

Disability Strategy Update 2020

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Introduction

2020 has presented a number of challenges right across our community, but it has presented additional challenges for disabled Islanders as access to some services was affected by public health restrictions and key opportunities to meet with friends and carers were limited due to COVID-19.

Despite the challenges that the pandemic brought, government departments and the community worked together in partnership to demonstrate resilience and support for disabled Islanders. The implementation of the Disability Strategy was severely impacted by COVID-19 but as we move into 2021 the Implementation Group* has met and agreed a new way to use the experience and expertise on the island to implement the strategy and build on existing partnerships.

The final part of the Disability Discrimination Legislation came into force in September 2020 and support and guidance has been provided to organisations through Liberate and Citizens Advice Jersey.

This report provides an update from a number of the partners the implementation group works with and is written in their own words.

Deputy Judy Martin
Minister for Social Security
Deputy, St Helier No. 1

*A list of Implementation Group members can be found from page 30.

Background

The Disability Strategy was developed in partnership and focused on 5 main priorities, namely, to ensure disabled Islanders;

- Have support to communicate and access information
- Have greater access to the island
- Have good health and wellbeing
- Have access to education, employment and enriching activities
- Have equal rights and experience equality

The strategy is supported by an Implementation Group which consists of disabled Islanders, voluntary and community organisations, private sector representation and Government of Jersey officers from a range of departments.

The Government Plan focussed on supporting the implementation of the strategy with a funding commitment for key posts and actions.

As the Island dealt with the COVID19 pandemic, implementation of the strategy was delayed. However, many of the partners from the implementation group worked together to support disabled Islanders with help and advice. It is clear that COVID19 had a significant impact on the wellbeing of disabled Islanders.

Current position

As Jersey moved through the Safe Exit Framework, implementation could recommence and during September and October the following progress was made;

- Two Disability Inclusion Officers have been appointed
- The implementation group has met in person (and virtually) and agreed to form five working groups around the key priority areas and meet up as a whole, three times a year
- The meeting enabled disabled Islanders and providers an opportunity to reflect on the impact of COVID19
- Customer and Local Services are in the process of recruiting a project manager to oversee the delivery of the disability strategy
- The Learning Disability Cluster has now joined the disability implementation group
- The disability implementation group are linking with Liberate to form an access panel to advise and train organisations around accessibility
- The disability implementation group are working with Volunteer.je and the Bosdet Foundation to develop a community volunteer driver scheme for both individuals and organisations
- The disability implementation group have agreed next steps and actions
- Funding has been obtained by organisations from the Jersey Community Foundation to support employment projects for disabled Islanders

A number of projects to raise awareness and improve inclusion have been agreed and will commence this year

Next steps

The disability implementation group will focus on the below actions as per the Government Plan for 2020 and 2021.

- Ensure that discrimination legislation is provided in accessible formats - incl. BSL (British Sign Language)
- Establish a reference group of disabled volunteers to advise on the accessibility of buildings. Train group to provide advice, guidance and support for an Island access audit
- Introduce a community-based post of volunteer driver co-ordinator to set-up and manage an island-wide volunteer driver scheme
- Promote opportunities for disabled Islanders to be active citizens - for example as jurors, board members, elected representatives
- Establish working group to promote disability awareness Island-wide, including working closely with media outlets
- Co-ordinate an annual event where disabled Islanders can share their experiences with elected members

2020

2020 will be a year that we will all remember and although there were significant and ongoing challenges, the disabled community in Jersey has once again demonstrated the strength of our community and our organisations.

A number of partners have provided an update.

Liberate

Accès accreditation scheme audits

To date, the Accès auditors have visited Police Headquarters, Jersey Library, the Central Market, the Household Recycling Centre, Mourier House and the States Building, which includes the Greffe, States Chamber and Royal Court.

Unsurprisingly, the older listed buildings that make up the Government's property portfolio have distinct challenges, such as narrow corridors, no lifts, heavy/awkward doors and big granite steps up to the front door. The adjustments we are recommending for these buildings rely heavily on employees being alert to the fact that they are a key part of the 'reasonable adjustment'.

The newer, or newly refurbished, buildings all display some consideration for the needs of people with disabilities, such as disabled parking spaces, compliant lifts, accessible toilets.

Some of these features are exemplary: Mourier House's consistent labelling and colour coding of each floor to aid navigation; DVS's accessible toilet and shower facility; and, Police Headquarters' evacuation chairs on every floor. All buildings have some areas where improvement is needed.

Due to COVID restrictions, we have only managed to deliver one face-to-face training session to Library and Property Holdings employees. The session was well received with good feedback from those who attended.

And, this a consistent theme: the employees we have met as we have toured the buildings are keen to tell us about their experiences of working with people with different disabilities and any pitfalls they have found with the building in order to improve its accessibility. This is really encouraging as it is the positive engagement of the Government's employees who will make a building accessible. So many barriers to participation for people with disabilities can be removed through a willingness to be part of the solution.

Beresford Street Kitchen (BSK)

In January 2019 Beresford Street Kitchen began a 3-year contract running the canteen at Police HQ and since then 12 crew members have had the opportunity to train there. It has had a positive impact on how crew members perceive and trust the police and one crew member volunteered to take part in the Hate Crime campaign.

Our outside event catering service really took off in 2019 with the crew preparing and serving formal dinners and cream teas for up to 200 guests. The crew even held a take-over event at Pomme D'Or. These events were a great opportunity for the crew to demonstrate their skills to a wider audience.

The crew were delighted to be acknowledged for their hard work and professionalism in a series of industry awards in 2019 including Casual Dining Experience of the Year at Jersey Style Awards and Best Team in Food & Drink at Sure Customer Service Awards.

2020 has been a rather different year than planned! We made the decision to close all sites in advance of lockdown and transform our business model.

As a social enterprise we rely heavily on our traded income. We ran a home delivery service of freshly cooked meals and introduced a Pay It Forward scheme for people who wanted to pay for meals for people who needed support. At the height of lockdown, we were delivering 1,200 meals a week!

We kept in contact with the crew through phone calls, emails, competitions and group calls on Zoom. These methods of communication didn't work for everyone and we were acutely aware of how much the crew were missing coming to work.

We were delighted to open La Hougue Bie Tea Rooms, our latest venture, in June and nine of our existing crew were able to return to work.

The main site re-opened in July and the crew have shown amazing resilience in adapting to the new rules and routines and in how quickly they fit back into being at work.

Lockdown has given us the opportunity to pause and look to the future. We are developing the Aspire Life Skills Programme which is an adult education scheme for crew working at the Aspire Charitable Trust social enterprises including Beresford Street Kitchen, Beresford Street Print Works, La Hougue Bie Tea Rooms and the Police HQ canteen. The programme has just been launched and will enable crew to further develop their employability, personal and social abilities and general life skills. The programme will be delivered in-house through a series of challenges and certifications.

We also held our first social impact survey in September to measure outcomes. The results are extremely positive and demonstrate the impact training and employment have on the lives of people with learning disabilities and autism.

Some highlights:

- Since becoming a BSK crew member:
- The average life satisfaction score has increased by 21% to 8.7
- The crew reported a 78% increase in never feeling lonely
- There was a 62% reduction in those who rated having high anxiety
- 79% feel that their life is better now
- 79% feel more valued
- 68% have more pride
- 79% feel that being a BSK crew member gives them the confidence to move into another role in the future
- 82% have more friends since becoming a BSK crew member
- 50% have joined new social and sports clubs since becoming a BSK crew member
- 100% think their job makes other people happy
- 100% felt supported and listened to by the Beresford Street Kitchen staff

EyeCan

EYECAN is concerned that Islanders with sight loss and dual sensory loss may not be receiving the health care support they require due to communication difficulties and lack of sight loss awareness. This can lead to anxiety, failure to diagnose in a timely way, and, particularly in Care settings, lack of staff awareness which can lead to residents being neglected and becoming increasingly isolated. EYECAN will be working with the Disability Implementation Group to develop solutions to the issues raised.

EYECAN deliver a range of support and services, including:

- Rehabilitation: mobility training, activities of daily living support, matching people to assistive equipment, accessible communication support (IT, phones, text etc), advice and support, helping people understand and adjust to sight loss
- Welfare (support with CLS), Grants (subject to financial review) – Quality of Life grants – Wellbeing, Education (to date: Counselling courses, pottery, music tuition, massage course, English as a foreign language), Counselling, Equipment, Adaptions
- Support with Housing applications (appropriate specifications), Medical Board reviews etc
- Advocacy – individual (eg. ensuring client questions asked and recorded at appointments, supporting re complaints), Group (advising sight loss issues to Services, facilitating Sight Board), input on Partnership Boards (carers, dDeaf, Disability Partnership, DSDG)
- Hospital visits

- Assistance / endorsement re: Blue Badges, reduced rate TV licences, Avanchi Access
- Training – Sight loss awareness training (eg. Care homes, corporate, new input nurses, GP Symposium, WI, Scouts)
- Advice regarding access premises and communication
- Social opportunity (social clubs including meals, raffle, bingo, quiz, entertainment, outings) and activities (art and craft, gardening), transport arranged when required
- Signposting and referrals, connecting clients to services (during Covid to volunteer support)
- Awareness raising events – EYECAN events and joint events (eg. EYECAN Solutions, Closer to Home)
- Children's events – to link families (working with specialist teachers from Education)
- Supporting other agencies with tech advice – Education, JET
- Eye Health – Awareness raising, Children's spectacles voucher scheme, Community Optical financial support (subject to financial review) to obtain glasses when Special Payment not an option
- Projects – (working with other agencies re shared objectives eg. Mobility Scooter initiative re guidance and standards, Deafblind booklet)
- Awareness raising / Awareness Dates – media, community

Les Amis

Les Amis took the decision to protect their staff and residents by going into lockdown ahead of the Government with all back-office staff working from home. The Management function was split into Gold and Silver teams, with Gold team as first point of contact fielding all calls & emails then filtering down to two silver teams.

New rotas were introduced with less footfall through the houses, Staff were on shift for longer periods of time with more rest days off in between, with Registered Managers working from home. Staff liked the longer shift patterns, so we are looking at incorporating this moving forward.

The Maintenance team were repurposed and responsible for shopping, medications and PPE deliveries. Shopping habits were interesting, highlighted by how much we were spending unnecessarily. We will be looking at changing to on-line as we come out of lockdown.

Daily reporting was introduced which covered temperatures, shopping, medications, wellbeing etc. for both staff and residents in each house. We appointed a Health & Mental Wellbeing practitioner for both staff and residents to also support HR and to bring another level of expertise.

Respite closed, one of our respite houses was set up to function as a hot cell, we set up a team which would go in if we needed to invoke the plan, and they received training.

Staff went above and beyond during Covid. This time has given us more opportunities to analyse working practices and become more person centred in our approach.

We were able to meet with HCS and share best practice, this has worked so well we will be keeping this moving forward on a monthly basis.

We encouraged the Learning Disability Cluster to be used, where organisations can meet and discuss best practice, research, anything which has a direct impact on service users, moving away from competitiveness and working as equal partners. This will also see the introduction of a professional Charter.

What we found complicated, was the States guidance around the categories as the Government moved quickly through the unlock phases, trying to get guidance from the JCC. It led to confusion and frustrations with families when we couldn't allow them to meet with family members or go back to work. We would like to hope that this would be addressed in the future.

Mencap

Jersey Mencap only have a small team but as we closed our projects we identified those members (adults with a learning disability) that lived alone or with older parents and offered regular contact with calls, messages etc.

We're lucky that our small team have been with Mencap for many years so our members received a call from someone already familiar to them which I think made a big difference. The purpose was just to touch base and chat but in a couple of cases we then signposted to other agencies where needed.

With our art project closed we switched to posting art packs. What evolved from this was more engagement as our members were keen to send us pictures of their art and craft lockdown projects so we could share these on our social media.

As restrictions were lifted, we met with our members for walks on a one-to-one basis and offered small group sessions at our pond project. This gave parent-carers a small breather and our members a change of scenery and the chance to work outside.

The past two months have been really focussed on easing members out of lockdown and encouraging them to re-engage with activities and getting back into a routine so much harder than I anticipated.

Looking ahead we're now offering more activities via Zoom to accompany the small the group sessions that we're running.

As with all charities – all our fundraising events were cancelled so that has had an impact but we have been able to use the time productively and draw up plans for new projects in 2021.

Acorn

Lockdown was certainly an unprecedented challenging period of fast-moving change, a time to think of solutions and new ways of working.

Fortunately, JET has always been good at change, responding to the needs of our clients, and that certainly worked in our favour and all our staff were really flexible. We adapted our service so that clients were able to have continued support at a time when they probably needed it most, particularly in the area of wellbeing.

I am delighted that the results of client surveys, both with the Employment team and at Acorn Training and Development about the services we offered during lockdown, were overwhelmingly positive and showed that people felt supported.

We didn't cut any services but provided them in a different way, supporting via phone or email and, as soon as we were able to, staff organised distanced walks and activities like beach cleans, instead of projects at Acorn.

New procedures were introduced, with strict staff bubbles at our Acorn, Oakfield and Kensington Chambers sites. Our Job Clubs continued to operate, but with one-to-one appointments, not drop-ins, and that has worked very well.

The closure of Acorn meant a loss of £279,000 income. Thankfully the Government Co-Funded Payroll Scheme softened the blow and, as things improved over the summer, we found the support from the Jersey Funders Group to be invaluable.

When it reopened after 15 weeks, Acorn Reuse had a different entrance, new opening hours and a 72-hour storage system for donated goods – which resulted in something we would never have thought about before, an improved new drive-through area, which will free up shop floor space. Now we are planning to make this a permanent fixture.

Looking ahead, we particularly have concerns for the young people leaving school. If you have a disability, you are 50% less likely to be employed. And if you are a young person, you are a further 30% less likely to gain employment. Some of our clients are the least likely to be employed of all demographics, and we expect our referrals to rise, particularly in relation to mental health issues.

Another thing JET always does, and which worked very well in lockdown, is work together with other charities. We utilised the Acorn staff who were being covered by the cofunding scheme to supply up to 10 volunteer delivery drivers three times a week to help the Salvation Army food bank.

Move More Jersey

2020 has been a challenging year for all however throughout, Jersey Sport have committed to support Islanders to maintain their physical and mental wellbeing by focusing on the importance of physical activity. This has been even more pertinent for those Islanders who have a disability.

In September 2020, Jersey Sport launched the Government's new 'Inspiring an Active Jersey Strategy' which will be delivered by Jersey Sport, through collaboration between Government departments, the island's volunteer and community sectors, and business.

The strategy, published by the Government of Jersey and Jersey Sport, sets the vision of making Jersey a healthier, more productive and fairer society by being one of the most physically active populations in the world. The mission is to increase physical activity by 10%, by 2030. The strategy lays out a clear vision and mission with a set of guiding principles to continually harness and focus the efforts required to tackle the significant challenges, presented by physical inactivity.

A fundamental part of the strategy is increasing opportunity for all Islanders to engage in meaningful and innovative opportunities for physical activity and breaking down barriers to exercise, especially for those with a disability or minority groups. Further information about the Inspiring an Active Jersey Strategy can be found at: www.jerseysport.je/IAJStrategy

A full time Disability and Inclusion Officer has recently been appointed at Jersey Sport and they will start work in January 2021. This officer will work closely with the newly appointed Government Disability Officers and Project Manager to deliver the Government Disability Strategy and Inspiring an Active Jersey Strategy.

Welfare Calls

During lockdown, the Jersey Sport staff team made regular welfare phone calls to service users, many of whom have long term medical conditions, are vulnerable or elderly. This included Move More referral clients, adult class attendees, health walk leaders and participants.

These calls were very well received, with many stating that they were the only calls they got in the week. Staff provided exercise and wellbeing advice as well as in some cases help with other concerns such as organising home food delivery, helping with internet problems and just offering a listening ear.

Some of the clients had not left their homes during lockdown, so the Jersey Sport team built a 'relationship' with them which has enabled many to feel supported to return to the Move More programmes as restrictions eased.

Exercise Resources

Jersey Sport created a number of resources during lockdown, to encourage Islanders to become more active. This included exercise guidelines, downloadable exercise sheets of standing and sitting

exercises, YouTube exercise videos and made the Soulgenic wellbeing app available free-of-charge to all Islanders with easy to follow programmes on; mind and body; fitness; health; and nutrition.

Move More Zoom Classes

Move More Jersey introduced Zoom classes for existing clients whilst 'physical programmes' were unable to run.

A variety of classes were offered each week which proved popular both for people's mental and physical wellbeing.

"I took a zoom class today. I was thanking the instructor and the team for doing the zoom which has been a lifeline for me, and it seems everyone else who takes the classes. When lockdown started, I was confined to the bedroom as my daughter who lives with me works from home, is in the lounge. We share my one bed flat as she has fibromyalgia, I myself was told to isolate as I have diabetes and had a triple heart bypass two and a half years ago. I tried to do You tube classes (not the same, no contact) until you started the Zoom. I would just like to thank you all for saving me from feeling sorry for myself and making me and all of us have a great excuse to get out of bed in the morning which helps with being positive about facing the rest of the day."

As indoor classes re-started, a reduced Zoom timetable of 3 classes a week for those who are still shielding at home remains on offer and it is our intention to continue to provide this for the foreseeable future.

Move More Adult Classes (Referral & PAYG)

The Move More Jersey adult programme was reinstated in its entirety at the end of July for both Referral and PAYG clients.

The uptake was initially slow with many existing clients being classified within the 'shielding' category and as such concerned about being in classes, however uptake has started to increase and the Zoom classes are a popular feature for those still shielding or nervous to return to indoor activity.

Notably, since reopening, the most significant reasons for referral is for mental health, anxiety, stress.

A testimonial from a referral client:

“I have found that improving my general fitness helps me emotionally and the social aspect of the classes, seeing the Move More Jersey team, in turn helps me cope with the pain better. I'm also convinced that in helping to keep my weight down that has a positive impact on the pain. In particular I feel much safer knowing that you are there to ensure I'm working to a program and not putting pressure on areas that could cause a flare up.”

Walks

Move More Jersey are currently organising 13 walks a week with over 200 walkers registered on the system since lockdown. These walks are aimed at those with limited mobility (Level 1: 10-30mins) up to accomplished walkers at Level 4.

During lockdown Mencap approached Jersey Sport to introduce a weekly walk for adults with learning disabilities as they had become very isolated and deconditioned. With support from Mencap staff, a weekly walk was started. 5 participants initially attended with numbers growing weekly and over 20 now regularly attending. The Mencap manager reported a notable increase in the participants confidence. We received the following feedback from the Mencap manager:

“Just had a lovely chat and email from one of our members he talked about having lost confidence in going out during lockdown and really wasn’t sure about joining the walking group but his words were “best thing I could have done” & “it sets me up for the week and even on Monday when the weather wasn’t great, I still went and really enjoyed it”

Below is a copy of an email from this client:

Jersey Mencap suggests starting a Monday morning walk with Jersey Sport?

“I thought I might try this i had been feel a bit low with everything that’s happen this year re lock down so I try it. I think is the best thing i have done for a long time you walk with someone a just have a chat about general thing don’t get me wrong family all comes first but some time just meeting some new given you confidence in your self again I feel that this should continue is only a hour a week but is starts your week off relay well. Good on you Mencap for try something different!!”

Disability Sessions - Sportability

Jersey Sport run a weekly Sportability session through partnerships with Les Amis, Beresford Street Kitchen, Jersey Youth Service Inclusion Project and Mencap for young adults with disabilities. During lockdown the team worked with the partners to deliver weekly social Zoom calls hosted by Move More Jersey with a physical activity component and physically distanced outdoor activity classes. Sportability was reinstated in September and continues to be very well attended.

Cycle Without Limits

Jersey Sport recently launched Jersey's first inclusive cycling centre thanks to a number of corporate, charitable and private sponsors. 17 adapted bikes are now available at the centre for Islanders with a disability. Weekly sessions will be run/led by Jersey Sport Cycle Instructors and specifically trained volunteers to support sessions for all age groups.

Autism Jersey

Autism Jersey, as with all care provider services, was significantly impacted upon in its ability to maintain and deliver key services. We were able to maintain the essential support we provide to autistic adults, for whom we provide long-term supported living care packages; as this is essential in enabling people to live their lives in their own homes within the community. We were also able to maintain the majority of our adult short break service due to being able to work within the Government guidelines for social distancing.

The biggest impact was on having to stop the provision of our children's services, which included short break services, family support services and holiday clubs. This was regrettable, and difficult for us due to knowing the impact upon both the children and their families. However, it was impossible to adhere to the Government guidelines to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both the child, staff and families.

Where services were stopped, creative and innovative ways were used to ensure that contact was maintained with both the individuals we support and their families, with the use of IT, social media, and virtual contacts.

As an organisation we took the decision not to furlough any members of staff. This was due to us operating with the use of both contract and zero hour staff. Therefore, all contract staff were maintained, with priority given to ensure we maintain our adult provision.

The greatest concern early on was accessing and the use of PPE. This created a greater sense of anxiety across our organisation. However, overall, staff responded very well, and in a very professional manner, and must be acknowledged and recognised for doing so.

Citizens Advice Jersey

Our staff have of course faced their own challenges during this time and our clients were also understandably nervous about the whole situation. With the support of our Board, volunteers and staff, we have been able to continue our service and finding new ways to service our clients' needs has been a challenge that, as a collective, we have risen to.

The Government support schemes such as CRESS, the payroll scheme, enhanced protection for tenants in terms of evictions and rent rises have all added up to a package of measures that many of our clients have benefitted from in various ways.

Fiscal stimulus measures in the shape of £100 payments for Income Support recipients and the subsequent £100 card / voucher scheme are innovative ways in which to boost economic activity and public confidence.

The decision to make the £100 payment universal and the subsequent analysis of the data collected by tracking this spend, may just prove to be the lightbulb moment that builds the modelling and provides the catalyst for our benefits system to move in a new direction.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges of 2020 we move ahead in 2021 with Officers in post, the implementation group revitalised and a positivity that we can make significant progress to deliver the strategy.

To conclude, we are very fortunate to have a large number of organisations who are committed to working together to improve inclusion and by implementing this strategy we will continue to improve the lives of all Islanders.

Implementation Group

Communication and access to information

- Malcom Ferey
- Peter le Feuvre
- Angela Goddard
- Jim Hopley
- Steph de la Cour
- Shaun Findlay
- Laura Flynn
- Claire De Than
- Jamie Laffoley Edwards
- Nicholas Ozouf
- Esther Tremeer
- Rebecca Bull
- Tracey O'Reagan
- Cormac McTimothy
- Nic Turner

Access to the Island

- James Thompson
- Dave Malpas
- Jim Hopley
- Ant Lewis
- Peter le Feuvre
- Angela Goddard
- Jen Stafford
- Lorie Rault
- Lesley Bratch
- Shane Crocker
- Clare Smith
- Vic Tanner Davy
- Julia Clively
- David de Gruchy

Good health and wellbeing

- Cirsty de Gruchy
- Tori Ducker
- Ant Lewis
- Alex Wiles
- Lisa Perkins/Shane Jennings
- Adelina D'Orlea
- Clair Cousins
- Paul Rendell
- David Lord
- Rachel Sawyer
- Tess Gilani
- Cormac McTimothy
- Jen Stafford
- Sarah Shaw

Education and enriching activities

- Rachel Sawyer
- Cirsty de Gruchy
- Steph de la Cour
- Lesley Bratch
- Shane Crocker
- Giselle Willis/Caryl Peree – Sarah Jane Walker

- Clair Cousins
- Gabriele Schiessl
- Jocelyn Butterworth
- Zoe Morrison
- Sarah Shaw

Equal rights

- Steph de la Cour
- Chris Dunne
- Shaun Findlay
- Adelina D'Orlenes,
- Laura Stark
- Claire De Than
- Jocelyn Butterworth
- Gabriele Schiessl
- Nicholas Ozouf
- Pip Hesketh
- Vic Tanner Davy
- Nic Turner