

HEAR OUR VOICE



supporting independent living

Strategy

September 2015-April 2019



History of WECIL

The West of England Centre for Inclusive Living (WECIL) is an organisation run by and for disabled people.

In 1989 a group of disabled people formed the Avon Coalition of Disabled People (ACDP), part of their work involved campaigning for Independent Living Services to be made available to disabled people.

Independent Living Services were the first incarnation of Direct Payments and made it possible for disabled people to have more independence and choice over their lives by employing a Personal Assistant to meet their needs. ACDP

were successful in their mission and in 1994 they secured funding to develop a 'Centre for Independent Living' (CIL) to deliver Independent Living Services in the Avon area and a new organisation called the **Avon Centre for Independent Living** was born.

In our first year we established our aims and objectives and registered as a Charity and Limited Company. We were officially launched in September 1995 by Jane Campbell, the then Chair of the British Council of Disabled People.

About Us

WECIL is a user-led organisation; this means that we are governed by a Board of Trustees (at least 75% of whom are disabled people) and our Members (all of whom are disabled people). We also actively encourage job applications from disabled people and over 40% of our workforce are disabled people.

The Social Model of Disability underpins all that we do at WECIL. This asserts that disablement arises from the organisational, environmental, economic and attitudinal barriers that disabled people face on a daily basis.

Consequently, the Social Model is a tool for social change – we see ‘disability’ as a collective responsibility that involves all of society.

Our aspirations for equality and inclusion continue to develop to keep up with current social change and environmental factors.

This was reflected in us changing our name to replace ‘Independent’ with ‘Integrated’ and then to ‘Inclusive’.



Our mission

We are an organisation of disabled people working together to enable choice. We challenge the barriers to independent living through the delivery of high quality support and advice.

Our services support disabled people to overcome the barriers they face, so that they can live independent lives. We do this by working in a holistic way – knowing that every person has a unique

set of needs that span many areas of their life. We are able to offer a range of in-house services, as well as make referrals to partner organisations to ensure people feel fully supported.

We co-produce all of our services, so that disabled people are able to shape the support they receive and have a mechanism for challenging inequality.



Our services

Direct Payment Support Services

WECIL has been delivering Direct Payment support services for over 20 years; this service provides expert knowledge and guidance on all aspects of managing a Direct Payment and being an employer. The service also includes a payroll and managed account service, a personal assistant (PA) matching service, PA apprenticeships and employer training.

Support Services

We provide specialist Advice and Advocacy services to ensure disabled people have their voices heard and have access to the help and support they are entitled to. Services include:

a telephone helpline that offers advice on any disability related topic, care assessment advocacy, benefits and benefit appeals advice and a form completion service. We also have a successful peer-support network that runs social activities, peer-to-peer support and acts as a consultation mechanism.

Young People's Services

WECIL runs a full range of activities for children and young people up to the age of twenty five. These include Saturday clubs, youth groups, participation & empowerment groups, adult transition groups and integrated activity sessions that bring disabled and non-disabled young people together. All activities have a focus on independent living skills, knowing your rights as a young disabled person and of course, having fun!





CEO Report

Strategy 2012-2015: The story so far...

The funding for voluntary sector organisations has changed significantly over the past four years. Overall, there is far less money available; outcomes are more restrictive, spot purchasing has replaced block contracts and minimal overhead costs are recoverable.

The WECIL 2012-2015 strategy was developed to address the new environment we found ourselves in. We specifically focused on how we could diversify our income streams, transition our processes to meet spot purchasing requirements and meet the new 'more service for less money' commissioning model.

Some of the changes we made included:

- Reducing our running costs by moving premises and making internal changes

- Creating a volunteer programme and recruiting support staff to increase the capacity of our services
- Developing a new model of direct employer's support that offers better value, and is available to Direct Payment recipients and people that fund their own care and support.
- Diversifying the source of our income through social enterprise activities and consultation work
- Working with partner organisations to deliver joint services– both as a lead provider and as a sub-contracted service.

With lots of hard work and dedication from the whole of the WECIL team, we successfully met our strategic objectives and are proud of our achievements.



Strategy 2015 – 2019: Our next steps...

In considering our direction for the next four years, we consulted with our members and people that use our services, also looking at the changes taking place within the Health and Social Care and Welfare to Work sectors and the impact that they may have on disabled people.

It is clear that the need for WECIL services will continue to grow over the coming years, and as we are still in a time of reduced funding, we cannot rely on our income increasing in line with that need. Neither can we continue to focus on reducing running costs and offering more for less, as we would have to do so by compromising on our values and the quality of support we offer. For us, this is not an option, as

an organisation we have gone through many cycles of improvement, but our ethos always remains true and strong.

We are a user-led organisation; putting disabled people and the model of social disability at the heart of everything we do. This means that the impact of our service goes far beyond the outcomes that are expected by our funders. An independent social return on investment assessment calculated that for every £1 invested in WECIL, there is £5.25 worth of social return.

In this time of austerity, services are often viewed in isolation, they are measured by their direct delivery costs and the wider reaching benefits are overlooked. It is difficult for the results of a traditional SROI outcome to be fully understood by commissioners, as a monetary value is placed on wider social

improvements rather than specific sector outcomes, such as health or health & social care.

When we considered our wider operating environment, including government policies and initiatives, it became clear that our holistic way of working was already aligned with the introduction of new legislation and political agendas, such as:

- The Care Act, which calls for services to be co-produced and for users to have access to advocacy services
- The move towards Personal Health Budgets and Personal Budgets increases the need for support planning, integrated health and health & social care services and direct payment support
- The focus on reducing loneliness and social isolation as an integral part of improving people's wellbeing and mental health
- The development of services for young disabled people aged 0-25years, integrating all their support needs including education, health and social care

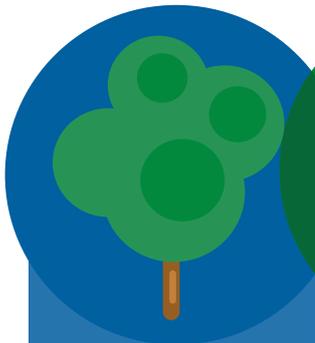
- Promoting social capital, for example: the use of self-help tools, group sessions, skills swaps and the use of time-banks or other free services, as a way of meeting increasing need, whilst managing overall spend

Considering the synergy between these statutory directives and the WECIL ethos, our 2015-2019 strategy focuses on promoting the work we already do, so that its value can be recognised and our position strengthened.

We will rethink and improve the way that we present our services, evaluate and prove their ever increasing value, involve even more disabled people of all ages in the organisation and come together as a collective to challenge and influence policy makers and commissioners.

Cheri Wilkins
CEO

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



Grow
a vibrant
WECIL
Community
that meets
the needs
of its
members



Become
a strong,
influential,
collective
voice of
and for
disabled
people



Support
each
person's
right to
choose and
control
their own
assistance
and/or care



Measure
and prove
the monetary
value and
social
contribution
of our
services



Celebrate
and
encourage
the
contribution
of young
disabled
people



Grow a vibrant WECIL Community that meets the needs of its members

What will success look like?

By 2019, we will have a thriving community of over 5000 disabled people. Services will include: informal social get-togethers, befriending, experts-by-experience guidance and professional advice & advocacy services. Disabled people will continue to be involved in the design, promotion, development and running of the services.

“We support each other as we know what it feels like to be a disabled person. I’m not so scared now - I don’t feel on my own anymore”



How will we make this happen...

Developing Community Partnerships by:

Arranging benefits and discounts for ‘WECIL Community’ members, through our corporate partners, as well as working with other organisations to raise awareness of the services that are available to disabled people and to deliver joint projects.

Offering different ways for disabled people to get actively involved by:

Providing training and development to support disabled people to become trustees, volunteers, ambassadors, feedback group participants and session-leaders.

Providing an ‘Experts-by-Experience’ service by:

Creating ways for disabled people to support, inform and advocate on behalf of each other. This will include online tools as well as telephone and face to face services.

Increasing the number of ways we can connect to each other by :

Coordinating regular drop-in sessions across Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset. We will also run a telephone befriending service and create a WECIL Community app, so that there is always a way of staying in touch.



Become a strong, influential, collective voice of and for disabled people

What will success look like?

WECIL will be the 'go-to' organisation for queries relating to disabled people in the south-west, offering access to reliable data and disabled people who are experienced in co-production and specialised consultation services. We will be pro-active in our approach and seek to educate and raise awareness of disabled people's issues.

"I want people to see me as a whole person and not to make judgements about what I can or can't do"



How will we make this happen...

Collecting meaningful data by:

Recording and analysing relevant information, and encouraging disabled people to share their views through a variety of methods, including: online tools, paper based surveys and focus groups.

Challenging stereotypes and changing perceptions by:

Running campaigns that raise awareness of issues affecting disabled people. These will include topics such as the Social Model of Disability and hidden impairments.

Making co-production easier by:

Using the tried and tested co-production model and toolkit for all internal organisational developments and offering a co-production service to external organisations.

Increasing accessibility by:

Providing a training and consultancy service, offering bespoke packages to a wide range of organisations. Educating managers, employees, teachers and students.



Support each person's right to choose and control their own personal assistance and/or care

What will success look like?

WECIL will offer a full range of services that support disabled people to have choice and control over their own assistance and/or care. This will include: providing information sessions, support planning tools, direct payment services, access to work assistance and specialist PA and support worker recruitment.

“Having a direct payment has changed my life – now I get to choose what I do and when. Even little things like being able to go shopping, or to a garden centre! I finally feel like I have a life again”



How will we make this happen...

Informing disabled people about their options by:

Promoting the different ways of having a direct payment (e.g. trusted person, a fully managed service, financial on behalf of accounts etc).

Continuing to improve Direct Payment services by:

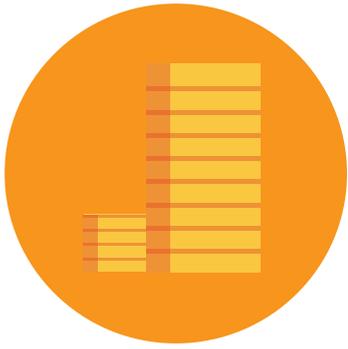
Adapting services to meet the changing needs of direct employers. For example: including auto enrolment pension support within our payroll service.

Making support planning even easier by:

Training volunteers to assist people using the free Create My Support Plan (CMSP) online tool and developing a shorter 'lite' version of CMSP.

Increasing access to personal assistants (PAs) and support workers by:

Launching an online PA & support worker matching service, developing an accredited training programme and running recruitment events.



Measure and prove the monetary value and social contribution of our services

What will success look like?

We will evaluate all of WECIL services and calculate the return on investment for specific statutory sectors (i.e. Health, Social Care and Welfare to Work). This information will be used to demonstrate the added value that CIL's offer, widen the scope of our services and influence the way services are commissioned.

"I have surprised myself with everything I have achieved! Before I got in touch with WECIL I was very low and felt isolated - but now I volunteer, I have much more confidence, and I really feel like I have something to contribute to society"



How will we make this happen...

Calculate the real monetary value and impact of services by:

Creating a tool that measures the return on investment for specific sector services (e.g health, social care, welfare to work etc).

Continually improving services by:

Evaluating provision to understand what works and what elements of each service are most important to users. Taking action to develop services in line with need.

Play a more active role in the National Centres for Independent Living (CIL) network by:

Sharing learning and best practice with other CILs. Doing all we can to strengthen services run by and for disabled people.

Influence commissioning by:

Ensuring evaluation and impact assessments align with the strategic objectives of statutory organisations. Working closely with commissioners to benefit all stakeholders.



Celebrate and encourage the contribution of young disabled people

What will success look like?

Young disabled people will play an active part in the creation of the WECIL community. Training, development, participation and support services, will be emphasised within all youth services to better equip young disabled people to feel confident and empowered to contribute in wider society issues.

“I had to leave foster care and move into my own place at 18. struggled to manage my money and felt really lonely, but the staff at WECIL helped me through it. There was always someone to listen and offer support. I don't know how I would have managed without them”



How will we make this happen...

Support young disabled people as they move towards adulthood by:

Offering 1-1 and group transition support on topics such as: independent living, employment, money-management and relationships.

Involve young disabled people in leading the organisation by:

Offering ‘Trustees in Development’ training, covering participation, co-production and governance. Young people can then get involved in the co-production of activities and at the age of eighteen are eligible to apply to be Trustees.

Work towards an inclusive society by:

Providing fully accessible activity sessions for disabled and non-disabled young people. Helping to reduce stigma and stereotypes at an early age.

Ensuring young disabled peoples voices are heard by:

Running a participation group, where young disabled people learn about their rights and have a forum for making their views heard.

How we will work together to achieve our aims?

Our decisions and actions are based on the Social Model of Disability and the needs of our members and customers

We each take responsibility for working in an honest, fair, respectful and professional way



We accept challenges with a 'can do' attitude and support each other to achieve the best outcome



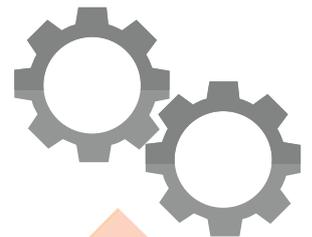
The things that we do and the words that we say always reflect on the organisation in a positive way



We have the courage to lead change and shape a new and exciting future



We accept things do not always work first time and learn from our experiences, focusing on solutions not problems



THANK YOU



Thank you to all the people that have been involved in the development of the new WECIL strategy. Your input and suggestions have been invaluable, and will help to shape the future of our services.



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