20 heritage sites creating products including **large print guides; BSL video tours; easy read guides and visual stories for people with autism**. 119 mystery visits at local heritage places, undertaken by people with disabilities and Deaf people to **provide feedback and suggestions to improve accessibility**.
- **All terrain mobility scooters** are available to hire at 47 countryside and heritage partner locations, enabling access for people with limited mobility.
- 101 **service providers consulted with our service users** to inform the development of accessible services.
- We worked with 68 local sports providers to **improve access to sports / physical activity for Deaf British Sign Language users**.
- In Exeter alone we commented on 33 **planning applications highlighting access issues**.

“As BSL is my first language I felt included, some Deaf people with BSL are not good at reading English on the boards so the clips are very good to watch and know more about Wetlands.” (BSL video tour user)

“The independence & freedom it gives me enables me to see things I otherwise wouldn't see.” (Tramper user)

“Really enjoy going. Its Deaf friendly. The coach is changing things to suit the group.” (Deaf Get Active participant)



Over 90% of Tramper users stated that hiring Trampers had improved access to heritage and countryside places to a great extent. (Total response 201 people)

People will feel valued

What we have achieved:

We had 201 volunteers working across our projects, helping with project delivery, fundraising, or joining project steering groups.

Over 700 people took part in consultations. People were able to share their views; be listened to and feel that their opinions and ideas are valued.

We offered a variety of volunteering opportunities Including:

- Carrying out **mystery visits** to local heritage sites to give their feedback on accessibility.
- Providing **peer support** over the telephone to other people with disabilities.
- Acting as **'buddies' for Deaf people** encouraging them to be more active.
- Providing **office support**, gaining valuable experience and skills
- Supporting the See Hear Centre team to provide **information and advice** to people with sensory impairments
- Helping with **fundraising** activities
- Supporting people with disabilities to produce **person centred** plans

"I feel proud that I got involved and made a difference." (Deaf volunteer)



"I really enjoy making a difference to the people and being part of the service." (See Hear Centre volunteer)

"This is an important thread in my life. It makes me feel good as I am involved in something worthwhile". (See Hear Centre Volunteer)

"What it has given me is the experience of getting paid work. It makes me feel like I'm valued." (Heritage Ability volunteer)

75% of respondents told us they felt they were making a difference for people with disabilities and Deaf people, either through volunteering or attending consultations. (Total responses 249 people)

Examples of our impact

George is a British Sign Language user. He was keen to get more fit and healthy. He had experienced communication barriers when trying to participate in sports in the past.

Deaf Get Active has provided accessible activities with communication support and George has tried new sports such as volleyball, yoga and boxing. George feels healthier; he has lost weight and has found his general wellbeing has improved. *“It has given me the opportunity to take part in new sports. Opened doors to places”.*

Judy has long term physical disabilities. As well as housing and financial issues, she was feeling very isolated as she has no friends in the area. The Time to Talk team supported her over a period of time providing the practical support she needed and helping her to build confidence to find a volunteering placement, enabling her to begin to feel less on her own and more a part of her local community. She is now thinking more positively about her future and thinking about career decisions.

Jenny has been a Countryside Mobility member for 2 years and regularly hires Trampers in countryside locations close to her home. Access to the Trampers has enabled her to spend time in the countryside with her family where she used to have to stay at home or sit in the car and wait. The Trampers have given her the chance to revisit places she used to go: *“I could not possibly enjoy my life so much if I didn't have a 'Tramper.'”*

Matthew has severe physical disabilities as well as being on the autistic spectrum and with some mental health needs. He has felt let down and ‘rail roaded’ into agreeing with things he didn’t understand.

Using a person-centred approach, the advocate is enabling the client to take an active role and fully understand and engage with the assessment process. The Advocate visits often to re-explain information and listen to Matthew’s concerns. The process is taking place in very small stages and the client feels he is understanding what is happening and being given the time to discuss issues and make choices.

All names in case studies are pseudonyms

Thank you

.. to our volunteers

We have been overwhelmed by the support of our volunteers. Without you it would not be possible!

.. to our partners

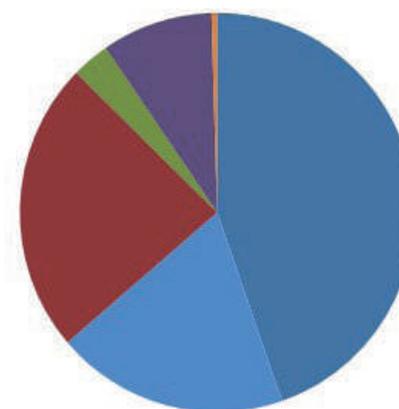
- Active Devon
- Citizens Advice Devon
- Hlkmat Devon CIC
- Proud2Be
- Westbank
- Rethink Mental Illness
- Age UK Devon
- Devon Voluntary Action
- Plymouth MIND
- Vocal Advocacy
- Young Devon
- Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council

.. to our funders including:

- Devon County Council
- Devon Clinical Commissioning Group
- The Henry Smith Charity
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- National Lottery Community Fund
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Peter Harrison Foundation
- Sport England
- Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust

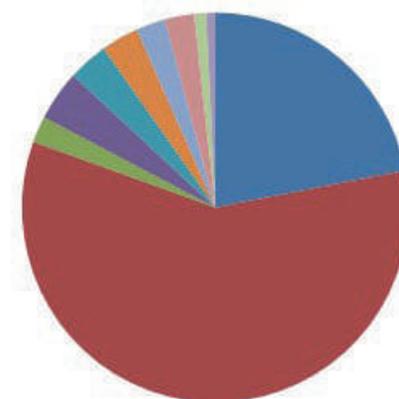
Our Financial Performance

Income



- Public Sector Funding Own Delivery 45%
- Public Sector Funding Subcontracted 19%
- Grants, Trusts, Foundations 24%
- Access to Work 3%
- Sustainable 9%
- Donations, Legacies <1%

Expenditure



- Partner Costs 22%
- Staff and Volunteer Costs 59%
- Depreciation 2%
- Premises 4%
- Office Costs 3%
- Access to Work 3%
- Training 1%
- Communication Support 1%
- Professional Fees 2%
- Delivery Other Costs 3%

What's next 2020 - 2021

We will:

- Develop our new strategic plan for the next five years in full consultation with service users.
- Focus on our sustainability through extending the range of our accessibility related products and services.
- Engage Devon residents in the development of local health and social care services, reaching those affected by any proposed changes.
- Address loneliness and isolation faced by disabled and Deaf people by running a phone support line, life coaching, counselling and groups .
- Develop our engagement with current and potential services users across the projects, via multi media channels including new digital services and a new more interactive user friendly website.
- Attend local events and community groups, ensuring we continue to reach out and engage with existing and new service users.
- CEO to continue to lead and influence strategic developments at local, regional and national level, in particular focussing on the importance of social prescribing and the role of the Voluntary and Community Sector across Devon County.

Get involved!

Help us make next year the best year yet!

Volunteer: Join our team of volunteers working on our projects and supporting events.

Leave a Gift in Your Will: Help us support disabled and Deaf people now and in the future through leaving a gift in your will.

Become a Corporate Supporter: Whether through donations or volunteering, your company's support will help to fulfil part of your Corporate Social Responsibility plan whilst making a real difference to local disabled people.

Sign up to our newsletter: Sign up to our newsletter for regular updates on our services and news.

Fundraise for us: Taking on a new challenge or running an event? Consider raising money for Living Options Devon and make a difference to local disabled and Deaf people.

For more information on all the above please visit www.livingoptions.org or contact us using the details on the back page of this booklet.

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