

2015

Draft Evaluation Report 2015

Brent Mencap

An Evaluation of the Service – Compiled by Competitive InSights
September 2015



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Background

Brent Mencap is the leading voluntary sector organisation in Brent working with and on behalf of people of all ages with a learning disability. In its current format it has been operating since 1999, however it has evolved from the work of broadly similar organisations that began in the 1950s.

Primary object: The relief of people with a learning disability in particular by the provision of help and support for them and for their families, dependents and carers, and to promote inclusion, independence and choice for people with a learning disability and to challenge discrimination against people with a learning disability.

Secondary objects: The promotion of the welfare of older people and adults and children with disabilities and their carers in any manner which now or hereafter may be deemed by law to be charitable within the London Borough of Brent and adjoining areas particularly by the provision of care, advocacy, support, treatment and education commensurate with their needs and potential ("Older people" are people over the age of 55). To provide or assist in the provision of facilities for the recreation or other leisure time occupation for people who have need thereof by reason of their age or disability with the object of improving their conditions of life"

Brent Mencap exists to enable Brent residents with a learning disability to live as full and independent a life as possible. It has about 500 service users, about 150 are people with a learning disability, the rest access its pan disability services such as information and advice. They are in touch with more than 1500 users, carers, partners, funders and paid workers who receive its newsletters and email alerts. The services that they provide encourage and enable people with a learning disability (PWLD) to take control of their lives. They do this in various ways: by providing services and activities relating to health and well being, adult learning; advice and support; social activities; research, anti-discriminatory work and campaigning for equal rights and better services.

In brief Brent Mencap is a multi-project service provider with services ranging from advocacy and outreach to sporting and social activities and family support etc. A core value of Brent Mencap is to constantly endeavour to improve its service. It has been awarded a Silver standard in Investors in people and it is considering ISO9001. Service user involvement is very important and there are two service users on the board. Like all third sector organisations there is also a constant challenge to funding as a consequence of changes in public policy.

Objective of Research

Evidence of stakeholder engagement is now a key performance indicator for funders. For many funding streams it is a prerequisite of a funding bid. The main objective in conducting this research is to strengthen the ability of Brent Mencap to provide for the needs of its service users. This research will provide Brent Mencap with a clear understanding of perceptions, experience and needs of its service users and carers/parent's families. It will also consult with employees/board members and those in the statutory area- (Brent Council). By conducting this research Brent Mencap is sending a positive message – that its strategic intent is to continue to improve the service to them.

The results of this research will help inform strategy and future bid applications.

The Scope of the Research

This project is focused on stakeholders of the service. At a practical level it poses the question - are the services provided in line with the objectives of Brent Mencap, and how satisfactory are they in practice?

Methodology

There is a need to ascertain the perception and opinions of Brent Mencap in the eyes of the service users and their carers/parents.

Meetings were held with service users/parents carers to ascertain their views on Brent Mencap. Questions were agreed in advance.

Opinions of carers /parents and ex-service users were also sought by telephone conversation. 42 service users were interviewed- representative of the main service user groups. A formal questionnaire, to help focus discussion was used. This questionnaire was agreed in advance with Brent Mencap. It focused on people's expectations of Brent Mencap, their levels of satisfaction with the service and any suggestions for improvement. For ex-service users the focus of the conversation was on their experience since no supported by Brent Mencap. A number of key staff members were also interviewed as was Brent local authority.



Results of the surveys were presented with recommendations and conclusions. Information from the surveys will be kept on a database to facilitate any further queries.

Measures of Success

Brent Mencap will have an objective, independent appraisal of its current position and potential future position from the viewpoint of its service users and other stakeholders.

Value to Brent Mencap

This project will contribute to Brent Mencap's ability to improve its fundraising and operations, strengthening its ability to champion the needs of its service users.

Contributors - 67

Service Users – 36

Ex service users – 6.

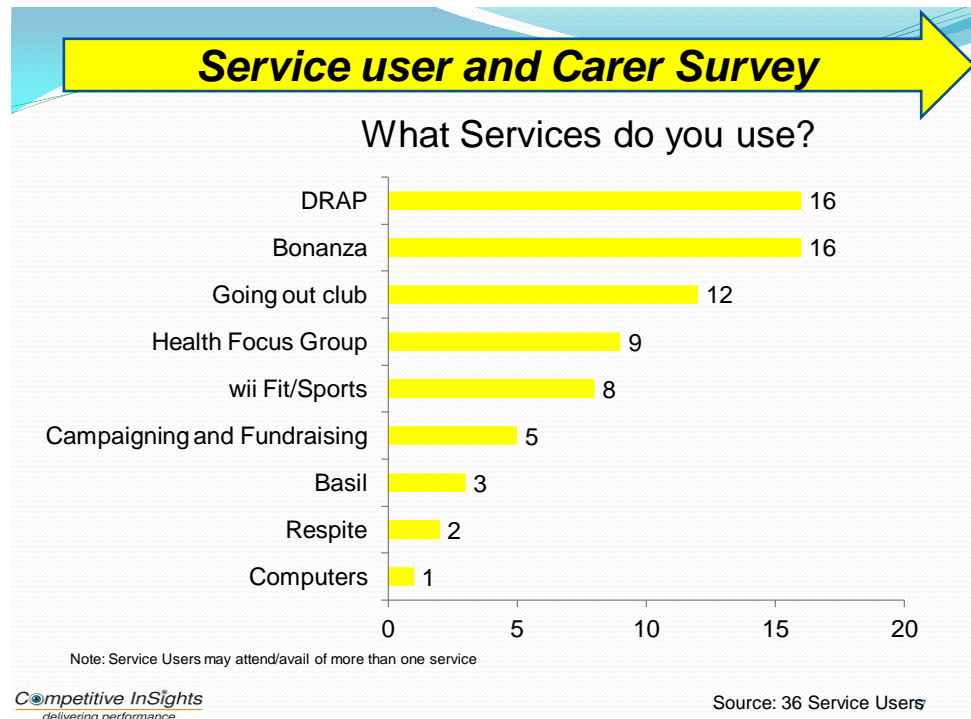
Carers/Parents of Service Users - 10.

Employees- 12.

Local Authority – 3.

Service user and Carer Survey

Results of Service User and Carer Survey



Vox Pop – Verbatim Comments

Why do you attend /access the services of Brent Mencap? - Social–

“Nice people + meet friends (3)..... I like it and the people (2).....

To make new friends and see old friends. It’s good here. The staff are nice and polite. (6).....

I enjoy it. I like meeting new people (7).....To meet people and make new friends (8).....

Meet friends, join in and I love art (17)..... It’s good fun (11).....I have friends at Mencap.

They help people with learning disabilities (12).....To enjoy myself, have a bit of fun

(13).....To mix with people and to go out with them (14).....See my friends and meet

people (15).....Because my friend Y comes to Bonanza and I wanted to do something on Saturday other than staying in my flat. (16)..... The only place that you can meet

people (47)....

Those in blue = comments of carers/parents.

H loves the club, the disco and meeting with people. It is a good back up (52)..... D goes because she knows so many people- they were her school friends -socialisation. She has dementia and the sewing is good for this. This is something that we could not provide. We want to keep her at home and Brent Mencap helps us to do this (55).....F attends the gateway club. Bar b que- social and meetings on housing info. Social for F- for me it's informational and social" (54) "It takes him out of the house and he meets with people"(57)""Something to do – dancing and a sing-song, goes on holiday, M is excellent"(58)

Why do you attend /access the services of Brent Mencap? Information

"I don't want to miss out on things; I like to mix with people" (10).....

"I come to meetings like DRAP group. I find out about other meetings. I went to one last week. We talked about health. I heard about a girl, who is sick, her husband is not helping. She needs support (from rehab team). We split up into different group. It wasn't so easy to speak up in group" (5).....

"I come here to learn about going out. I go to DRAP and health meetings like the health partners forum. I got a got a card – I went to a group. They talked about mental health. I said about a man who had a heart attack and fell down. He had to have tablets. I'm finding out more about mental health. I can say what I think. I collected money for Brent Mencap at Wembley Stadium. It was fun" (6)

"I use the professional experience of what I would describe as highly qualified and highly motivated staff. The staff are extremely supportive and helpful. It is very reassuring to have an organisation like Brent Mencap. Advocacy courses related courses such as learning computers and the focus group" (4)

"It keeps me informed of what is going on before we felt left out "(5)

"To learn about DRAP Group, going out group, housing, meeting friends and making new friends" (4)

"The staff are nice, they take us out, they helped us go to Millennium Centre. We did a campaign to keep it open to keep it open so people aren't bored. I find out about elections and MPs, who you vote for is confidential". (5)

“They care about people with LD + get voices heard – by MPs + government. Good that we get our voice heard” (7)

“For info, support, advice + to socialise with other men of group”. (9)

“I like the concept that you can do virtual sport” (46)

“At the beginning I couldn’t do much or speak much. It’s a good place. There are things to do all the time. Its politics- speakers about the buses, the MP. Because a lot of things are bad, I am in the wheel chair- a lot of things are difficult or impossible- the thing is to protest” (9)

“M is in a wheelchair- and he wants to attend DRAP. Its local and he enjoys this group” (50)

“They understand and accept the differences. Someone who knows what it is like to have a child like- good feedback” (59)

Why do you attend /access the services of Brent Mencap? - Practical Support/advice

“I come to DRAP group on Wednesdays. I like it because we chat about wheelchairs, buses. I used to get support to live in my house. Cassie and Ann helped me. They helped me with bidding for a new house. I showed them letters and bank statements. I had a problem with mice. They put poison on the floor. They talked to my mum. I was scared of the man downstairs” (8)

“They helped me with problems in the past. The gas- which tariff is the best? Disability living allowance is the right money or not?” (9)

“I don’t do football anymore. I used to do sports, cricket and bowling. It finished. I come here now. I can bring letters from doctor or hospitals. I chat to Cassie about them. This group is good. They give me letters about going out to other places. They told me about the council’s consultation day in October” (8)

“I used to go to the Wednesday group. I used to go bowling with the Brent Mencap. I had Anne and Janet and Maria to help me with my cleaning they helped me pay my bills. They helped me move from Wembley Park to Willesden” (3)

“I suffer from anxiety and depression and I am a recovering alcoholic. The staff act as advocates for me. The staff are like family and are highly motivated and very helpful and supportive” (4)

“For information - get info better here than on my own. Like changes in benefits etc. I also wanted to make a contribution” (5)

“If I had a problem I will approach them” (54)

What is the best thing about Brent Mencap?

Staff are nice (3).....It's like a family (4)..... I like the Christmas parties and the activities. I've been coming for 3 or 4 years (6)..... I like to play snooker and table tennis on Friday afternoons. I see the same people, they are my friends. (8)..... Meeting friends. Going to the sports centre – soft touch rugby (2)..... Seeing my friends, playing games, listening to music- doing activities – drawing and dancing with my friends (10).....Meeting my friends (11)..... Opportunity for going out to places, I like going in a group (6).....

It is reassuring to know Brent Mencap exists. Brent Mencap welcomes everyone with open arms. All members and staff are friendly. As someone who is isolated. This is where Brent Mencap is helpful to me. You can meet people, have a chat and make friends (4)..... Enjoy myself, seeing my friends M and J at the club (13).....Going out with them (14)

They are friendly people, going out on trips (15)

Meeting people and seeing my friends (16).....They are helpful (17)..... Karaoke (19).....Exercise and drama, I love the drama (20)

We go out on Saturdays (21)..... Meeting people and going to different things (22).....Getting on with P and L (staff) (23)

To meet people and to see what is happening around the borough- to get talking newspapers and to hear of changes in the country (1)

I like hearing about what people were doing (2)

The BBQ. Sausages, vegetables, fries. We went to Wembley stadium. We collected money there for Brent Mencap. It was good fun but it was raining. Sometimes we have problems on buses (5)

What is the best thing about Brent Mencap? *continued*

Campaigning/fundraising. Helping people with LD (7)

Giving advice + support + help, when in need. Very professional (9)

It is good at helping people go forward (45)

Hate Crime and Health Focus- all very good. (46)

You can talk to people there and they give good advice (47)

It is good at creating an awareness of LD. Before it had a stigma. When you have LD you don't think like a normal person. The social aspect is very important. Tomorrow- we are looking at the website to see if it is easy for us to read. Good at awareness, signposting and safeguarding. PWLD always say yes as they are eager to please- that is why safeguarding is important. PWLD do not like fast changes (48)

Good at helping people with difficulties- housing etc. Very happy with them – especially the hate crime project and safeguarding and health awareness (49)

Good at getting over info to PWLD and those with more difficulties. Staff take great interest - go further than they need to. (5)

Reading, writing, in the kitchen- during groups, cleaning the tables- after groups (7)

I enjoy the format, one of the things is that 1 person (speaks) at a time. It's important. Not for 4 or 5 different conversations. All the people not speaking around the room. Different people have different problems. All of them will have a question. I have the right phrase in my mind but speech is difficult. I get time and space and other people can also ask questions specifically to the speaker. All the people ask questions once at a time. The staff in the place are happy, positive all of the time. All of them are good people, they talk slow to me. (9)

They care about people with learning disabilities which is great. They do a lot of good work (12)

What is the best thing about Brent Mencap? continued

He enjoys it and has people to socialise with and find out what is happening (50)

The only respite is him going on holidays. They know him – they have known him since he was a child (52)

“They are very modern in their approach. Their information is very easy to read. They are good at training- they have trained the police and a lot of people in the NHS. . Good at giving advice on health and benefits. Good for socialisation. Good at campaigning for equal rights. Continuity is important. Daycentres are closing. Fighting the same argument- it can be hard to keep going. Councils are outsourcing- and much rotation of staff” (53)

“I am 74 and will not go on forever. A big worry is a place for Y to live. She will want 24 hour care. We know the people very well. She enjoys it and they have young volunteers. It gives me a break when she goes on holidays. They go beyond helping people- they even organise funerals. Since my husband died my daughter is having counseling” (54)

“It gives you the opportunity to meet with other carers. They know us very well and we can talk to them about the future. They also sent someone to help with her future plan” (55)

“It gives Y the opportunity to meet people at the same level as her- she enjoyed it. This is her only social life – other than her immediate family. The people that run the clubs are great. Good on advice and help on how to cope” (56)

“...is more social through having more contact with people there. There are few places that he can go – it is very good at social inclusion ((59)

What is the worst thing about Brent Mencap? - Changes/Suggestions for improvement

Nothing (3).... None (8)..... Nothing (10) (12) (13)..... Nothing (20)..... I don't know, I've just joined (16)

Getting there (14).....They should play more games (18)..... They should do more parties (19)

They should do more bowling (21).....There should be more choice (6)

They could do something a bit more active – my daughter has a weight problem- perhaps more sports that appeal to girls. I know that they tried having fruit but no one took it. It can be hard work dealing with the council. It can be hard to get through to the people that you want. The only way is to send in a complaint (54)

Sometimes I have found things out by accident rather than by design- perhaps because I am a sister. S is wonderful- she knows them. (55)

More courses in awareness and more advice on benefits or housing (49)

More funding so that mainstream can have a better understanding of people with LD (9)

Not enough funding for clubs and advocacy etc. They should have more (50)

Keep on doing good work – stopping the cuts – government cutting too many services (7)

Needs more staff (11)..... Sometimes they are not always there when you need them/they should help people get jobs (17)

Not enough services, closing a lot down, it's too small (15)

They should help more disabled people who live in homes to get out more (22)

It would be good to have a sensory room- for respite for people. Should sent out support workers- more of that – helping people (46)

Since 2013 – do not have floating support. Bring it back. They handed me over to Riverside and I haven't seen them for a year. I used to phone G there but the phone number now just rings out. The staff used to come around and help me – but no more (47)

It is a shame that they lost the contract for floating services to Riverside- it has gone downhill- changed its name and location (48)

What is the worst thing about Brent Mencap? - Changes/Suggestions for improvement ...continued

The worst thing about Brent Mencap (would be) if it closed. Finding a place to park a car. The business might be happy to allow Brent Mencap users to park their car in the car park. I think it could use more staff. The current staff is brilliant but we need more support (4)

Someone stole some money from me. Another person took my wallet. If he comes back I will leave (5)

One person comes here. He has touched my leg. I told him to stop. He started to touch my face on the bus. He also touched another male client's arm. Staff told me I needed to call the police. The person laughs at me. He calls me "mum". He doesn't listen when we told him. He laughs when we talk about sad things like cancer. (6)

(NB Issues outlined above have been dealt with by staff through investigation and safeguarding referral)

Staff are very positive many PWLD don't have "get up and go" and don't know what is needed. (5)

Sometimes it's all different conversations at once, people don't listen (9)

It might be an idea to do counselling for parents as well (52)

Perhaps help on legal rights. I had to take my sister out of the house as she was in an appalling condition. There has been a lot of red tape and rigmarole dealing with Brent council. There are people still living in that house and conditions are bad. It would be good if they could give you guidance if you are unhappy. If Mencap had some way of supporting parents and carers who are unhappy with conditions. Offer this legal advice. Her accommodation in ...is getting paid for by Brent – who are misrepresenting her. (56)

"He would like another job. He does not want to sit at home doing nothing" (57)

"a box on the website for frequently asked questions and connections to support agencies – links to other advice services" (59)!

If you did not come to Brent Mencap where would you go? What would you do?

Nowhere (3).....Walk around London (4)..... I would ring my friends on my phone. I would stay home and be bored. (6)

Stay at home and watch TV (11)

Not much, stay at home (13)

Nowhere – there are no alternatives (54)

“he would be gutted and upset and would miss it” (58)

I'm not aware of any other place similar to Brent Mencap. I think Brent Mencap is unique and irreplaceable. I would consider going to an AA meeting (4)

The only other organisation is Brain once a week in Harrow Wealdstone. But it's more structured. Once a month is brain injury support group in Willesden hospital and Harrow Wealdstone. I would miss chatting; the group is a good thing, positive thing different thing, talking about buses, income support, gas and protests (9)

There is very little else to do if you are disabled in Brent and dependent on other people (50)

I wouldn't know where to go. Maybe the library (6)

I wouldn't know (7)

“I would not know where to go. The location is better- a safer nicer area – he is now picked up and he gets a lift home” (57)

I don't know I would be sad and miserable. It's easy to get here. I would find a different office (8)

Not much, stay at home and watch TV. Do writing at my desk in my bedroom. I would like to get a laptop soon (10)

If you did not come to Brent Mencap where would you go? What would you do? - *continued*

I would go to the sports centre by myself to find out what they were doing. I would feel bad. That means we can't do things. We can't go out to central London, going out group. We won't go and do collections. I would see my friends at college. (5)

I'd go to my mother's house in Barnet (14)

I don't know. He also goes to a private one in Ealing (52)

Ealing or Richmond. I come here as I enjoy the group – very unfortunate (9).....Only job I got. Have to get another (2)

I go to other places now. I miss the Wednesday group. (3)

I would volunteer for the Lib Dems (1).....Go to Brent Mind instead – an art group + a quiz (2)..... I would find another organisation nearby and do something similar (7)

Become a trustee with someone else (5)

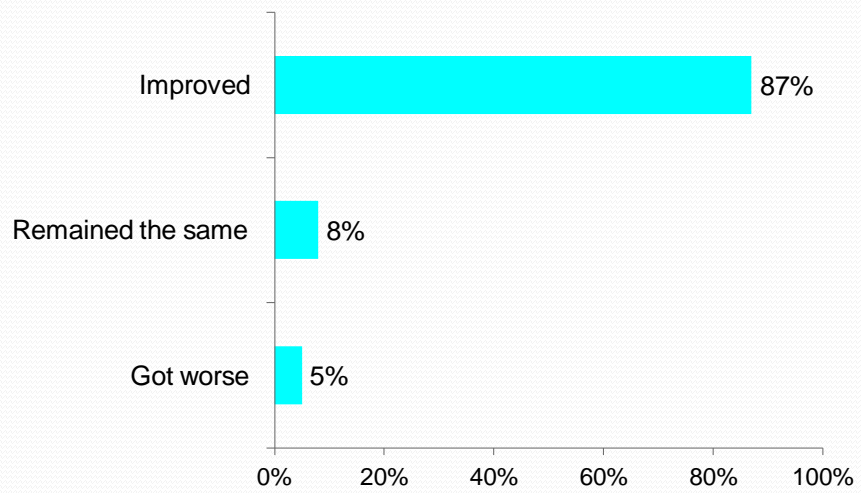
Go to other groups (8)..... I would go to see friends, to the cinema, to the seaside (12)

Anywhere, shopping, church, see my family/friends. Go to Bingo. (15)

Tidy up my flat, housework on sat (16)

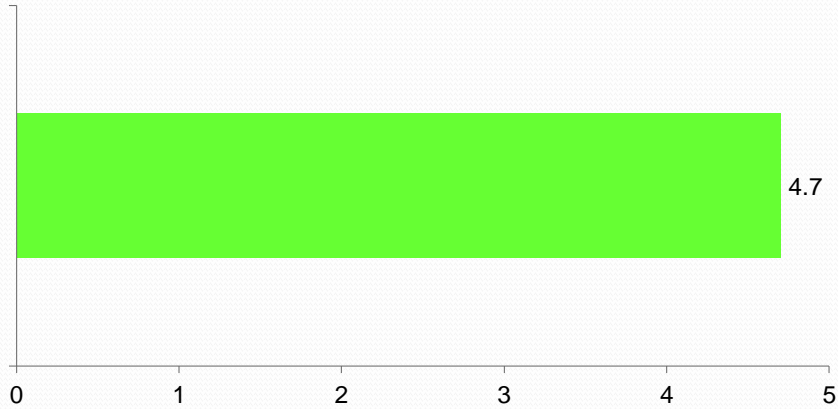
Service user and Carer Survey

Performance – Since attending have things?



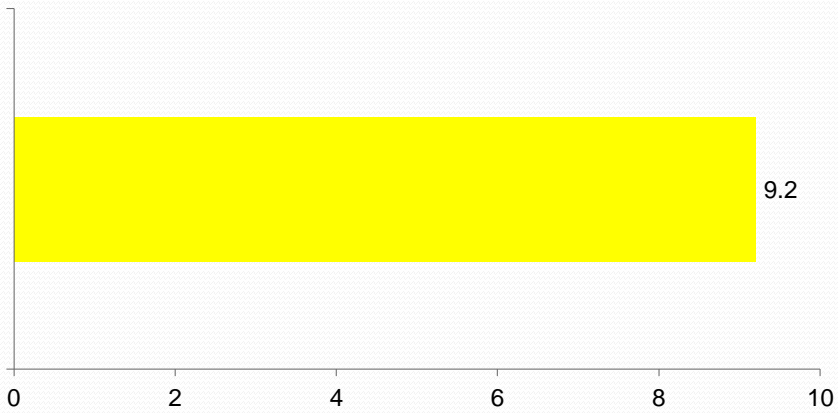
Service user and Carer Survey

Satisfaction – A. On a scale of 1 to 5 how satisfied are you with Brent Mencap?



Service user and Carer Survey

Satisfaction – How likely are you to recommend Brent Mencap to others – Carers Only (on a scale of 1 to 10)



Results of Ex Service User and Carer Interviews

(Vox Pop – Verbatim Comments)

“Brent Mencap helped me out a lot. They showed me how to pay bills properly – pay as you go. When my parent passed away Brent Mencap helped me with gadgets Things had improved for me because Brent Mencap helped me in 2012- I didn’t get caught out with bills etc. Brent Mencap could no longer help me. Now social workers come from Riverside every Monday and Wednesday. They used to help me to understand bills but this has stopped. The bailiffs came here last week”. (a)

“I have lived here for 18 years but I have to move now. I have a drug addict next door who owes me £200. A lot of the neighbours around here are not very good. My main concern is getting out of here. My family do not have the time. My bills are all up the Swanee. My neighbours will not help- I haven’t got the internet. I want someone to come in to give me the initiative to do things. They used to come from Riverside but now they say that I am never in, but I am in most of the time and anyway they can phone me first.”(b)

I used to get help with rent/arrears (from Brent Mencap) but I don’t get help anymore. My daughter and a friend try to help me with them. (c)

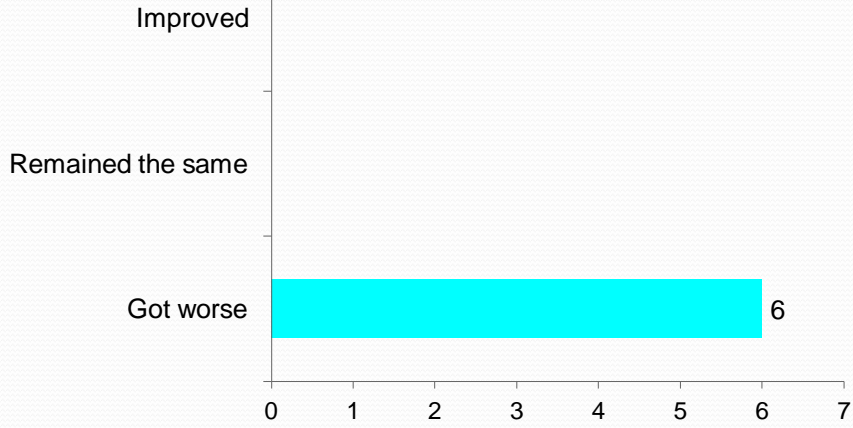
The care workers only come on a Tuesday. I am taking medication for arthritis. Sometimes I forget my meds. With Riverside there are no trips. I cannot get out and about because of the arthritis. I would like to go back to Brent Mencap- something to do. I am stuck in the flat all the time. (d)

I used to get housing advice in Brent Mencap. Now someone comes every 2 weeks. There are no specific appointments. When a worker is unavailable- no message is passed on- I do not hear from anyone – there is no communication. I rely a lot on family and friends (e)

There was no real service from Riverside. Now Look Ahead. I knew the staff in Brent Mencap. Now he is isolated. Nothing is planned or organised. He needs structure plans and activities. He is putting on weight. Cooking needs to be organised and better foods bought. If given a choice he will always make the wrong choices. He needs consistent support. You cannot do that if you have different staff coming every week. This makes it difficult to stick to a diet plain was much happier with Brent Mencap. They were better at communication and they had a support plan and a review. This is too disorganised and the loss of activities such as football. He would love to go back to football.” (f) Carer/Parent

Service user and Carer Survey

Performance – Since no longer attending have things?



6 out of 6 interviewed say that their lives have become worse!

Employee Survey

Results of Employee Survey (Vox Pop – Verbatim Comments)

What do you think Brent Mencap stands for/represent? What is it trying to achieve?

Campaigning – the voice of LD in Brent. (1).....Improve the life chances of those with LD (2)

We are there to represent people with LD. It is one to one; it is access to information, access to services and access to campaigning. (3)

Access to services and the right support to help people lead an independent life (4)

To help people to live independently. To give support when needed- but not to mollycoddle them. Give them guidance and information to make an informed choice. Also to support carers (although not a lot going on there at the moment). It is only when people know what they want that they can go for it. (5).

Not sure what trying to achieve. We should be looking at the gaps- now focused on survival. I think that if you are not a profit-driven organisation you should help people who have no money. (6)

Greater independence for PWLD (7).....We know what is going on and we offer specialised services for PWLD. For those who do not want this – we help them into mainstream (8)

Improve the lives of PWLD. One to one services and finding out what people need (9)

A realistic voice for those with LD- listening and advocating- encouraging people to be independent (10)

That PWLD are not forgotten. That they get the same opportunities as others- employment, independence- through workshops clubs and advocacy. (11)

Disability rights and facilitating service users to speak to people who they wouldn't normally get to speak to. The idea is to go out to those who don't come here – the jungle drum-campaigning.i.e – is the new library suitable for PWLD? A good service under challenge because of financial constraints. LAs have less money- they cannot commission services. Mencap is having to look at alternative sources of funding. Funding is usually there if you work with others. Usually those with similar people and similar issues. - i.e. older people. Issues such

as accessibility- the way that doctors speak to them and getting appointments and access to transport. Dementia, in some respects is similar to LD. (12)

What is Brent Mencap good at?

Listening to clients (that we know) - we are not out and about so much. Many LD people in the borough are not known to us. They may not fall within the definition of critical and substantial needs. We would need finances to reach them. (1)

Continuity of care. (2)

Good presence, good at partnerships- good activities – a really good voice. (3)

Understand PWLD needs and have time and funding. Good workers and good at campaigning. (4)

Campaigning, training, listening, and communicating. (5).

It is well-known, good with clients. Getting people's views. Kept social club going- purely LD-clients enjoyed. (6)

Interacting with client – getting things done (7)

Campaigning and contacting the right people if it is very bad (8)

Good at finding new avenues and exploring new things. Also collaborative working- informal learning (9)

Listening and advocating and making the voice heard (10)

Understanding PWLD. Knowing what inclusion is and to encourage PWLD to contribute to the community (11)

In the past PWLD were in homes, now they are in society. They are living longer – tie up with older people. Good at getting the views of PWLD – good at telling providers what needs to change in services (12)

What does Brent Mencap need to improve?

Outreach in the community. More social gatherings. One of the most important things that we can do is to get them to socialise. Also helping them to complain. (1)

There is too much time spent trying to bid. (2)

Its reach. Why are some people not coming? What are the access issues? Maybe we need satellites. There has been a reduction in our core – we had to scale down (3)

More funding- activities for young people- was 40 days, now 5. More courses and holidays – not getting the right support. Most of our clients do not like sports. People should do a course in health and well-being before football. We may not have taken on board the services that they need – we are now following the money. (4)

A public profile- attracting more funding. We used to have an employment service. We are short on staff- so sometimes things can be a bit bitty. I had to answer the phones today. Ideally we should have someone with a learning disability answering the phones and doing light administration. We should be doing more work with PWLD. Concentrate more on LD itself- have lots of buzz – activities and drop in. (5).

Focus on mission statement. What are the gaps and how can we fill them. Go beyond campaigning- look at new ways to get funding (6)

Do not fight enough. More campaigning to stop cuts. Could do more activities- parental skills and general living skills (7)

To fill the gap. Outreach. The clubs were a major social hub and the day centres have closed. We miss a generation who are not into computers. Need more outreach. Sometimes there is a conflict between the family(carers) and the person on what they want to do. (8)

A tricky one. Ideally in an ideal world- we would give more support to PWLD. We do not know how many people with LD in the borough. It would be good to talk to those who do not use the service(9)

Finding a basis and a relationship with the council. We do not have a great relationship with the council. While Basil is excellent- it benefits only a % of people with LD. When we had floating workers- we saw more people on a weekly basis. Our reach is not as good as it was. We are not offering summer schemes. It would be great to attract more people (10)

Funding and a greater variety of services. 10 years ago we would have scored 10/10. We had the services- from practical services to helping them in their homes- to help them get to appointments. Social advocacy and trips and club nights. We had such a rich wealth of services- we had something for

everyone. Now because the funding is not there, we are not supporting the community as much as we should. (11)

More physical on-site activities- come and have fun- not to have it as a situation where it is not a crisis- we could nip in the bud. Also there are many groups such as Mind that we could work with. (12)

How do you think our service users view Brent Mencap?

The ones that we see love us. We have a good core of service users. (1)

It depends on who you speak to(4)

Most will be happy – some will want more activities- arrange outings etc (5).

It depends on who you talk to. Many would like the services back. They probably think that we are good but not doing enough(6)

There is a core group that absolutely loves coming here (7)

Some who use it think that we are wonderful (8)

Some complain about charges and others say that there is a gap in services. (9)

Good staff that are supportive and caring and kind. They would like it to have a better range of services. (11)

Not as much to do as there used to be. Used to be more direct contact- don't hear much from them (12)

Funder Survey

Results of the Funder Survey- (Vox Pop – Verbatim Comments)

How do you see the future of learning disability services in the next 3 to 5 years?

“There are 2 components. Firstly for those who meet the eligibility criteria- to encourage them to be more independent. To be more creative in service delivery. For those who are not eligible – probably 5-6000 in Brent. In terms of LD strategy we need to look at their needs- let them know what colleges is out there-, transport libraries etc”.(a)

“Resources are limited. Giving more empowerment and choice- more independence”. (b)

“An integration of health and social care. Negative – there is a loss of resources”. (c)

What type of learning disability services will there be more of in the future?

“Those that empower people to become more independent- including lifestyle choices- skills for independence – maintaining support networks”.(b)

What challenges does the learning disability sector face?

“Traditionally it has been very paternalistic. Individuals can do more but they lack the confidence”. (b)

What would you identify as the core objectives of your strategy?

“For adults- a reassessment. Everyone has the ability to learn and improve. To become independent and to make choices. More universal rather than specific care. We will not send them to the same place for 10 years. It is an enablement ethos. Having staff that understand this is critical”. . (a)

“LD is a wide umbrella- but we need to build up the skill levels of people. I would like to see services become more bespoke – tailored to people’s individual’s needs”. . (b)

“Safeguarding – for example the way that vulnerable witnesses are dealt with by the police- to improve the service”. (c)

How can Brent Mencap help you to achieve your strategic aims? How can Brent Mencap add value to your strategy?

“Ensuring that they help to share the message. They will continue to challenge us. Find us other groups and voices- ideas and attitudes. Inform us of cultural differences. Keep LD on the agenda. I understand that they are an advocacy organisation. They need to get the population to understand the positive changes that have taken place”. . (a)

“It is a valuable service. Continue to challenge us. Not everyone is entitled to help. There is very little for the borderline- sometimes they fall between the cracks. They can end up in hospital if they don’t get preventative support”. . (b)

“By nominating a designated safeguarding manager. They have a role on the safeguarding adults board”. (c)

(Please note quote above is misinformed - that Executive Director is the Safeguarding Manager for Brent Mencap)

For what type of projects have you used Brent Mencap?

“They have sat on the interview panels and also had an input into the safeguarding strategy. Also co-production of Basil”. (a)

“Housing advice and leisure development projects”. . (b)

What is Brent Mencap good at?

“Challenging and keeping LD on the agenda. Having direct access to those with LD. Good at service delivery”. (a)

“Good advocates- a high level of service to service users. Drop-in, befriending, social activities – sporting – for those who may not meet the LAs threshold for funding. They hear what is going on and this feeds into strategy. They help the service users to express themselves. They wear a lot of hats – from hate crime to public transport- they “plug the gap”. If the service user does not end up in crisis then they have done something right”. . (b)

“They are good at being vocal and assertive”. (c)

What does Brent Mencap need to improve?

“Help us to identify key aspects that will make us all work better”. . (a)

“Give new people the opportunity to sit on boards. Often it is the same people on boards. They have a good race/gender balance- just need a better rotation of people”. . (b)

“Ensuring that the issues raised are relevant to the forum. More awareness of what the forum is for- sometimes they go off message. Perhaps a more diplomatic approach about getting their message across”. (c)

What are your expectations from any third sector organisation to which you give funding? What are your Key Performance Indicators?

“Need to demonstrate impact and value for money. Move from outputs to outcomes. What did the spend produce? For LD services going forward – how did that help someone become more independent or achieve their life goals”. . (a)

“Transparency and procedures and policy in place”(c).

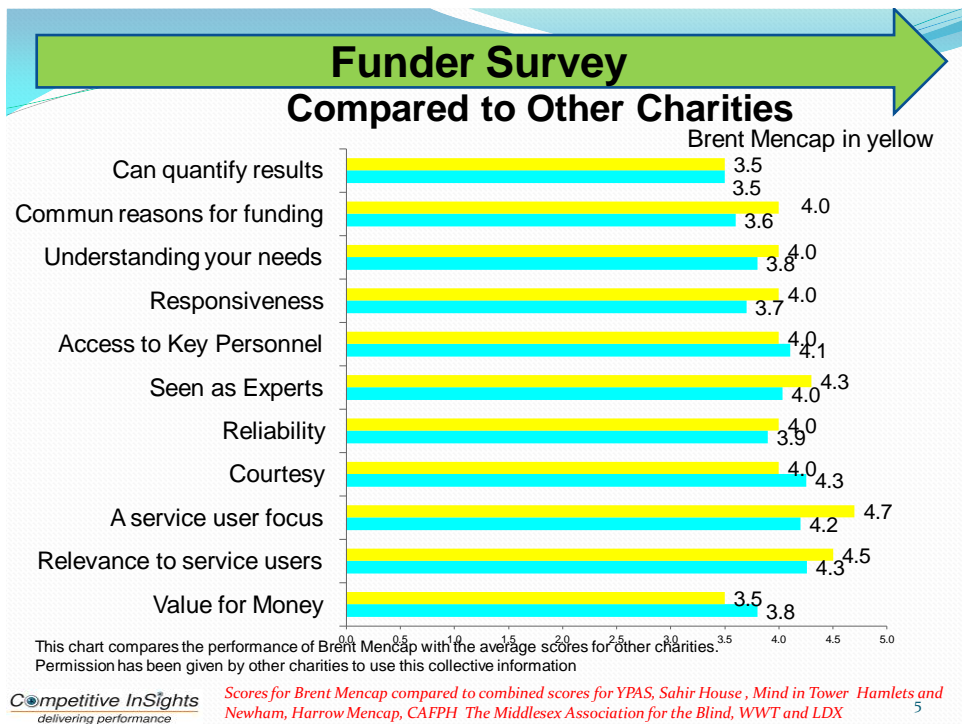
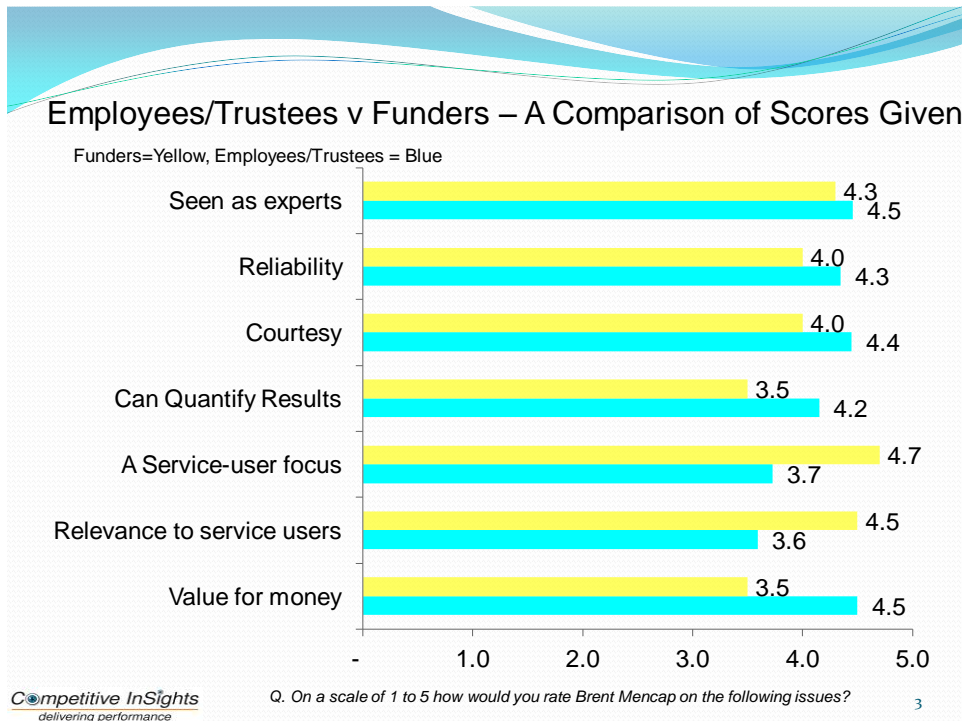
Who competes with Brent Mencap for funding?

“Very few” (b)

“Brent Mind and The Alzheimer’s Assoc” (a)

How do you evaluate levels of need?

- as per the Care Act – “the criteria there is quite explicit – 2 or more significant areas that need assistance- a diagnosis of LD or safeguarding”. . (b)



Findings and Recommendations

- Firstly Brent Mencap meets a need in the community. It has a major positive impact on the lives of its service users and their carers/parents.
- It is evident and acknowledged by contributors to this project that there are many people in Brent who are not getting the support that they need.
- It is also clear that Brent Mencap have a considerable reservoir of historical knowledge of the sector, the local area, and the service users and their families. They know how to identify the key issues and have the experience of working with people to resolve problems. This experience gives them the operational agility to work effectively and efficiently. They can also signpost to the most appropriate source of help and support.
- Service users and carers have a very high opinion of the service that they receive from Brent Mencap. The terms “welcoming”, “advice”, “listen”, “support”, “help”, “understand”, “positive” come up constantly.
- Almost all said that their quality of life had improved since attending Brent Mencap.
- Isolation can be a corrosive factor for service users and their carers. Brent Mencap creates social capital and performs a critical function in creating a social hub. This community-building aspect was cited by many as a core value.
- Without Brent Mencap service users and carers would experience isolation and stress in all probability leading to a fall back into the statutory and/or hospital services. The social aspect is crucial and Brent Mencap is a counterweight to isolation.

- Interviews with ex-service users highlight the stark and chaotic lives of those without an adequate support network. All had crisis of varying levels. First and foremost there is the toll on people's lives. Secondly in most cases of those interviewed in all probability there will be a resort to the statutory services (if not already) with its consequent costs. Respondents had issues from not taking medication to safeguarding to housing to bill payment. These conversations echo the view of Healthwatch England and Dr. Simon Duffy at The Centre for Welfare Reform. A proper functioning outreach service would lessen the chance of a minor everyday issue escalating into full-blown and costly crises.

- These highly vulnerable people require an outreach service and Brent Mencap is well positioned to provide this service.
- In terms of recommendations for improving the service in the main they want more of what is currently on offer.
- They also want other services and activities brought back.
- Both service users and their carers and employees perceive Brent Mencap as a very caring organisation that has an acute understanding of the needs of PWLD.
- As well as its social function Brent Mencap is seen as the go-to organisation for information.
- It also provides service users with very practical help and advice.
- A lack of self confidence and self worth is often a hallmark of PWLD. By listening to PWLD and getting them involved and showing them how to do things Brent Mencap performs an important role in confidence building and self esteem. This confidence is important for independent living and helping people to be less dependent on others – including the statutory services.

- ❖ It should be noted that interviews with ex-service users were over the phone so there was no opportunity to observe the physical living conditions of respondents.

Employees

- The level of care is perceived as outstanding.
- Staff have a deep understanding of people with learning disabilities and their carers.
- Staff are compassionate in their relationships and their communications with service users. Everyone gets a chance to speak. Information is explained well and they are asking the service users about the website.
- The employees are very clear on what Brent Mencap stands for and its values.
- Employees know the needs of the service users and they know how to meet these needs.
- Service users often present with other underlying emotional/social problems – for example isolation and emotional distress as a result of their condition – can have crippling effects on people and their carers/families.
- Also having a disability increases the stresses of everyday life and traumatic events and a predisposition towards depression etc. Brent Mencap has a very key preventative function and early detection service by keeping service users from needing acute services and giving respite to their families.
- Employees, in a similar way to service users want more services and other services brought back. The loss of floating support and the lack

of outreach is seen as a blow to the values of Brent Mencap in its abilities to meet the needs of service users.

Funders

- Brent Mencap has an almost unique opportunity to position itself as an expert in its field, by educating the funding community.
- There are a number of common themes in what funders and others believe will happen in LD service provision in the next 3 to 5 years. All agreed and mentioned that the current cuts will continue. These cuts will occur at a time when there is more need for services.
- From the viewpoint of those who fund the service Brent Mencap is seen as having a very high level of expertise and care with its service users. It scores well and it is perceived as a trusted partner in the delivery of LD services.
- Because of the dispersed nature of the LD population funders are unlikely to be dealing with substantial numbers of LD clients (compared to diabetes/cancer etc) so that their knowledge base may be limited and may take a long time to build up.
- The core objectives of funder's strategy are similar (see interview notes), In a similar way to investors in a business they all want to provide high quality value for money care that dovetails with their strategy with an emphasis on results and outcomes. None of them want service users entering residential care.

- Brent is no different- these are major issues for those currently funding the service. Perhaps at least partly because there is continuous competitive pressure from groups competing for resources. And also they are under acute internal pressures to reduce costs. It is likely that in the future there will be more scrutiny of outcomes.

- In all other third sector projects for which we have been engaged statutory funders wanted to see clear reasons for funding, measurements and evidence-based outcomes.

- In this challenging financial environment third sector organisations meet these requirements with varying levels of success.