



Hear Our Voices get together report - May 2024

Introduction

The first Hear Our Voices event happened in October 2023. People with a learning disability unanimously wished to meet again and the consensus was 6 monthly.

The second Hear Our Voices get together was on 9th May 2024 at the Kindle Centre in Hereford. It was another amazing day filled with energy and enthusiasm.

The event was organised by Mencap and Healthwatch Herefordshire and funded by Herefordshire Community Foundation.

This is a report of:

- What we did on the day
- What People said
- What people thought of the day and Hear Our Voices future plans

Appreciations!

Thank you to the participants on the day for coming along and making it a day full of energy and inspiration and most of all for sharing their enthusiasm and views.

Particular thanks to the people with a learning disability that spoke on the day and worked hard to organise and make the event a success.

Thank you to Herefordshire Community Foundation for funding the event.

Thank you to the support organisations who helped people to attend and participate: ECHO, Beacon College, Mencap, Our News Our Views, Walsingham Support, Our Way, Enviroability, Health Checkers, West Midlands



Self Advocacy Network, Horizon Centre, Shared Lives, Healthwatch Herefordshire.

Thank you for the organisations that came along to support the event and listen to the views of people with a learning disability about Community Safety and looking after your health: West Mercia Police, Victim Support, Independent Advisory Group and Taurus,

Thank you to Karen Messer (formerly from Healthwatch) for volunteering and for her marvellous photos and filming.

Participants

There were 62 people at the event. 36 participants with a learning disability from 12 support organisations with 19 support workers, 3 people from police, 1 from Victim Support and 3 from Taurus.

Agenda

This was our agenda:

Agenda

9.45 to 10.15 Registration and refreshments

10.15 Welcome Tracy and Kevin and Bindya or David from Mencap

10.30 Icebreaker by Beacon college student Council. **Activity.**

11.00 Break

11.15 Keeping safe in my community - Led by Bev Davies with Chris Smith Independent advisory group and West Mercia Police - Marie Bridgewater and Adrain Symonds, Matt Cole (Victim support). **Table activity.**

12.00 Lunch and filming

1.00 Health checks and vaccines film show with Becky from Health Checkers and Libby from Enviroability and Looking after your health with Taurus - Gillian Pearson and Dr. Edwina Gallagher **Table activity**

1.45 Quick comfort break

2.00 Hear Our Voices - Speaking Up! - Mencap. **Table Activity.**

2.30 What next: Hot topics for future event - October 2024 ,

2.50 Evaluation

3.00 End



Note: Our guests from regional Mencap were unable to come and Gillian Pearson was also not able to come but two more people came in her place from Taurus. Lyn Johnson came with police.

PowerPoint

Our PowerPoint shows the activity content and is in the appendix.

Welcome

Tracy and Kevin from Mencap welcomed everyone.



Beacon College Icebreaker

Beacon College led an excellent icebreaker and a good way to get to know each other.

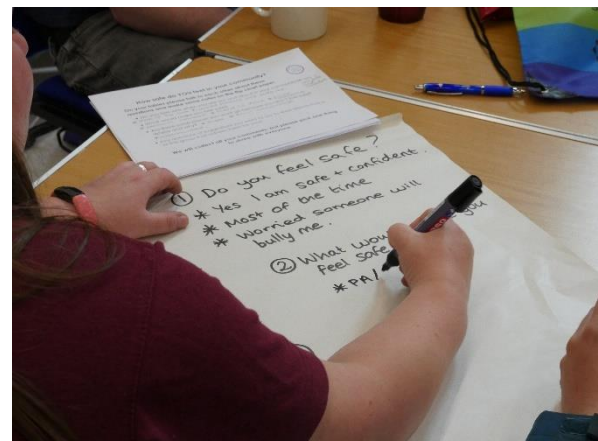
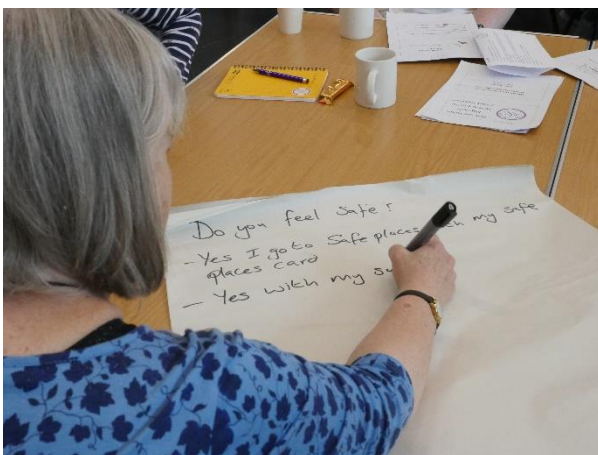


Keeping safe in my community

Bev Davies from Mencap presented a piece of research she had carried out with Mencap about community safety.



We then had a table activity discussing some questions about community safety. Marie Bridgewater, Lyn Johnson and Adrian Symonds from West Mercia Police and Matt Cole from Victim Support mingled to hear feedback.





Afterwards a representative from each table gave feedback by microphone of their most important thoughts. Chris Smith (Independent Advisory Group) explained an opportunity to join the advisory group representing people with a learning disability. The group advises the police.



West Mercia Police gave us some freebies of rainbow antihate crime bags and drinking bottles!

We wrote up the comments made and these follow.



Do you feel safe in your community?

- ✓ Not always, especially at night. I feel safe in the day but I'm safe at night with friends of Mum and Dad.
- ✓ Having someone with me makes me feel safe.
- ✓ Yes, I go to safe places with my safe places card
- ✓ Yes, with my support worker when I go to new places. Happy to go to shops
- ✓ Not at night. There have been lots of things happening. Very wary.
- ✓ Leominster, yes in the day. At night I go with someone. I also know the safe places.
- ✓ Yes
- ✓ Yes, but you need to be cautious
- ✓ Sometimes people make comments – call names
- ✓ I take my phone with me and stick to the places I know. I tell my staff or family where I am going. Extra careful in new places.
- ✓ Not on own
- ✓ On own but aware of surroundings
- ✓ Biggest issue is at night
- ✓ Most of the time

Yes, I am safe and confident

- ✓ Worried someone will bully me

What would make you feel safer?

- ✓ Having a phone in case you get lost or need to contact someone
- ✓ Knowing a safe place to go
- ✓ Carry an attack alarm to alert if you are in danger
- ✓ More safe places in the evening
- ✓ Being with friends and family
- ✓ Look up place before you go (if new place) – know what to expect.
- ✓ Find out as much as you can
- ✓ Look at the area you want to go to.
- ✓ 'Here to Help' people (Old Market, Hereford)
- ✓ Stopping people doing drugs and you can smell it
- ✓ People asking to borrow money off you or begging, is difficult



- ✓ Have right things with me like a mobile phone, smart watch, medical ID bracelet, a torch, a map, some emergency money for a taxi.
- ✓ Numbers saved in my phone
- ✓ Risk assessing – staying aware of surroundings
- ✓ People knowing where I am. Not being on your own – stay in a group
- ✓ Having someone – not confident
- ✓ Would cross the road if worried
- ✓ Keep away from anyone fighting
- ✓ More education for people to understand disabilities and race
- ✓ More travel training
- ✓ Public buses to go to Beacon College



More police on the streets/in town

- ✓ More crossings
- ✓ PA/buddy



Friend and a drink

- ✓ Police presence

Places won't go to

- ✓ Parks at night, dark alleyways, pub on your own at night. Certain housing estates – places that can have drug activity. Police around. In these environments you might not know who you are going to bump into.
- ✓ Anywhere at night, eg Commercial Road, Hereford – fights happen. Dodgy, rough
- ✓ The Kerry (pub in Hereford) – cheap drinks – drunk people
- ✓ Wetherspoons, Leominster without carer at night – fights. Don't feel safe
- ✓ When people stare at me



Nightclubs

- ✓ Where people drink
- ✓ Underpasses at night
- ✓ Going out late at night – after dark
- ✓ Sometimes something unexpected can make me feel anxious
- ✓ Groups of youths on the street can sometimes make me anxious
- ✓ Alleyway in dark
- ✓ Nightclub
- ✓ Walking path by river on own



Stick to main road

- ✓ Leominster, The Grange, drugs
- ✓ Cemetery by Morrison's (Hereford) – drinking and drugs
- ✓ Underpasses – only use in day
- ✓ Dark places, alleys, pubs
- ✓ Too many cars, not safe



Pubs

- ✓ Down alleyways
- ✓ Overcrowded places
- ✓ Not at night x 3

Suggestions

- ✓ Easy read guide to keeping safe
- ✓ Keep the people using drugs off the streets
- ✓ Knife crime – keep stopping knives being carried
- ✓ Visit group and give safety talks
- ✓ Help at night where lots of drink is happening
- ✓ How to prevent yourself having a drink spiked.
- ✓ More police/security can help



- ✓ Better street lighting

Being with people you trust

- ✓ Alleyways, especially at night
- ✓ Canal sides
- ✓ Parks
- ✓ More community officers building relationships between organisations and police.
- ✓ Safe places app not working
- ✓ Not heard of Ambassadors (Hereford)
- ✓ More police to stop the bad guys
- ✓ Community hub/help centres with officers to offer advice
- ✓ More support for young people/disabled people/LBGGTQ community
- ✓ More police
- ✓ More patrols in Leominster
- ✓ How can I contact the police when I can't talk and it's about my carer that I have a problem with?



Community Safety and event film

During lunch people had the opportunity to speak about community safety on film. The link to the film and event is here: <https://youtu.be/B4jDyaEJOBY>



Health checks and vaccines

Becky from Health Checkers and Libby from Enviroability presented the films they had made with the help of Healthwatch in partnership with Taurus.



Afterwards Dr. Edwina Gallagher talked about some simple ways we can look after our health.

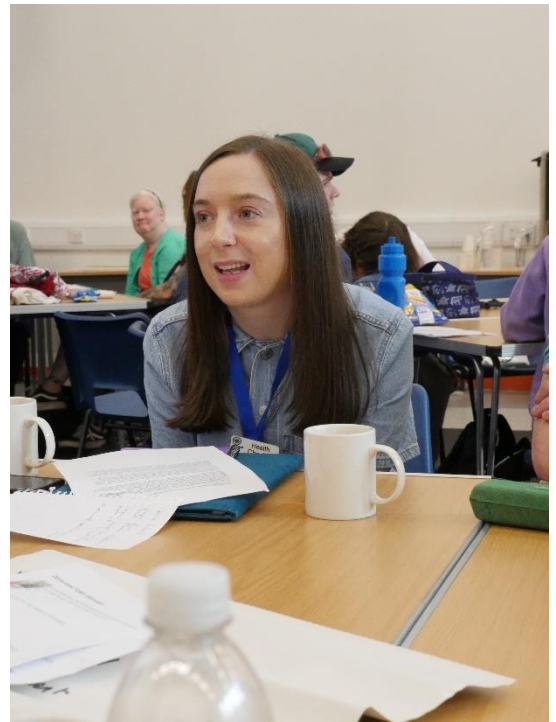


We then had a table exercise looking at 4 questions while Taurus staff came around to hear our thoughts. Afterwards Taurus gave us a free booklet in easy read about ways we can try to prevent cancer.



Where should we show the films on learning disability health checks?

- YouTube, Tik Tok, Facebook - All social media apps x3
- Children in need / Comic Relief / Red Nose Day
- Mainstream and special schools,
- GP surgeries/ hospital waiting rooms
- Charity events
- Cinema
- Pop up tents in markets
- Social clubs and day centres
- On TV as a commercial
- Schools
- GP text messages
- Care homes
- Newspapers
- Newsletters
- Advertising boards
- Theatre screens
- Endorsement by someone famous
- Contact children's centres
- Respite centres and day centres
- Council website/local government
- Local send school/college, website and TV (any)
- Billboards
- Supported living/ care/ residential places
- Cinema screen adverts
- Doctors surgeries
- Local radio
- Hospital TV's/ radio
- Leaflet - video skills
- Advocacy groups/ organisations
- Included within doctors and health professionals
- Carers and support workers



Is there anything that worries you about going to the doctor?

- Going to an appointment might make me miss something
- The doctor talks to my carer and not me
- Appointment is not long enough
- My carer is always in the room so I can't talk in private
- I don't know what to expect
- Sharing your concerns
- Hearing bad news
- Not seeing the same doctor
- See a different doctor each time and it would be better to have the same doctor so they get to know you. It would give you more confidence.
- Turning up I'm waiting in a queue to speak to the receptionist
- Notice coming too late for that appointment is cancelled
- Phobia of needles
- Uncomfortable questions
- Ask person if they want the person accompanying them to stay
- Speak to me not the person with me
- I'm not worried at all about going to the doctor
- Not being listened to
- Not being able to get an appointment
- Receptionist demanding what it is, it is rude
- Undressing in front of the doctor
- Being alone in the treatment room
- Medication that I am unsure of
- Waiting time for appointments – months
- Needles and blood tests
- Busy waiting rooms
- Talking about your personal problems
- Being examined intimately
- Speaking confidently
- Appointment availability
- Doctor understanding my disability
- Car parking
- Signs
- Catching something else



Do you know what tests and vaccinations are available to stop you from getting poorly e.g.

Tests

- a. bowel cancer screening,
- b. Breast screening,
- c. Cervical smear test,
- d. What others do you know about?

and vaccinations:

- a. Flu,
- b. Covid,
- c. Shingles,
- d. What others do you know about?

Responses were:

- Bowel cancer screening for over 60s
- Urine samples blood samples
- Skin tests - moles
- Blood pressure
- Listening to your heart or your chest
- I don't know about bowel cancer screening breast screening or cervical smear tests but I have heard about allergy tests
- Eye tests, hearing tests, dentist
- Chicken pox
- MMR
- I have heard about vaccinations: flu COVID and shingles. I've heard of HPV, BCG, Tetnus, Polio Diptheria and Meningitis as well as Hepatitis
- I've heard of prostate checks
- They can check your height
- I've heard of ECG's, blood pressure, blood sugar levels
- We know about flu and COVID as we get a letter about it when it is due we don't really know much about cancer screening.
- Some of the tests are uncomfortable and we get embarrassed
- I don't like tests done by strangers



- Bowel cancer screening is horrible and smelly
- Prostate screening
- I've heard of annual health cheques blood pressure testing cholesterol and eye tests as well as dental
- There are lots of vaccinations when you're a baby
- I was tested for a tumour
- I've heard of diabetes testing and liver and kidney functions
- I don't know how to access cancer screening

Reasonable adjustments are actions services can take that would make it easier for you in your appointment. Examples are:

- speak clearly,
- no difficult medical terms,
- make time to ask me if I understand
- repeat information if I need it
- give me any questions before so I can prepare
- allow me to bring support with me (but talk to me)
- write down advice to help me remember
- call me in from the car park because I become ill in crowded waiting rooms
- wheelchair accessible room
- speak louder so I can hear
- look at me so I can lip read
- dim the lights



What do you think is the best way to tell your Dr. what adjustments you need? *E.g.*

- Fill a form that will be added to my medical records,
- Tell the Dr each time I come,
- Fill a form each time I arrive,
- Dr to ask me at beginning of appointment,
- Tell receptionist when I book appointment,
- Receptionist to ask when I book appointment,
- carry a list to give to the Dr. Surgery,
- Give me my list when I arrive to take in to medical professional
- Other, what are your ideas?



Responses on the tables were:

- People need to know what health passports are
- Fill a form in when you get there
- Doctors need tips on how to speak to people with a learning disability
- Don't use medical jargon
- Speak slowly and clearly
- First you need to be able to make an appointment! The NHS app is not easy for people who cannot use technology
- It would be good to make a SEND friendly NHS app in the UK - symbolised and talks to partially sighted/hearing issues
- Explain things in a better way- you simple concise sentences
- Ability to see a doctor in person
- Not have to tell the receptionist everything before they let me see a doctor
- Ask for more time
- Ask for last appointment of the day
- A quiet place
- Best to write adjustments down and attach them to my records
- Quiet times
- Speaking slowly and allowing time for my answers
- Cancer screening

- Seeing the same doctor different doctors
- Let me make an appointment at a good time for me and check give me enough time to talk and think and respond
- Offer online and in person ways to book appointments doctors should ask what are you doing today and planning to do
- Better parking at doctors and hospitals
- Longer parking time so we don't get tickets even with blue badges
- I'd like to be spoken to instead of my parents because I am in a wheelchair
- Need GPS to know more about disabilities
- Have a flash on my notes saying I have a learning disability
- Speak clearly and make sure I understand

These responses have been sent to Taurus to help them to serve people with a learning disability better.

Hear Our Voices – Speaking Up!

Mencap shared their ideas about speaking up giving their tips to the people attending. We then had a table top exercise asking people for their own ideas and tips. We have made a list of all the fantastic suggestions here:

Speaking Up Top Tips and Thoughts

- ✓ Practice the subject
- ✓ Take your time when delivering your speech
- ✓ Keep your speech simple, not too complicated
- ✓ No abbreviations
- ✓ Remember and understand the subject you are talking about. Don't waffle on!
- ✓ Stay confident and give time for questions to be asked
- ✓ Speak clearly, take a breath if needed
- ✓ Encourage your audience and be respectful to them
- ✓ Know who you are speaking to
- ✓ Use our own experiences
- ✓ Be honest, especially about our concerns and worries
- ✓ Don't talk over each other – wait



- ✓ Speak clearly and slowly, do not rush – take your time
- ✓ No jargon
- ✓ Smile and be polite
- ✓ Look at the person you are talking to
- ✓ Be friendly
- ✓ Don't snap at people – stay calm

- ✓ Give people time to speak
- ✓ Always be respectful
- ✓ Use a microphone
- ✓ Be patient
- ✓ Plan what you want to say
- ✓ Speak in person or write a letter or email
- ✓ Let people know the questions in advance
- ✓ Join a group with the same aims
- ✓ Take a deep breath
- ✓ Stay calm
- ✓ Check for understanding
- ✓ Use clear words
- ✓ Keep your head up
- ✓ Arrive early and give yourself plenty of time
- ✓ Take turns
- ✓ Use sign language or pictures
- ✓ Plan and prepare
- ✓ Support them to have a voice
- ✓ Help them to be confident to speak up

- ✓ Get to know the person and check the right environment
- ✓ Support me with reasonable adjustments
- ✓ Listen to what I am saying
- ✓ Look at me when I am talking
- ✓ Don't interrupt me while I am talking
- ✓ Speak calmly
- ✓ Ask someone you trust to speak for you



- ✓ Stick to the point
- ✓ Talk clearly
- ✓ Communication – board & book
- ✓ Interpreter
- ✓ Sign & speak
- ✓ AAC device
- ✓ Newsletter – online or paper
- ✓ Braille
- ✓ Leaflets in local places – shops, medical and small businesses, in schools/colleges
- ✓ Symbolised schedules
- ✓ Social media
- ✓ Sensory bag/fidgets – Amazon – textures, smells
- ✓ Hearing aids – loop
- ✓ Allow therapy animals
- ✓ Meet and greet to familiarise themselves with
- ✓ Speak to me like an adult
- ✓ Time out if over stimulated
- ✓ More time to process and speak
- ✓ Snacks/food allowed
- ✓ BIG text



- ✓ VOICE text
- ✓ Phone allowed for regulation (video games)
- ✓ Bumper stickers
- ✓ Badges
- ✓ Stickers
- ✓ Key charms

Hot topics for future events

People listed some ideas they would like to be included in future events:

- More local clubs [social]
- places to hang out\ safe space for youth.
- More fun activities.
- Healthy eating
- Exercise
- Friendships/ relationships
- Socialising
- Healthy lifestyles
- Community
- How to get involved in community groups
- How to make a difference in the world e.g. social justice like homelessness or Ukraine
- Housing and accessibility for people with disabilities
- People getting paid jobs
- Exercise, Health and wellbeing.
- Any Health topic



Who should we invite?

- Invite everyone EG MP, councillor, council, health, talk community, police
- Job centre
- Job centre and job coaches, Alexia Heath.
- Police commissioner
- Counsellors
- Invite council to hear our views (social care, Hilary Hall, Sally Wilson (interim head of care?))
- Police Commissioner

Skill sharing

“Yes, I would like to share my skills present and be involved”.

Dates

Don't mind 10th or 17th

Prefer 17th

Prefer 17th Beacon College



Evaluation - Reflections of the day

Comments were as follows:

Have you found the event useful?

Yes very (Beacon College)

Yes (Beacon College)

Yes (Our News Our Views) x2

Yes (Hannah Carpenter)

Yes very (ECHO)

Very interesting (ECHO) x4

Yes (Mencap) x2

Yes (Ross On Wye Horizon Centre) x2

Very useful (ECHO and Mencap)

Yes I did (ECHO)

Yes good networking opportunities (Enviroability)

Yes (Walsingham support)

Yes (Our way self advocacy – West Midlands self advocacy network) x6

Excellent (West Midlands self advocacy network)



What did you like about the event?

- Diversity, community, meeting new people, finding out about different organisations. Finding out about vaccinations/ health checks video.
- Ability to have voice heard and build more confidence. See more inclusion. (Beacon)
- Diversity, community and meeting people from new organisations and opportunities. Hearing my voice heard. (Beacon College)
- It was very good and hear our voices. (ONOV)
- The police being here. (ECHO)



- The health check videos (ECHO)
- I found it's quite good to listen to. It was all good. I like the morning part the best. X2
- Liked listening two people talking at here our voices (ONOV)
- Liked group work (HC)
- Getting to know everyone and learning how to be safe (Horizon)
- Learning how to keep safe (Horizon)
- Everything (Mencap)1
- Everything (ECHO)1
- The guest speakers (ECHO)
- I like all of it (ECHO and Mencap)
- All of it (ECHO)
- Networking opportunities (Enviroability)
- Allowing us to speak up our mind and concerns (Walsingham support)
- Good to network and find out about other groups and organisations (our way)
- I found it really useful and interesting about having a voice (our way)
- hearing what people's points of view are. And able to share ideas. (West Midlands self advocacy network)
- Everything (West Midlands link worker)
- I enjoyed the Ice Breakers we have time, good breaks, nice lunch enjoyed using a microphone. I enjoyed the event very good presentation and good information
- (West Midlands self advocacy network)
- Good topics and well presented. Good venue. (West Midlands self advocacy network)
- Everyone sharing information and stories (West Midlands self advocacy network)
- Energy dropped after lunch. Perhaps stretch after lunch to wake everyone up. End at 2.30.
- Lunch 12.30 most taxing bits over before lunch.
- After lunch more laid back.
- Ice breaker too long?



What didn't you like about the event?

- Not applicable x2
- Nothing x 11
- I loved all of it



- Going a bit too quick for some who can't talk and using a computer. (ECHO)
- Bit noisy (West Midlands self advocacy network)

Would you come to the next Hear Our Voices event?

Yes x 22 No 0

How often do you think Hear Our Voices should meet?

Every 3 months x 1 (If not more often!! Beacon) x 8

Every 6 Months x 9

Once a year x 6

Other comments

Thank you very much (Beacon College).

For next time allowance for communication time have the questions in advance for the tabletop exercises (ECHO)

See you in October!



Hold this date!

Look out for booking details...



You are invited!

Hear Our Voices event

Thursday October 17th

The Kindle Centre

Registration opens at 9.45am

Event starts 10.15am

Event finishes 2.30pm

Free lunch, tea and coffee included

In a relaxed environment, the event will:

- bring together people with a learning disability who like speaking up
- explore ways people with a learning disability can make a difference
- help build confidence and skills

