

Speaking up, Fighting Prejudice, Improving Lives

Annual Report 2020-2021



Sara Ryan, My Life My Choice Patron | Michael Edwards, My Life My Choice President

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Our vision is a World where people with learning disabilities are treated without prejudice, and are able to have choice and control over their own lives.

We couldn't let Covid stop us..

Who would have thought social distancing would have made us closer?
My Life My Choice (MLMC) has worked extremely hard to support people with a learning disability all around Oxfordshire. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we must admit we were concerned for our members. We knew we needed to step up by supporting and speaking up for people with a learning disability and that is exactly what we did! This report celebrates our achievements during 2020-2021.

Co-Chair of Trustees

Ben McKay Paul Scarrott



COVID-19 Mail Outs



Making ourselves heard



Celebrating Epilepsy Day



Raising Awareness

Our Trustees

For us, by us..

My Life My Choice is a self-advocacy organisation for adults with a learning disability in Oxfordshire led by 15 Trustees, all who have a learning disability.



Michael,
President



Ben,
Co-chair



Paul,
Co-chair



Louise,
Vice-Chair



Jack,
Vice-Chair



Jamie



Joan



Charlene



Abul



Andy



Nigel



Leslie



Steve



Keith



Katie



2,200

Wellness Packs

We provided 550 members with wellness packs throughout the pandemic. These packs included activities and treats to tackle loneliness and bring a smile to our members' faces.

150 **Members Using On-Line Services**

We have embraced working digitally by ensuring our self-advocacy groups, Stingray nightclub and paid work opportunities remain available online.

COVID-19 Highlights

13,200

Easy Read Mail Outs



Accessible information packs were sent to all 623 members containing Covid-19 updates and guidance.

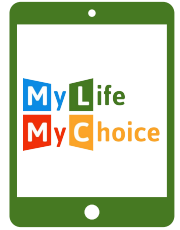
The packs included activities, recipes and My Life My Choice news to ensure members were kept up to date.



46

Digital Devices

We tackled digital exclusion by providing 46 free devices to members without, and a further 74 received training and support to get on-line. This work remains part of our long-term plan.



168

Phone Buddy Users

Our members have received regular phone calls from a team of 35 volunteers offering advice, friendship and support.



COVID-19 Vaccine Campaign

Once the COVID-19 vaccine was safely developed, our trustees were determined to ensure people with a learning disability were not left behind. The Champions group successfully campaigned for Oxfordshire to be one of the first areas to prioritise people with a learning disability for a COVID-19 vaccine and then worked with the charity Mencap to embed this change nationally.

Our fortnightly on-line meetings for Champions have seen our campaigners challenge CQQ, the local authority and the national government over COVID-19 issues (e.g. lack of accessible information).

The Champions were successful in a funding bid to the National Lottery's "Leaders with Lived Experience" programme; this will enable campaigns over two years to reduce health inequalities.

Our Young Champions have been equally busy with the highlight being to create a film for International Youth Day to raise awareness on how important youth voice is and to show that young people want to make the world a better place.



Don't stop the party

With activities severely restricted by COVID-19 attention switched to picnics, walking club, and our nightclub. Stingray is our user led nightclub, run by a team of adults with a learning disability but the pandemic didn't stop the party.

Pam and Ady led Stingray nightclub online via Zoom and have hosted 21 nightclub events for all our members! When rules allowed weekly walking clubs in Oxford, Abingdon, and Banbury helped people out and about and to socialise once more.

In March an online MLMC Home Festival was run in collaboration with local charities, Soundabout, Keen, and Yellow Submarine with 85 people attending the full-day event. Three picnic events added to a sense of "getting back to normal".

Our Gig Buddies Coordinator was seconded to work for Learning Disability England for four months to manage the distribution of an NHS England Covid support grant to self-advocacy groups around the country.

Power Up

Power Up is our user led training, research, consultancy and inspections team.

Despite a significant decrease in paid face-to-face work opportunities the team still carried out 45 on-line Quality Checks for our Local Authority. We became a partner in a successful bid to evaluate a pilot of the national mandatory learning disability training for all health & social care workers. We translated documents into accessible Easy Read for clients e.g. Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), BBC, and British Association of Social Workers. As well as running on-line focus groups, webinars and consultations we completed research into the lives of people with a learning disability at the Littlemore Hospital Institution. The work with the University of Oxford around "Loneliness and Growing Older with learning disabilities" was extremely important and finally, we helped the Open University with their research around digital inclusion for people with a learning disability.

Travel Buddy

Travel Buddy is a user-led travel training scheme for adults who have a learning disability funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

Although the pandemic severely impacted upon operations the team got involved in the Low Traffic Neighbourhoods project to improve accessibility around Oxford City Centre and further developed the Travel Buddy Scheme franchise which is now available for sale to other organisations. Once COVID-19 restrictions subside the Travel Buddy team are looking to bounce back strongly.

Self-Advocacy Groups

We have run 13 monthly online groups this year: Abingdon College x 2, Banbury, Didcot, Frank Wise School, Oxford, Oxfordshire, Wantage, Women's, the Big Joint Oxfordshire, Witney College x 2, Young Person's Group.

The groups have provided a life-line for our members who have had the increasingly unpleasant feelings of loneliness to deal with.

Despite the pandemic, we have had an average of 99 members attending our groups each month. Members have received training on topics such as Climate Change, Mental Health, and Being Safe On-line. Members of our Women's Group were paid to partake in research work with Women Enabled International looking at the experiences of women with a disability during the pandemic.

We get things done!

This year, MLMC carried out an independent staff survey to find out what staff thought about conditions and working at MLMC. We couldn't be happier with the results.

“ The job is very purposeful, it makes a real difference to the lives of people with learning disabilities and that's very motivating! ”



Across industries, a high score is seen as being above 80% and the average 69%. We are delighted to know our staff love working for My Life My Choice.



Money Report

From accounts for 2020/21

Income: £651,726

Expenditure: £309,524

Reserves: £342,202

Thank you!

Thank you to everyone that has made this year's achievements possible. We hope that you can support us again!



A very big thank you also to:

Banbury Charities, Bartlett Taylor CT, Beatrice Laing Trust, Black Hill CT, Card Factory Foundation, Christadelphian Samaritan Fund, Christ's Hospitals of Abingdon, Clothworkers' Foundation, Cooper CT, Cotswold Primrose Trust, De Brie CT, Disabled Peoples' Office, Doris Field CT, Edgar E. Lawley Foundation, Edward Gostling Foundation, Faringdon United Charity, Forbes Foundation, Grace Trust, Greenham Trust, Grey Court Trust, HDH Wills CT, Hudson CT, Invesco Cares, J C Seccombe CT, Jules Thorn CT, Leeds Building Society, Marsh Christian Trust, Martha Louise Jackson, Bequest, Mbili CT, Michael and Anna Wix CT, Pharsalia CT, Robert & Margaret Moss CT, Rotary Club of Oxford, RTR Foundation, Sackler Trust, Sarah Nowell Education Foundation, Simon's Charity, Sport England, St. Michael's and All Saints, Stanton Ballard CT, Steven Bloch Image of Disability, Tesco, The Fitton Trust, Mencap, Oxford Digital Media, Oxford Brookes University, Royds Withy King, University of Bristol, Chris Locke, Professor Jan Walmsley, Oxford University Trust Hospitals, Learning Disability England, Councillor Judith Heathcoat, Ann Nursey, Craig Moreby, Face2FaceHR, MP Layla Moran, MP Anneliese Dodds, Councillor Ian Hudspeth, Councillor Marie Tidball.