

**Paul Robinson**  
Chief Executive

Mr Peter Pinfield  
Chair - Healthwatch Worcestershire  
Civic Centre  
Queen Elizabeth Drive  
Persore  
WR10 1PT

County Hall  
Spetchley Road  
Worcester  
WR5 2NP

9<sup>th</sup> January 2019

Dear Mr Pinfield,

**Re: Learning Disability Partnership Board and involvement of people with a learning disability and their carers**

Thank you very much for your letter of 18<sup>th</sup> December 2018 about the Learning Disability Partnership Board and strategy.

Worcestershire County Council highly values the well-developed and productive partnership arrangements we have in place for learning disabilities in Worcestershire, underpinned by the Learning Disability Partnership Board. As you mention in your letter, Worcestershire's Learning Disability Strategy sets out our commitment to the principles of co-production, meaning people with learning disabilities and their carers working as equal partners with us, and we remain fully committed to this approach as we move forward.

As you know, the Council is under significant financial pressure due to increasing demand for services without accompanying increases in our funding. In order to make our finances sustainable and ensure that the Council can continue to deliver its duties to meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents, we have unfortunately had to make reductions in some areas, including the Adult Services Commissioning Unit, and reductions in funding to some of our partner organisations.

It is as a result of this, and to ensure that we are working in the most effective and efficient way, that we have had to review how the Partnership Board and its sub-groups will operate in 2019/20. However, we are pleased that we have been able to maintain the Partnership Board and have planned three Partnership Board meetings in 2019. We will be working with members of the Partnership Board to revise its Terms of Reference and take forward the principles of the Learning Disability strategy, making sure that the meetings are as effective and productive as possible, picking up and addressing all of the key issues impacting on people with learning disabilities in Worcestershire and their carers.

We are also actively discussing with partners how to maintain as many of the sub-groups as possible, either by the Council continuing to support these, or by working with partners to keep the groups going. For example, there are already plans in place with provider partners to maintain the Having a Job sub-group, in order to ensure Learning Disability employment priorities continue to be addressed. And in relation to the Preparing for Adulthood group, officers in Adult Services have been working with colleagues in Children, Families and Communities to ensure that the group continues, with a particular focus on how we can enable views to be heard and issues to be discussed using a co-productive approach, linking to both the Learning Disability Partnership Board and the SEND Improvement Board.

In relation to the reductions in funding for learning disability self-advocacy, we have been working closely with SpeakEasy N.O.W over recent months to ensure that any adverse impacts on people with a learning disability are minimised. An Equality Impact Assessment in relation to these changes has been completed and recently published; I attach a copy of the assessment for your information.

With regard to the potential impact of some proposals upon the team known as the Quality Checkers, you will be aware that a final decision has yet to be made. The Council continues to follow its standard procedures to manage the proposals but, as discussions are ongoing, it would not be appropriate for us to share any detail at the current time. We will, of course, do so as soon as we are able.

The Learning Disability Partnership Board meeting in January will discuss and agree a plan to make sure that all of the priority workstreams continue to be addressed, and develop a refreshed strategy for 2019 onwards. It is intended that a report will be presented to Health and Wellbeing Board once these plans have been developed. This will also enable us to renew and reiterate our commitment to ensuring that people with a learning disability and carers are involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of services, which is invaluable for the Council as both a commissioner and provider of key services.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Robinson', is positioned above the typed name and title.

Paul Robinson  
Chief Executive  
Worcestershire County Council