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| **Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living**  **Service Users’ Survey**  **Midlothian 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 sixth 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 865 service users in total across the 4 Local Authorities (121 in Midlothian), 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 Midlothian 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 121 registered service users from Midlothian 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. A few service users asked for word versions via email, following their receipt of a Survey Monkey link. These were sent upon request.

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 MLC service users who had accessed services between 1 April 2019 and 29 March 2020, for whom we have contact details – 121 people in total. Of these:

* 22 surveys were completed and returned – **18% response rate**.
* 98 service users were contacted by email and 23 by post.
* 18 responded online via Survey Monkey and 5 by post.
* This gives a response rate of 15% online and 4% 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 | 73% | 18% | 4% | 0% | 5% |
| The service(s) met my needs within a reasonable and appropriate timescale | 64% | 32% | 0% | 0% | 4% |
| I value the work of LCiL and would recommend the organisation to others | 82% | 18% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Support from LCiL has helped improve my choices and given me more control in my life | 64% | 32% | 4% | 0% | 0% |
| As a result of support from LCiL I have been able to do other things that are important to me | 59% | 36% | 5% | 0% | 0% |
| The support I get from LCiL helps me to live in my own home | 63% | 32% | 0% | 0% | 5% |
| LCIL has helped me to increase my knowledge and understanding about self-directed support | 58% | 26% | 16% | 0% | 0% |
| With LCIL I know what help is available to me to manage my support | 58% | 32% | 11% | 0% | 0% |
| With LCIL I have a greater chance to make my support work for me | 74% | 26% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| With LCIL I can better manage my responsibilities as an employer | 79% | 16% | 5% | 0% | 0% |
| It is important to me that LCIL remains a one-stop shop (provides all services as one organisation) | 77% | 18% | 5% | 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 | 73% | 23% | 0% | 0% | 4% |

**Service Users’ Comments on our Organisation**

We asked service users to comment on LCiL as a whole, to which we received 9 comments.All of the comments left were positive ones.

* ‘My advisor, XX, has been helpful. I commend LCIL for employing [disabled] staff]’
* ‘I am really happy with LCIL, they are extremely helpful and always just a phone call away’
* ‘Fantastic work, well done. Keep it up as you are helping so many people who may not have been able to do these things by themselves’

We also asked service users the question:

**Why is LCiL important to you?**

Most of the positive feedback centred on how much easier life is with the help of the organisation. People appreciate the excellent staff, and the assurance that we are always there for them. It was also said by several that they wouldn’t have SDS without LCiL’s support, and less stress was a common theme. Some Examples are:

* ‘Because through I can have a carer who helps me with my needs due to my health situation i.e. where I need help with personal hygiene, bathing, dressing etc. Ensuring my safety and that I have proper meals etc. any do shopping when needed.’
* ‘I couldn't have arranged support for mum without LCIL help.’
* ‘LCIL take the stress out of handling wages, pension and all other employer information that I can’t do on my own and frees up the time I would spend doing this to use the time on other things important to me and my family. I know if I need any information I can give them a call and they can answer any questions I have and deal with them for me.’
* ‘They helped me have a better understanding of what I was entitled to and what help is out there for me and my son.’
* ‘I would struggle to fulfil my legal duties as an employer if I didn't have the support of LCiL i.e. payroll and ILO assistance with PAs terms and conditions.’
* ‘I would find it impossible to manage direct payments and maintain the autonomy that gives without LCiL’
* ‘I know any problems that may arise LCiL will guide me and help me with everything. We would be lost completely without LCiL doing what it does for us.’

**3. Service-specific responses**

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

* 82% had used the Payroll Service
* 32% had used the Independent Living Service
* 9% had used the Financial Management Service
* 14% had used the Self-Directed Support Development Programme

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 | 67% | 22% | 5% | 0% | 6% |
| All my payroll needs are dealt with effectively and efficiently | 89% | 6% | 6% | 0% | 0% |
| They use jargon-free and plain language | 72% | 22% | 0% | 0% | 6% |
| All my Personal Assistants’ payroll calculations are accurate | 72% | 28% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| I have confidence in the competence and knowledge of Payroll staff | 83% | 17% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Payroll staff are helpful and able to answer my queries | 78% | 17% | 6% | 0% | 0% |
| I feel more confident about being a Personal Assistant employer | 67% | 22% | 6% | 0% | 6% |
| I feel more confident about managing my Direct Payment /Independent Living Fund package | 67% | 28% | 0% | 0% | 6% |
| I value the work of Payroll and would recommend the service to others | 78% | 17% | 0% | 0% | 6% |

**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 20 comments in response to this question, all were positive and many said that it was ‘very useful’ to them, especially when it came to record keeping and, most importantly, managing their SDS payments.

* ‘Very useful I know that my personal assistant is important to me and they receive their payments quickly and efficiently.’
* ‘Very helpful as I need to show this to local authorities and also keep a copy myself.’
* ‘They keep me updated on any changes of anything and they ensure my employee is always paid on time for all hours they spend helping me.’
* ‘I need to send it to the council to reconcile my SDS.’
* ‘So that i know how much to pay & provides reassurance i have paid the correct amount to HMRC/NEST’

There were no negative comments about the Payroll Service.

**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 12 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, an easier life and not being able to do it without our help were also running themes in the comments:

* ‘Couldn’t be without it. Would cause me so much stress as not only do I look after my special needs son, I have a 96 year old mother too.’
* ‘Makes my life so much easier, all I have to do is complete timesheets signed by myself and employee and payroll does the rest.’
* ‘Essential - without this i would not be able to use the DP service.’
* ‘I am on my own now and getting older and my health is not improving, if anything getting g worse re my mobility in the main.’
* ‘Because employing a pa for my mum with dementia is a hard thing, yet another burden, and having payroll support helps to make it possible.’
* ‘Take the pressure off me having a carer.’

**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 was only 1 FMS clients responded to the questionnaires sent, which was decided was not enough to provide a proper representation of the opinions of the MLC service users.

**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.

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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 | 57% | 29% | 0% | 0% | 14% |
| Their support is excellent | 57% | 29% | 0% | 0% | 14% |
| I appreciate their home visits | 29% | 14% | 14% | 0% | 43% |
| The support provided by ILT has given me more choice and control over decisions affecting my life | 43% | 43% | 0% | 0% | 14% |
| I know more about Self-Directed Support due to my support from ILT | 57% | 14% | 14% | 0% | 14% |
| The support provided by ILT has allowed me to live more independently﻿ | 43% | 43% | 0% | 0% | 14% |
| I can better manage my responsibilities as a PA employer with ILT support | 57% | 29% | 0% | 0% | 14% |
| I feel more confident about managing my Direct Payment / Independent Living Fund package | 71% | 0% | 14% | 0% | 14% |

We also asked the 12 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?”** 8 comments were given on this matter, and all of the responses were positive. They focused on how much better life is being able to employ their own personal assistants. Independence, quality of life and choices also came up in many of the comments. A few examples are:

* ‘This has helped me massively.’
* ‘My daughter looks forward to outings with other people, especially those befrienders whom I shall employ since they are deaf and like her use British Sign Language.’
* ‘Clarified grey areas’
* ‘Let’s me lead a better life.’

iv) Self-Directed Support Development Programme

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 | 67% | 33% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| I feel listened to, heard and fully supported in these groups. | 67% | 33% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| They use jargon-free and plain language | 67% | 33% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Information provided at the workshops was clear and well presented. | 67% | 33% | 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. | 34% | 33% | 33% | 0% | 0% |
| I value the opportunities the SDS programme offers. | 33% | 67% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| I know more about Self Directed Support due to my contact with the SDS programme | 33% | 67% | 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:

* ‘This has given me an opportunity to learn and grow also enabled me to share this information with other parents/carer that would benefit from such support network. Thank you’
* ‘Knowledge is power and it was very useful as I didn’t know what help was out there’
* ‘It’s a lifeline when needed. This improves my own wellbeing and mental health as well as my loved ones.’
* ‘gave me a boost of confidence’
* ‘So I know what is the best for me and my son’
* ‘was useful and what I required at the time.’
* ‘I am totally grateful and feel this should be course/ workshops available in each and every locality. Look forward to helping to initiate it locally to me.’

**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.

Here are some final comments from the survey as a whole:

* ‘I am so thankful and grateful that this service is a thing, this gives support of even someone being there to even listen and assist where possible, this totally allowed me personally to breathe again rather than feel isolated.’
* ‘Attended a workshop which I found very useful. Good to know that they are there for advice and had hope to attend further seminars.’
* ‘Each phone call is answered simply and easily, so that it's understood by me (I am 81 years old).’