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| **Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living**  **Service Users’ Survey**  **East Lothian Council**  **2019/20**  **June 2020** |

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The Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living (LCiL) is committed to seeking feedback from its service users in order to capture their views about our work and enable us to identify areas of good practice and where improvement and development may be required.

This report represents the findings of our seventh comprehensive Service Users’ Satisfaction Survey and includes information on the methodology used as well as service users’ views on the services we provide.

Questionnaires were sent to 973 service users in total across the 4 Local Authorities (145 in East Lothian), who used at least one of LCiL’s services between April 2019 and March 2020. The survey results were separated into Local Authority Area and this report focuses on the results from East Lothian Council.

The findings of this survey will be used to influence and shape our ongoing work in supporting disabled people to live more independent lives in the community of their choice.

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**1. (i) Methodology**

* The objective of the survey was to gather information on service users’ satisfaction with LCIL. To give depth to the survey, an overall service satisfaction section is complemented by a section on specific services.

Questionnaires were sent to 145 registered service users from East Lothian Council, who had accessed one or more of the following LCiL services in the last year:

- Payroll Service

- Financial Management Support

- Independent Living Service

- Self-Directed Support Development Programme

Contact information for those who had accessed the services was exported from LCiL’s database in line with GDPR requirements.

As well as a range of generic questions covering topics such as staff interaction with service users, services users’ confidence in the service(s) they use and the impact of the service in their lives, it was also decided to seek feedback on particular aspects of service provision. These findings enable LCiL to highlight the range and diversity of the services they offer to their service users and to provide evidence of service users’ views.

The survey was sent in late April, with a return deadline of 4th May in order to produce a completed report by June 2020. This is a little later than we had originally planned due to unexpected workload changes, in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Method of contact** – All service users for whom we hold an email address were contacted by email with a link to the relevant survey in Survey Monkey. For all others, a hard copy of the questionnaire was posted, with only the relevant sections for services that we knew they had used.

Service users were informed that the survey would be anonymous in order to encourage respondents to comment freely. Each survey was titled with the Local Authority of the recipient, based on the addresses we have in our database.

There were 3 ways that the survey results were sent back to us:

1. By returning a hard copy by post;
2. By returning an emailed completed form;
3. By completing the survey online via a web link to Survey Monkey.

**(ii) Issues**

* Some of the issues that arose at this time included:

**Confidentiality** – It was decided to keep these surveys completely anonymous – we did not request any personal information from the recipients. The only information known from returned surveys was the Local Authority of the sender.

**Format of survey** – In order to encourage as many service users as possible to complete and return the survey, we offered 2 different formats: Survey Monkey and printed copies.

Many questions offered an opportunity for open-ended responses and a rating scale was used so respondents could indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with statements about service provision. This ensured that a more detailed and comprehensive service user satisfaction survey would cover most aspects of LCiL’s services.

Last year, was highlighted by a few respondents that they were not sure if they should leave blank or mark ‘disagree’ when a question did not apply to them – this year, however, this does not seem to have been a problem after several of the questions were tweaked slightly.

**Covid-19 Pandemic** – We knew in advance of sending the surveys that there was a chance that we would receive less of a response than last year, due to service users perhaps already having a lot on their minds. This does seem to have been the case, however we still feel we had enough of a response to report on.

iii) **Response rates**

The survey was sent to all ELC service users who had accessed services between 1 April 2019 and 29 March 2020, for whom we have contact details - 145 people in total. Of these:

* 25 surveys were completed and returned – **17% response rate**.
* 118 service users were contacted by email and 27 by post.
* 21 responded online via Survey Monkey and 3 by post.
* This gives a response rate of 14% online and 2% by post.

**2. Overall service satisfaction**

We asked service users to rate their overall satisfaction with LCiL and LCiL’s impact on their lives by indicating how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements about the organisation.

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|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Skipped |
| The LCiL service(s) I used fulfilled my expectations | 76% | 24% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| The service(s) met my needs within a reasonable and appropriate timescale | 72% | 28% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| I value the work of LCiL and would recommend the organisation to others | 84% | 16% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Support from LCiL has helped improve my choices and given me more control in my life | 67% | 29% | 4% | 0% | 0% |
| As a result of support from LCiL I have been able to do other things that are important to me | 67% | 25% | 8% | 0% | 4% |
| The support I get from LCiL helps me to live in my own home | 48% | 43% | 10% | 0% | 4% |
| LCIL has helped me to increase my knowledge and understanding about self-directed support | 68% | 32% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| With LCIL I know what help is available to me to manage my support | 59% | 36% | 5% | 0% | 0% |
| With LCIL I have a greater chance to make my support work for me | 64% | 32% | 5% | 0% | 0% |
| With LCIL I can better manage my responsibilities as an employer | 77% | 23% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| It is important to me that LCIL remains a one-stop shop (provides all services as one organisation) | 80% | 20% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Even if I may not use LCIL for a year or more, it is important for me to know it can help me at any time | 80% | 16% | 4% | 0% | 0% |

**Service Users’ Comments on our Organisation**

We asked service users to comment on LCiL as a whole, to which we received 37 comments in response to 2 questions.The majority of the comments left were positive ones, with 2 constructive comments.

**Why is LCiL important to you?**

Most of the positive feedback centred on the value LCiL has on their lives and the difference the organisation makes to them. Some comments were very detailed. People appreciate the excellent staff, and the assurance that we are always there for them. It was also said by some that they wouldn’t have SDS without LCiL’s support, and less stress was a common theme. Some Examples are:

* ‘On making initial enquiries, regarding Self Directed Support, with my local authority, I was warned that it was a complicated process and given very little information. LCIL were able to present all the information I needed in a clear and simple fashion. Without this I may not have pursued SDS. Fortunately I did and have had an extremely positive experience which has had a transformative impact on how I live my life.’
* ‘LCIL help me to be a good employer and generally support me to be independent.’
* ‘It gives me freedom to get on with my life, and get help when I need help.’
* ‘The information, contracts, insurance and payroll information would not be manageable for me with LCiL, this would reduce my daughters SDS choices.’
* ‘Always very prompt, helpful and friendly. Never make me feel stupid (even though I ask stupid questions!)’
* ‘The staff are amazing friendly and quickly respond to any query or questions you have’
* ‘… they are a user friendly fantastic organisation.’

Constructive comment:

* ‘I would be keen to see a digital platform to submit timesheets, rather than the current long-winded process of handwriting them, scanning and emailing them. Could a digital portal be a more efficient way of managing timesheets.’
* The only drawback is that I have to contact LCIL quite often in order in order to know what the balance of the account is as I cannot see it in real time (as I used to). However, I am very appreciative of the analyses that XX at LCIL is able to provide me from the Bank Account since I am illiterate in Excel!

**3. Service-specific responses**

Service users were then asked specific questions about the services they had used. Of those who responded:

* 88% had used the Payroll Service
* 48% had used the Independent Living Service
* 12% had used the Self-Directed Support Development Project
* No responses were returned by service users who used the Financial Management Service

1. **Payroll Service**

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| **How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?** | | | | | | |
|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Skipped |
| Payroll’s telephone support is excellent | 65% | 30% | 0% | 5% | 9% |
| All my payroll needs are dealt with effectively and efficiently | 77% | 18% | 0% | 5% | 0% |
| They use jargon-free and plain language | 82% | 9% | 5% | 5% | 0% |
| All my Personal Assistants’ payroll calculations are accurate | 86% | 9% | 0% | 5% | 0% |
| I have confidence in the competence and knowledge of Payroll staff | 82% | 14% | 0% | 5% | 0% |
| Payroll staff are helpful and able to answer my queries | 73% | 23% | 0% | 5% | 0% |
| I feel more confident about being a Personal Assistant employer | 73% | 23% | 0% | 5% | 0% |
| I feel more confident about managing my Direct Payment /Independent Living Fund package | 73% | 23% | 0% | 5% | 0% |
| I value the work of Payroll and would recommend the service to others | 86% | 9% | 0% | 5% | 0% |

**Service user comments about the Payroll Service**

We asked people:

**‘What payroll support have you received’ and ‘After processing your timesheets we send you detailed information. How useful is this to you?’**

Out of the 26 comments in response to these questions, all were positive and said that it was of great use to them, especially when it came to record keeping and, most importantly, managing their SDS payments.

‘Feel happier that legally financial details are dealt with.’

‘Very. It enables me to make the correct payments to all the right people.’

‘Very useful to support my returns to East Lothian Council’

‘Essential as I need to send this to the local authority that provides the SDS package.’

‘helps me to pay my Personal Assistants without worry’

‘It shows me how much to pay the PAs, tax, etc and also provides the information for returns to the council.’

‘It takes a lot of stress off me and LCiL does a great job’

‘Timely payments to my PA - Responsive to requests for information regarding annual leave - Confirmation of payments’

‘Setting up Personal assistant payslips, Advice, reassurance. Support and information during Covid 19.’

**We also posed the questions ‘How would you describe the impact of the payroll service in your life?’ and ‘Why is it important to you?’**

Out of the 27 responses, many centred on how much easier and stress-free life is with LCiL’s help, and how invaluable we are to the service users. Reassurance, less stress and not being able to do it without our help were also running themes in the comments:

‘Coniutally work out my annual leave. Work out what I need to pay as it can vary each month from pA to PA. I wouldn't be confident to do this myself or able.’

‘Gives me confidence in knowing I’m paying my PA correctly.’

‘My home life is hectic and stressful. I have 3 adopted children. 2 with ASNs and I work part time. I do not have the time, patience and knowledge to do the work they do and would potentially never get round to paying personal assistants correctly.’

‘It enables us to get the care we require, as I would not have time/knowledge to manage payroll myself’

‘It enables me to have Direct payments with in turn enable me to have independence over my care. Initially when I first was ill I used an agency and I became very depressed and anxious. This is much better for me and having LCIL helps me to do this.’

‘It has been a high benefit to me as I don't have to worry about this side of being an employer.’

‘It gives me peace mind that I have this support and that I can be assured a quick response if I have any concerns or queries.’

‘My daughter is supported by PAs who it is my duty to pay. Payroll do a job I could not do. I could end up with no PAs as I may not be organised to arrange the financial details.’

‘It is the only way we can get the care we need.’

‘Having independence over my care is vital to my wellbeing, my dignity. Being chronically ill is a challenge enough and can strip you of self-worth and value. Having ownership of your own care is vital to your well-being. And being helped to do this is paramount. I would not feel confident to administrate my care by myself’

‘So that my daughter can have choices with her SDS package. Agencies are not an option for us as the staff aren’t always consistent.’

There were no negative comments regarding the impact of the Payroll Service.

**ii) Financial Management Support Service (FMS)**

Our FMS Service offers disabled people a step further than the Payroll Service. Through individualised client accounts held on behalf of service users, LCiL is able to pay PAs, HMRC, agencies, care providers and/or professionals as instructed by the service user.

There were unfortunately no responses received to surveys relating to the FMS service.

**iii) Independent Living Service (ILS)**

The views of the service users who receive support from the Independent Living Team are further proof of the high quality services and benefits for disabled people. More than 40% of respondents skipped questions related to ILS, however almost 50% of those who did answer strongly agreed with each statement:

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| **How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?** | | | | | | |
|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Skipped |
| The Independent Living Team (ILT) are contactable when I need them | 42% | 8% | 8% | 0% | 42% |
| Their support is excellent | 50% | 8% | 0% | 0% | 42% |
| I appreciate their home visits | 42% | 0% | 8% | 8% | 42% |
| The support provided by ILT has given me more choice and control over decisions affecting my life | 50% | 8% | 0% | 0% | 42% |
| I know more about Self-Directed Support due to my support from ILT | 50% | 8% | 0% | 0% | 42% |
| The support provided by ILT has allowed me to live more independently﻿ | 50% | 0% | 8% | 0% | 42% |
| I can better manage my responsibilities as a PA employer with ILT support | 50% | 8% | 0% | 0% | 42% |
| I feel more confident about managing my Direct Payment and/or Independent Living Fund Scotland (ILFS) with the support of ILT | 50% | 8% | 0% | 0% | 42% |

We received 8 responses when we asked respondents to give further details of how Direct Payments or Independent Living Fund packages have helped them. As you can see, most of the service users responded that as a result of our help, they are able to socialise more, and live in their own homes.

Service users were asked **“How would you describe the impact of the Independent Living Service in your life?”** and **“Why is it important to you?”** 13 comments were given on this matter, and all of the responses were positive. They focused on how much easier life is with the help of the Independent Living Team and personal assistants. Independence, quality of life and choices also came up in many of the comments. A few examples are:

‘It gives me opportunities to be in the community without my parents. Experiencing activities with other people.’

‘It has been extremely helpful for me to have this service.’

‘I know that I will receive clear and concise information and advice if I need it.’

‘To avoid isolation.’

‘I have no peer age friends and cannot access the community safely without support. LCIL help organise financially the support I need to allow me this access to the wider community.’

‘It allows me to have the best for my son without worrying about the paperwork and pay side of it.’

‘Thank you for endeavouring to support our many needs and questions and encourage us to get organised and use our Personal Allowance in a timely, value for money, effective manner promoting independence and fulfilment in life.’

‘I had one or two visits from XX when we started with LCIL and they were very helpful. I had great support from Carers of East Lothian as well as LCIL. I also appreciate the work done by XX in advertising PA vacancies and in triaging Telephone calls!’

**iv) Self-Directed Support (SDS) Development Project**

Working across Edinburgh and the three Lothians, the Self Directed Support Development Programme engages with disabled people, those with long term conditions, older people and parent carers of disabled children.  We offer peer support groups and workshops to help these individuals self-empower to have knowledge, understanding and confidence to assert their rights and to live their own, independent life.

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| **How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?** | | | | | | |
|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Skipped |
| The SDS programme’s peer support groups and workshops are excellent | 33% | 67% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| I feel listened to, heard and fully supported in these groups. | 33% | 67% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| They use jargon-free and plain language | 33% | 67% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Information provided at the workshops was clear and well presented. | 33% | 67% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| I have confidence in the competence and knowledge of the SDS team | 67% | 33% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| The SDS team’s support has enabled me to improve my life. | 33% | 33% | 33% | 0% | 0% |
| I value the opportunities the SDS programme offers. | 67% | 0% | 33% | 0% | 0% |
| I know more about Self Directed Support due to my contact with the SDS programme | 0% | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

We also asked:

**‘How would you describe the impact of the SDS programme in your life?** and **Why is this important to you?** All of the comments left were positive:

‘Being a carer can sometimes feel isolating, having organisations like this give you somewhere to turn to for help.’

‘I prefer to keep up-to-date with things so I don’t feel overwhelmed’

‘Beneficial’

**A final word**

Ultimately, it is service users who determine how well LCIL has met its aim of supporting disabled people to live more independent lives, and how happy they are with our services.

Several of the respondents to this survey, simply ended with comments about how friendly the staff are, or how useful the service is when asked if they had anything else to share about the Organisation.

One very detailed comment expressed the strong positive impact on the lives of a disabled person and their family unit:

* ‘I have never dealt with direct payments before. As my adopted daughter gets older and her diagnosis has been confirmed it has become more apparent that she will always need support to live with any independence. I have previously had no knowledge or understanding of independent living information, support etc. I also have never been an employer and this is a new financial role that would have been a minefield to me without the support and guidance LCIL. I am an educated adult and without LCIL I would have perhaps given up trying to sort the financial details out and my daughter and the whole family would suffer as the support in place is necessary for my daughter’s independence and the sanity of the whole family. The support from LCIL has been professional, personal and empathetic. I have been continually supported through the process of setting up and no question I've asked is ever seen as irrelevant. I have been reassured and encouraged at every step. Thank you for this most valuable service, at a time when things are extremely difficult and stressful the support is essential.’