



Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015



Forward from Chair of Trustees

Welcome to our new Strategic Plan 2012-2015, which describes a clear and compelling vision for the future and provides a clear framework within which our strategic objectives can be achieved.

It is an ambitious plan, which will challenge our thinking and how we currently operate, yet it is realistic and builds on the excellent reputation for which we are recognised locally and nationally.

As always the plan incorporates the views of all of our key stakeholders, our staff and, most importantly, the views of service users and carers.



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Introduction



Living Options Devon (LOD) is a well respected disabled peoples user-led organisation (DPULO) which works to ensure that people with disabilities and Deaf people (for whom British Sign Language is their first or preferred language) can live the life they choose.

Set up in 1990, LOD is now a registered charity (Charity No. 1102489) and a company limited by guarantee (No. 4925281). Based in Exeter and Barnstaple, our charitable aims have recently been amended so that we can offer services across the South West and to enable us to share good practice throughout the UK.

Being led and run by people with disabilities and Deaf people ensures LOD has first hand knowledge and understanding of the issues facing services users and so is very well placed to increase the influence and voice of Deaf and disabled people. We do this by providing education, training and services which enable people to live the lives they choose.

Background

LOD's first Strategic Plan was published in 2005 following wide consultation and updated in 2008. As a result of significant changes that could potentially impact on LOD (for example, changes in government, funding cuts) and with support from Pilotlight London, we have now developed this new Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015 which will move us closer to our overall aims and has been created following in-depth consultation with a range of stakeholders (anyone with a specific interest in what we do).

Pilotlight is a charity which brings together skilled professionals from the private sector and harnesses their talents to help charities develop their strategic plans and capability so that they can work more effectively for the people who benefit from their services.

Pilotlighters, who pay a membership fee to join Pilotlight and then donate their time, not only supported us through the whole process of developing LODs strategic plan but also visited LOD and worked with Trustees and service users to develop a 'Service User Journey' to show what LOD offers (see pages 17 and 18).

Living Options Devon would like to thank Pilotlight for all the support and guidance they offered to us in the development of this strategic plan.

Our Vision

People with disabilities and Deaf people have the same life chances and opportunities to be active and equal members of society.

The 2010 Equality Act generally defines a disabled person as:

"Someone who has a mental or physical impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."

This includes people with a learning disability, visual and hearing impairment, acquired brain injury, people with dementia and those with a terminal illness.

Persons who are self-identified as belonging to the Deaf community use British Sign Language as their first or preferred language. Deaf people with a big 'D' do not have a disability - their deafness is part of their cultural identity which is recognised by the 2010 Equality Act as a 'Protected Characteristic'.

Our Values underpin everything that we do.

They have not changed

since 1990 and shape our behaviour both as an organisation and as people working with and for Living Options Devon.

We believe in a fully accessible society where all people can enjoy freedom of choice and equality of opportunity.

We are User-led in all that we do, enabling people with disabilities and Deaf people to influence and manage our full range of services and projects.

We aim to deliver the highest standards of service to all the people with whom we work.

We operate a culture of open communication, empowerment and development, where individual abilities are respected and people are encouraged to achieve their full potential.

Our Mission

Living Options Devon (LOD) is a DPULO which seeks to ensure that people with disabilities and Deaf people across Devon and the United Kingdom (UK) have the opportunity to live the life they choose.



Context (environment we work in)

National

This strategic plan has been developed in the context of significant changes in national policy affecting people with disabilities and Deaf people.

The Personalisation agenda continues to be a focus for the current government. It has had a significant impact on disabled peoples user-led organisations (DPULO) such as LOD, including their development and promotion. DPULOs are crucial in the move towards providing new services to meet the challenge of the Personalisation agenda, particularly in the areas of promoting choice and independence, such as person-centred planning, self-directed support and individual budgets.

The Big Society is the current Government's vision of a society where individuals and communities have more power and responsibility, and use it to create better neighbourhoods and local services.

DPULOs, such as LOD, are seen as an essential resource for ensuring that appropriate, responsive and empowering support is available for those who need it and that people with disabilities can make an active contribution to their communities.

Local

Devon County Council Market Position Statement

Devon County Council (DCC) has produced a Market Position statement which outlines their commissioning activity, whether provided by DCC or by other organisations. This statement is useful for organisations such as LOD as it points out opportunities for market development and changes that are likely to happen in the future.



Healthwatch

The Government is aiming to establish Healthwatch, as an independent consumer champion for the public - locally and nationally - to promote better health and social care for all. It is vital that LOD continues to promote the views of disabled and Deaf people and work effectively with Healthwatch to ensure this happens.

Local challenges

In 2011 the number of people aged 18 – 64, estimated by Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI) to have a physical or learning disability in Devon, was 62,314 (sixty-two thousand three hundred and fourteen). The number of people aged 65 and over with a disability, was estimated by Projecting Older People Population Information (POPPI) at 121,756 (one hundred and twenty-one thousand, seven hundred and fifty-six). These numbers will rise particularly with an increasing percentage of older people within the overall population. LOD faces a major challenge, not only to increase the number of people it provides support to, but to also identify, develop and set up services that meet the needs of the disabled population in Devon. These services should be in response to researching what people want, but should also aim to be in line with local and national developments. As the largest DPULO in Devon, LOD needs to make sure the voice of disabled people is at the heart of any decision making process.

Outcomes

As a result of implementing this Strategic Plan Living Options Devon will achieve the following outcomes:

Empower people with disabilities and Deaf people to become more influential so that better decisions are made with them, not about them.

Provide high quality services and projects, which are led and run by people with disabilities and Deaf people.

Inform people with disabilities and Deaf people to enable them to make choices which meet their needs.

Assist people with disabilities and Deaf people to feel valued and develop their confidence to reach their full potential.

Encourage seamless services for people with disabilities and Deaf people through partnership and consortium working.

Bring people together, creating the widest community for people with disabilities and Deaf people, to reduce loneliness and isolation.





Strategic Targets to be achieved by 2015

Following focus groups and discussion with people with disabilities, Deaf people and other stakeholders we have developed and agreed five main strategic targets which will ensure that we will achieve the outcomes.



Strategic Target - Independence and Wellbeing

To reach and support more people with disabilities and Deaf people so that they have the opportunity to live the life they choose.



Strategic Target - Choice and Opportunity

To further promote and support choice, independent living and new opportunities so that people with disabilities and Deaf people can enjoy a more active and fulfilled life.



Strategic Target - Empower and Enable

To enable more people with disabilities and Deaf people to influence those people who make decisions that affect their lives at local and national levels.



Strategic Target - Development and Achievement

To be the preferred partner of choice for others with similar values and encourage two-way sharing of learning to improve quality.



Strategic Target - Involvement and Personalised

To continue to provide services which reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation that many people with disabilities and Deaf people experience in both rural and urban communities.

These targets have been based on evidence that has been collected over the past year from Service Users, Trustees, staff and managers. This includes a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) exercise undertaken by staff, managers, Trustees and Service Users. Pilotlight facilitated a 'Service User Journey' workshop to help us understand what LOD is doing for the people that benefit from its services, a Trustee workshop and focus group work which explored issues such as our 'Unique Selling Point'. This evidence is available from LOD on request.

How we will deliver these targets

We have written a detailed Business Plan 2012 -2015 in which we outline 10 operational aims that are:

S Specific **M** Measurable **A** Achievable **R** Realistic **T** Time-bound

Our 10 Operational Aims



1 To implement a marketing and communication strategy

2 To continue to develop accessible premises

3 To comply with our reserves policy

4 To gain a better understanding of the needs of disabled and Deaf people

5 To improve access to services and outdoor space

6 To continue to provide advocacy, information and peer support

7 To increase choice and independence through service provision

8 To work in partnership to improve services

9 To achieve an externally accredited quality mark

10 To source new funding streams to become more sustainable and independent



LOD empowers people with disabilities and Deaf people to become more influential so that better decisions are made with them, not about them.



Peter's story: "Having been involved in a gymnastics accident whilst at college over forty years ago, I became involved with LOD from its beginning in 1990. LOD has been central to my life for over twenty years and my role as a Trustee is more hands off but no less rewarding and in its way, very challenging. In my view we have made a big difference to the lives of many physically disabled, sensory impaired and Deaf people and will continue to do so in future".



LOD provides high quality services and projects, which are led and run by people with disabilities and Deaf people.

One example of a free service we offer is The See Hear Centre (SHC). People in North Devon with hearing and visual impairments were not receiving the advice and support they needed as the nearest equipment centre was in Exeter (100 mile round trip with poor public transport). LOD supported a User Advisory Group to find the funding to set up The LOD See Hear Centre in Barnstaple.

Brian is part of the SHC service user group. Despite the fact he has no useful sight, he helped set up the Centre and has now taken the step to train and serve as a Trustee for Living Options Devon. He is also planning to volunteer for the Community Support Services project offering telephone support. SHC has provided him with the opportunity and support to put his skills into practice.

Gaynor has been profoundly deaf since birth. She recently changed career and gained a professional qualification and job, however she struggled to communicate reliably on the phone. SHC staff helped her solve the problem and she is now a respected, confident work colleague. Through SHC, Gaynor is also providing peer support to other people who are deaf and of working age as she knows she has a lot to offer from her own life experiences.



LOD Informs people with disabilities and Deaf people to enable them to make choices which meet their needs.



Sarah's Story: "Two years ago I had to get in touch with Haven Advocacy as I was unhappy with the way things were going. I was under a lot of stress. I wanted to set up my own care agency which they helped me to do. They also helped me to get a passport which I have used a lot. I have been to France and this year visited Las Vegas. I would definitely recommend Haven Advocacy to anybody who may need their help."



LOD assists people with disabilities and Deaf people to feel valued and develop their confidence to reach their full potential.



Alison's Story: "LOD have supported me over the last five years. With their help, I have been able to go on many different courses relating to roles and responsibilities, training to use PowerPoint etc as well as obtaining a Level 3 Award in Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector, to name but a few."



They have helped by booking British Sign Language Interpreters so I am able to access the information on the course and to aid me in completing the necessary coursework in written English.

I am now one of the trustees for LOD which has been one of the biggest things for me. I have learnt a lot about the organisation by attending their regular trustee meetings.

As I am the Chair for the Plymouth Deaf Association, I have found that attending these meetings has given me the skills to better chair our meetings at the Deaf club.

I am also a BSL Tutor and I have provided training through LOD doing Sign Language taster courses, Level 1 BSL and Deaf Awareness training. I feel that I have developed my confidence and learnt new skills that have empowered me to work away from LOD, wherever they send me!"



LOD encourages seamless services for people with disabilities and Deaf people through partnership and consortium working.



The LOD Countryside Mobility scheme offers improved access, independence and freedom in the countryside for people with limited mobility, living in and visiting the South West region. Working with a wide range of countryside partners 'Tramper' all-terrain mobility scooters and wheelchair accessible Wheelyboats are now available for use at 30 countryside sites and visitor attractions.

In just the first year in operation, more than 500 people were enabled to take part in activities that were previously inaccessible to them in the countryside and 98% of members report the services provided are of good or excellent quality. The scheme is a true user led project that has been successfully developed by working closely with disabled people.



Claire took her father, **Ronald**, to visit the 'Tamar Trails' in Devon where a Tramper is available for hire and said: "I didn't expect my father to be able to do much more than sit in a chair while he was staying with us for a short break recently. He has suffered with severe back problems for the past two years and walks with very great difficulty. He had to give up driving several years ago and really misses this independence. Most of his days he now spends confined to the house. He enjoyed a very happy afternoon on the tracks exploring the woodland and enjoying being out in the sunshine. I am sure that he experienced the greatest feeling of independence since the onset of his mobility problems." "I myself felt quite proud of the achievements that my father was able to make with the benefit of the scheme, and had never expected to see him enjoying the outdoors again in the way that he used to."



LOD brings people together, creating the widest community for people with disabilities to reduce loneliness and isolation.

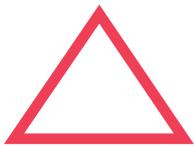


Kate's Story: "I became ill 12 years ago. I am mostly housebound. Over time I realised that most organisations representing people with disabilities tend to concentrate on issues around access and activities. Whilst these are of upmost importance, they didn't reflect my experience and my life. Although I use a wheelchair, I am too weak and have too many cognitive problems to play wheelchair skittles, for instance. I can't use the wonderful sounding Trampers to access the countryside. And I can't attend meetings to get my voice heard.

The staff at LOD have understood this, and helped me to both be included and have my say. When LOD started producing their 'Positive Devon Living' magazine, not only did they welcome an article from my perspective of being housebound, but have asked me to write others and pay me a small reward for my efforts too.

I am also a member of the Devon Disability eNetwork, a small group of people who, for varying reasons, find attending meetings difficult. We are able to discuss, via a teleconference and closed facebook group, issues that are relevant to us.

These two outlets have enabled me to have a say, and I hope reflect to others, the wide range of problems that being seriously and chronically ill can cause. When you are housebound, by its very nature, you are isolated. You are likely to have many health problems. Getting through each day can be a huge struggle, and throws up its own massive challenges. It has been a relief to have an outlet for this, and to share with others in a similar situation, and as a group to take issues forward to other organisations and ultimately 'make a difference'."



What we have achieved so far...

Living Options Devon has a strong track record of high quality delivery of services and empowerment and support. Some examples of work that we are particularly proud of:

✓ The Positive Devon Living Magazine is produced entirely by people with disabilities and Deaf people. It is distributed free of charge to over 3000 (three thousand) people across Devon. Over 90 service users are involved in each edition who share their experiences, explain how they have overcome difficulties and use their skills in its production. Each edition is produced in fully accessible formats

✓ During 2011, following service user requests we set up Devon Choice and Support Services: a web-based Personal Assistant Bank and the Devon Community Support Service in which volunteers provide much needed support for people with limited mobility to enable them to live more independently.

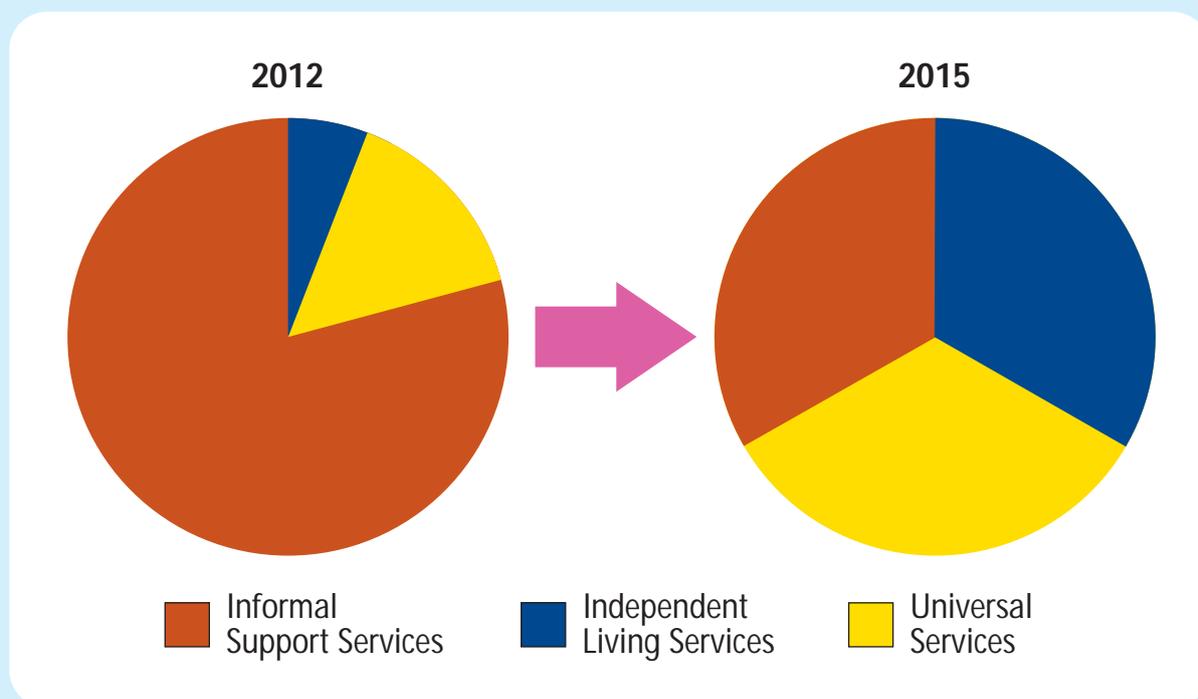
✓ LOD is the Lead Agency for a number of Consortia providing a range of services including The Devon Advocacy Consortium ensuring vulnerable people have the support they need to access health and social services; and Fusion: a Consortium of three charities who have joined together to become the User Led Organisation for Devon.

✓ We have enabled over 700 disabled people to enjoy the countryside through provision of Trampler all terrain scooters at 30 countryside sites across the South West.



Developing a stronger voice and more user-led services

The diagram below shows the types of services Living Options Devon currently provides for people with disabilities and Deaf people alongside our vision for our services by the year 2015.



Currently, the majority of our services are informal support services (represented by the red section of the circle). Informal support services support people with disabilities and Deaf people with issues relating to adult health and social care. The yellow section of the circle represents our universal services. These are services that support people with disabilities and Deaf people in areas outside of health and social care. For example, our Countryside Mobility Scheme is a universal service, providing people with limited mobility the opportunity to access countryside sites.

The smallest section (blue) represents Independent Living Services. These are services, which provide disabled people with support to use Direct Payment or Personal Budgets, such as the Devon Personal Assistant Bank. We currently provide little support in this area.

Our strategy focuses on promoting independent living and providing support to enable people with disabilities and Deaf people to live life the way they choose. This aspiration will mean an increase in both Universal and Independent Living services. By achieving our strategic aims our services will be more equally balanced by 2015, as shown in the second circle.

Service users, volunteers, trustees and staff



LOD is governed by a Board of Trustees, 75% of whom have a disability. Our strength is the people who work with us. We have a strong and committed Board, Senior Management Team, staff members and volunteers.

We have grown in terms of numbers over the past few years and have actively invested in our teams to ensure that they have a high level of skills for the role that they perform within the organisation. In the person specification of all the roles within LOD there is a requirement that the person has a commitment to the underpinning principles of the Social Model of Disability. All our interviews are conducted with service user and/or Deaf community involvement in both the process and the decision making.

We offer a range of volunteering opportunities for service users and others. For example: within the Community Support Service and the Deaf Peer Support Service. We have a range of policies to ensure that these people are properly supported whilst working with us. Due to the skills they develop, a high proportion of our volunteers secure permanent and/or independent consultancy roles within the organisation once a suitable vacancy arises.





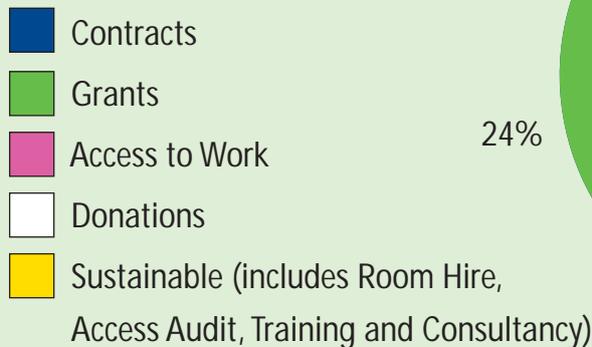
Financial Overview

LOD Income

Total income 2011-2012: £1,570,000 (one million, five hundred and seventy thousand). Our current broad variety of sources of income provide us with a solid foundation.

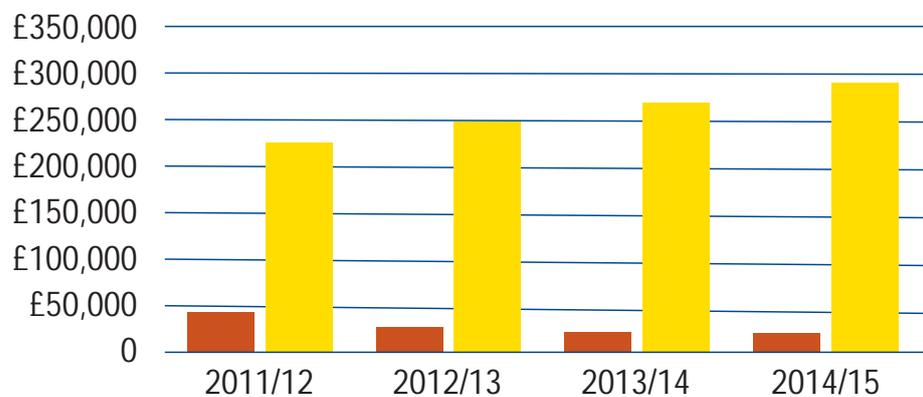
However the level of donations and income from non-statutory sources is low.

Therefore one of our ten operational objectives is to increase their proportion over the next three years.



LOD Annual Surplus and Reserves

This graph shows our surplus targets that will enable us to comply with our policy of three months of expenditure in reserve.



Monitoring and Reviewing the Strategic Plan

Monitoring

Are we progressing in line with the plan?

How will the plan be monitored?

Advisory / monitoring group to assess and report to the Board of Trustees.

Frequency?

Annual - to be reported to March Trustee Board meeting.



Peter Swain OBE
Chair of Trustees

Reviewing

Are the strategic aims still the right ones?

How will the plan be reviewed?

Advisory/monitoring group to coordinate consultation exercises with all relevant internal and external stakeholders and make recommendations to the Trustee Board. The CEO will be responsible for supporting the process.

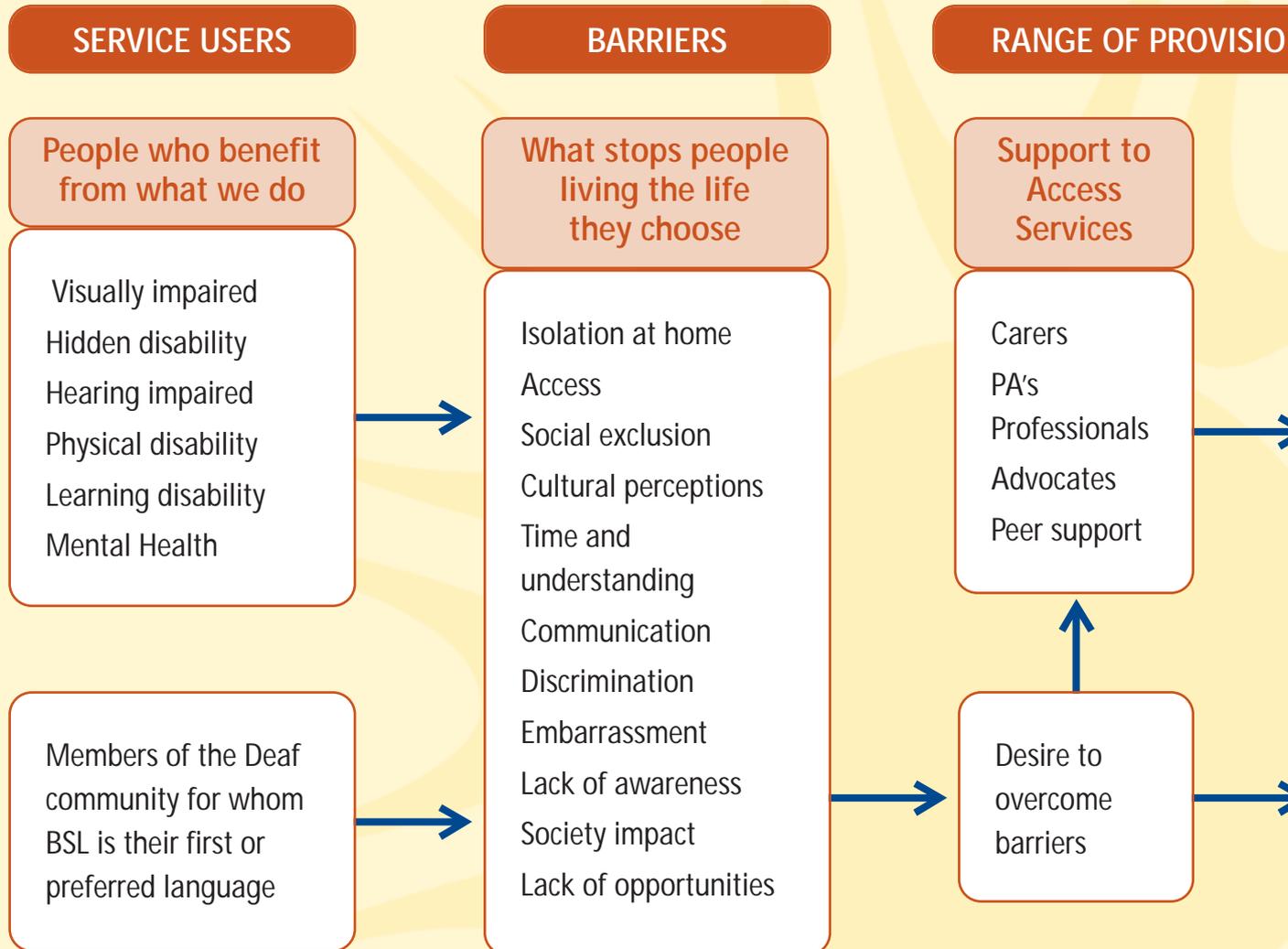
Frequency?

Every three years. The next review process must start December 2014 at the latest.



Diana Crump CEO

Service User Journey



SERVICES AND SPECIALIST SERVICES

Services we provide

Equality/disability/Deaf awareness Training
Countryside Mobility
See Hear Centre
User Led Magazine
Engagement and involvement networks (including DDN)
Network Information and Advice
Peer Support
Accredited training BSL
Access auditing
Advocacy
Research
Consultancy
Membership
PA Bank
Community Support Services
Experts by Experience
Social Events

LIVING THE LIFE I CHOOSE

Stronger Voice

Campaigning and lobbying
Influencing Statutory rights
Society understanding
Raising Awareness

Better Outcomes

Safer environment
Employment
Feeling in control
Increased confidence
Part of Society
Variety of life
Reduced isolation
Empowerment
Quality care
Enjoy life

Choice

Services that meet our needs
Knowing how to access them
One size doesn't fit all

VISION

People with disabilities and Deaf people have the same life chances and opportunities to be active and equal members of society



Empowering: Gathering Service User views in consultation workshops.



Assisting: Deaf people achieve Training qualifications.



Bringing People Together: Wheelchair Dancing at an LOD event.



Providing: High quality Services and Projects - Trumper Training



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