



Communication of Engagement (COE)

Period covered by this Communication of Engagement: From 19th October 2021 to 19th October 2023

Part I. Statement of continued support by the Chairperson and Executive Director

Dear Stakeholders,

I am pleased to reaffirm East Kent Mencap's dedication to our social vision of contributing to a world where individuals with a learning disability are treated equally with fairness, respect, and compassion. Our vision is rooted in inclusivity, and we are resolute in upholding this purpose through all our service provision, and effective partnerships, meaningful collaborations, and initiatives that address digital poverty, promote social mobility, and embrace diversity for people with a learning disability and local communities.

East Kent Mencap's social mission and values

At the core of East Kent Mencap lies our unwavering belief in the inherent dignity and value of every person with a learning disability. We are driven by our values of empowerment, advocacy, and co-production, where each individual's voice is heard, and their rights are upheld. Our services are designed to ensure that our service users are at the heart of decision-making, enabling them to actively shape their support and influence the direction of their lives.

Part II. Description of actions in support of our social mission

1. Collaborating with the NHS to empower healthcare

East Kent Mencap actively partners with the National Health Service (NHS) to demonstrate and advocate for the importance of inclusivity and co-production in healthcare settings. Our person-centred approach ensures that the voices and choices of individuals with a learning disability are integral to their care plans and treatment decisions. Through this partnership, we strive to build a healthcare environment that respects individual autonomy, promotes well-being, and upholds the principles of equality and dignity in medical care.

2. Engaging with university research leaders for advancement

Our commitment to promoting positive change extends to collaborating with university research leaders. These partnerships enable us to contribute valuable insights into the challenges faced by individuals with a learning disability. By actively participating in research projects and academic dialogues, we advocate for evidence-based practices and policies that

can lead to transformative improvements in societal attitudes, support services, and opportunities.

3. Partnering with LGBTQ+ groups for inclusivity

East Kent Mencap is proud to partner with local LGBTQ+ groups in our shared commitment to promote awareness, understanding, and inclusivity. Through joint initiatives, educational campaigns, and community outreach, we work to break down barriers and promote an environment where diversity is celebrated and every individual is respected for their unique identity. Our partnership demonstrates our commitment to upholding the principles of equality, acceptance, and social justice.

4. Addressing digital poverty for economic inclusion

Recognising the impact of digital poverty on economic opportunities, East Kent Mencap participated in a government-funded scheme to reduce digital poverty. By providing laptops, connectivity, and free training to individuals facing economic inactivity, we continuously strive to break barriers and open doors to new opportunities, building greater inclusion and participation in today's digital world.

5. Promoting social mobility through inclusive hiring

In our commitment to address social imbalance and promote social mobility, East Kent Mencap removed pre-qualification requirements for job vacancies. We believe that everyone, regardless of their background, deserves a fair chance to apply for opportunities within our organisation. We welcome individuals from our local community with positive attitudes, aptitudes, and ambition, valuing diverse experiences and perspectives that enrich our workforce.

6. Supporting apprenticeships for inclusive workforce development

We are committed to supporting workforce development and ensuring that apprenticeships are accessible to all who aspire to work. East Kent Mencap utilises sustainable sources of levy transfer to fund apprenticeships, making it possible for individuals from different backgrounds to benefit from vocational training and career advancement.

In addition to these actions, our selection as a collaboration partner for the Digital Health Participation Project (six universities nationally) builds on and demonstrates progress in the areas of engagement and innovation in healthcare accessibility.

Furthermore, we have recently agreed to work with Canterbury Christ Church University to secure resolutions for people to receive payments without the threat of losing benefits, further aligning with our commitment to empower individuals and address systemic issues affecting their well-being.

Part III. Measurement of outcomes of our social mission

1. Impact on service user empowerment and well-being

Through impact assessments, we measure the effectiveness of our digital inclusion initiative in reducing economic inactivity and increasing opportunities for individuals. Tracking the number of participants who have gained employment or engaged in educational pursuits due to improved digital access and skills, helps us evaluate the initiative's success.

2. Diversity and inclusion in hiring

We regularly monitor the diversity of our workforce and track changes in hiring patterns after removing pre-qualification requirements. These assessments guide our efforts to ensure an inclusive and equitable hiring process, creating an organisational culture that celebrates diversity.

3. Apprenticeship success and inclusion

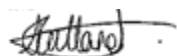
To assess the impact of our inclusive apprenticeship programme, we track the number of participants who successfully complete their apprenticeships and progress in their careers. This data aids us in refining and expanding our efforts to create opportunities for aspiring professionals from all sectors of society.

Conclusion

East Kent Mencap remains steadfast in our vision for a world where individuals with a learning disability are treated equally with fairness, dignity, and understanding. Our commitment to digital inclusion, social mobility, and workforce development, as well as our strategic partnerships with NHS, university research leaders, local LGBTQ+ groups, and collaborative initiatives, exemplify our dedication to empowering individuals and shaping a society that embraces diversity and equal opportunities.

We express our deepest gratitude to our stakeholders for their continued support on this transformative journey of empowerment and social progress.

Sincerely,



Amy Rutland
[Chairperson and Executive Director]