



# Choices 4U

Report 2013 - 2015



**This report is intended to give an overview of the service and outcomes Choices 4 U has achieved over the last two years inclusive of 2013 – present day.**



*I have met lots of people from the gym and they always speak to me. I am recognised places I go by people from the gym*



## Key Principles

Research tells us people with learning difficulties have greater health needs and can experience poorer health than that of the general population. This can be because some people with learning difficulties have less choice and control to influence factors that can affect their health and wellbeing.

The White Paper 'Valuing People Now' set out a vision and strategy to improve the health and lives of people with learning difficulties. The paper was based on four key principles; *rights, independence, choice and inclusion*. It is these principles that continue to shape the aims and direction of Choices 4 U today. Since the paper was written there have been a number of reports and policies produced that are committed to improving the health and lives of people with learning difficulties. This is achieved by promoting more choice and control as well as improved access to health improvement guidance and support for people with learning difficulties, their families and carers.

## Overview

Choices 4 U works within South Gloucestershire Councils Public Health & Wellbeing Division. The service is committed to improving the health and lives of people we support by means of promoting choice and control over support and healthy lifestyle choices that can enable people to achieve and maintain good health.

Choices 4 U was established in 2009, in response to a day service review for people with learning difficulties. Over the last six years we have received continued support from Leisure Trusts and are an established provider of day opportunities for people with learning difficulties from the age of sixteen years. Choices 4 U currently works with **47** people who access the service over a five day period, with many service users attending a couple of days a week.

Choices 4 U functions from leisure centres and uses the leisure centre venues as a base to work from. These venues are established community resources inclusive for all communities to access and enhances opportunities for service users to lead an active lifestyle.

Choices 4 U works to achieve outcomes by way of supporting people identify and accomplish individual goals that can empower service users to move away from the service, such as employment and education pathways. We work with other providers to deliver vocational and social opportunities such as supported employment agencies, colleges, Community Learning Difficulty Teams and professional instructors who facilitate a varied programme of educational, social and recreational sessions designed to develop independence and social skills.

We offer a flexible, user led programme that supports and encourages people to learn new skills, including core skills such as IT; independent living skills that include travel training, budgeting, community safety and information and support that can lead to health improvements such as lifestyle changes and circles of support that can reduce isolation.

## Aims

Choices 4 U aims to continue working with people with learning difficulties, families, carers, health and social care services in the future. We are committed to providing an effective and affordable service that can enable people with learning difficulties become more connected to their community, support people towards achieving learning and employment aspirations and access meaningful social and leisure interests that can support people to lead a fulfilling life. We believe this can be achieved by working in partnership with communities to improve the health and lives of people we support.

We aim to actively support service users participate in community life and focus on factors that promote good health and wellbeing such as social networks, employment and health promotion that can help reduce inequalities for people with learning difficulties.



“

*Met a new  
best friend that  
I sometimes  
meet up with on  
weekends and  
evenings*

”



## Specific Aims:

### 1. Develop independence

Providing information and support to develop and promote independence and quality of life through independent living skills such as; travel skills, community safety, cooking, IT and budgeting.

### 2. Promote a healthy lifestyle

Promoting access to health promotion programmes that lead to a healthy lifestyle and access to leisure facilities to improve health and wellbeing.

### 3. Develop circles of support

Developing friendships, relationships and circles of support that can help reduce isolation through support planning and signposting to local social and leisure activities.

### 4. Support towards employment

Supporting people to consider and explore employment opportunities including voluntary work and internships that can lead to paid work.

### 5. Provide a quality and cost effective service

Providing a service that meets the needs of people we support and can enable people achieve their goals, by way of understanding their needs, maintaining good levels of communication and partnership working with family, carers, commissioners and agencies.

## Outcomes & Measuring

Service users have the opportunity to plan their own person-centered goals which are included in individual planning. Choices 4 U is committed to delivering an effective and efficient service that meets individual needs and can enable people to achieve personal goals and lifestyle changes. We believe this is reflected by the outcomes achieved that indicate improvements in the health and lives of people we support. We value the importance of joint working with health and social care providers who have continued to contribute in reducing inequalities for people with learning difficulties and that have enabled many service users to accomplish goals and aspirations.

Choices 4 U uses a range of frameworks that enable us to gather qualitative and quantitative evidence which we use to measure outcomes and identify areas for development. Further details are outlined in appendix 1 and 2.

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*I feel very much part of the group, and socialise well at both the leisure centre and in the community*

”

The following is an overview of shared outcomes achieved.

### 1. Developing independence

Independence is one of the most important attributes for people with learning difficulties that can assist people to lead a fulfilling life. Choices 4 U works with service users to develop a range of independent living skills that promotes and encourages independence by way of providing a range of learning opportunities that can enable users to develop new and existing skills.

- Choices 4 U has supported service users to develop a range of independent living skills that promote independence, self-confidence and resilience. Specific areas of support have included; cooking, travel skills, budgeting, community safety, safe havens and an awareness of scams.

Travel		
Number of users who have received individualised support with travel training	% of users travelling independently, using sustainable transport to connect them to the service	Number of users reporting improved confidence and skills to travel independently
5	51%	5

Independent Living Skills	
% of users supported to access resource bases to develop independent living skills, such as cooking, budgeting & safety in the community	% of users self reporting progress with independent living skills
100%	40%



*Programme is varied and well planned out. Lots of different activities to do*





## 2. Promoting a healthy Lifestyle

Choices 4 U is supporting service users to lead a healthier lifestyle by way of promoting opportunities that build physical activity into their lives, such as active travel.

- Working in partnership with South Gloucestershire 'Walking to Health Scheme' Choices 4 U has promoted active travel across the service, investing in our staff team to train as walk leaders to meet the needs of individuals we support.
- Choices 4 U has continued to offer a range of inclusive physical activities within our programme facilitated by accredited, enthusiastic instructors who along with our staff team have worked to motivate service users to participate in regular physical activity. Examples include; fencing, tai chi, water polo, swimming with confidence, street dance and yoga.
- Based on the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' Choices 4 U is working in partnership with the 'Community Learning Difficulties Team' to facilitate a course of wellbeing sessions designed to assist service users to achieve and maintain good mental health.

Active Lifestyle			
% of users having a healthy weight (BMI under 25)	% of users participating in physical activity more than 3 times a week	% of users participating in more physical activity since coming to Choices 4 U	% of users reporting they feel healthier through physical activities at Choices 4 U
35%	51%	100%	95%

Wellbeing The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale	
% of users who report average or above average mental wellbeing in September 2014	% of users who report average or above average mental wellbeing in January 2015
94%	97%



*I had help to find Mencap and to look for a job and work experience*



### 3. Develop circles of support

Being connected to social networks is a desire for many service users at Choices 4 U. We know being connected can help reduce the risk of isolation and provides emotional and practical support which is an important factor in empowering people with learning difficulties to achieve good mental health.

- Friendships within the service have continued to develop. Choices 4 U has signposted service users, parents and carers to information and services that have enabled users to access social and recreational opportunities that has increased social networks, connected users to their local community, developed new interests and most importantly users have had fun!

Friendships, Relationships & Circles of Support		
% of users reporting improved knowledge of social and leisure activities within the community.	% of users reporting new friendships & relationships that have established and led to people keeping in touch outside of the service	Number of users who report feeling closer to other people.
100%	34%	33



*I learned to travel by self*





#### 4. Support towards employment

Having a job and contributing to society is an aspiration for many people with learning difficulties, it is also an important factor that can influence good mental health and wellbeing.

- Working in partnership with agencies and instructors, Choices 4 U has supported users to develop core skills identified as key requirements in the workplace and within daily living such as Information Technology; communication and social awareness.
- Choices 4 U has continued to work with service users to raise confidence and personal expectations towards employment pathways.

Education		
% of users supported into part time education.	% of users developing competence and confidence in ICT to support employment, daily living and social media.	Number of users who have accomplished employability training – Ways to Work.
23%	40%	6

Supported Employment
% of users supported and/or continuing to receive support in employment.
24%

#### 5. Provide a quality and cost effective service

Choices 4 U values feedback, which enables us to measure service users', families' and carers' satisfaction of the service they receive and assists us in identifying areas for development or improvement. We are committed to listening and responding to the needs of service users by offering a varied programmes that reflects choice.

<b>% of users reporting satisfaction with service</b>	<b>% of users reporting dissatisfaction with service</b>
<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>

“

*I can help more at home*

”





# Appendix 1

## Outcomes

### 1. Developing independence

- Service users have used external resource bases and interactive education programmes designed to develop independent living skills and promote independence such as; cooking and preparing nutritious meals, managing money, decision making and using household appliances.
- Working in partnership with 'Forest of Avon Trust' service users have participated and contributed to the 'Into the Woods' project. This aims to raise awareness to protect woodland settings through e.g. tree maintenance, clearing tree guards and identifying wildlife as well as teach bush craft skills such as building tree canopies and fire lighting.
- Choices 4 U has provided practical support to develop travel skills using public transport as well as promoting active travel. Support in this area has enabled a number of users to obtain the skills and confidence to travel independently as well as increase independence through improved access to services, employment and recreational resources.

### 2. Promoting a healthy lifestyle

- In partnership with South Gloucestershire 'Drug and Alcohol' service Choices 4 U have delivered a series of interactive sessions designed to raise awareness about the effects of alcohol and drugs on our health and wellbeing.
- Working in partnership with South Gloucestershire 'Walking for Health', service users have participated in a series of walks. These have assisted service users towards good mental wellbeing by way of promoting independence, creating opportunities to explore the community and meet new people.
- Choices 4 U have supported service users to work towards the 'ASA Learn to Swim Pathway' designed to develop water confidence and competence.
- In Partnership with the 'Community Learning Difficulties Team' Choices 4 U is delivering a 12 week course of wellbeing sessions across the service. The programme is designed to introduce users' to the 5 ways to wellbeing that can lead to health improvements.



### 3. Develop circles of support

- Friendships have continued to develop throughout the service. Service users have received support to plan social activities and develop relationships on a social level outside of Choices 4 U.
- Choices 4 U has promoted the 'Healthy Lifestyle Booklet' produced by Public Health & Wellbeing in January 2015, providing information about a healthy lifestyle as well as a guide to social and leisure activities throughout South Gloucestershire. Service users have reported they are more informed about social and recreational opportunities.
- In partnership with 'South Gloucestershire Dementia Action Alliance', Choices 4 U are working to promote a dementia friendly service by way of raising awareness about dementia with service users, parents and carers.

### 4. Support towards employment

- Choices 4 U has continued to work in partnership with supported employment agencies which has enabled user's to gain and sustain employment including paid work, voluntary work and work experience.
- In partnership with a supported employment agency, Choices 4 U has assisted a service user to complete an internship at 'Hobbs House Bakery'. Support comprised of pre-employment support and job coaching designed to assist the individual to learn their job role through systematic instruction.

### 5. Provide a Quality and Cost Effective Service

- Choices 4 U is committed to listening and responding to the needs of service users by offering a programme of activities that reflects choice. Here are some quotes from some of our users.

*I feel very much part of the group and now socialise with people at the leisure centre and in the community.*

*I have been going to the gym and been able to lose weight and become healthier.*

*I had help to look for a job and work experience.*

*It has helped me to make a difference to myself and to be part of the group that I enjoy being with.*

*I have used the gym every day which I really enjoy. My fitness has really improved.*



# Appendix 2

## Methods of monitoring and measuring

### 1. Person-centred planning - Getting to Know Me

Choices 4 U works with service users at the start of their service and on an ongoing basis to establish what users seek to achieve from their service and establish how they can be best supported to achieve desired outcomes. Information provided in this plan guides the support and planning of sessions which are based on service users' expressed wishes.

### 2. Direct observation/IT

Choices 4 U use direct observation as a tool to measure and record individuals' achievements and experiences on a daily basis.

We use photographs and video footage regularly to record levels of engagement. Photographs of users engaging in some activities are recorded on individual users 'Getting to Know Me' records and is used for much of our publicity material.

### 3. Evaluation questionnaires/discussion

Feedback is gathered through activity evaluation questionnaires every eight weeks and is designed to find out the views of users participating in sessions. Results from feedback shape future planning.

Quality is determined through the use of six monthly questionnaires completed by service users, parents and carers. Feedback is also obtained through regular telephone communication and one to one discussion.

### 4. Statistical evidence

Choices 4 U records levels of service users' current physical activity on referral and reviews activity levels six monthly. Information is documented on a 'Personal Details Form' which seeks to establish improvements to levels of activity.

Choices 4 U maintains daily service user records to record and monitor activity and participation.

Good mental wellbeing is what some people call happiness and feeling good. Choices 4 U use a questionnaire called 'The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale' on a quarterly basis. Results are recorded to measure and monitor wellbeing.

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