

Improving Outcomes for People with Learning Disabilities and Autistic People in Cheshire and Merseyside

Embedding good intelligence on the needs of people with Learning Disabilities & Autism *isn't a niche priority*. It's a test of whether a system works at all.

When systems work for those facing the greatest barriers, they work better for everyone.



Background & Context

People with learning disabilities and autistic people (LDA) often face extra barriers in their day-to-day lives compared to neurotypical people. From job security to housing stability, care and support access and coproduction opportunities there are barriers that can impact the long-term health and wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Recognising the need to provide exemplary support to people with learning disabilities and autistic people, Cheshire & Merseyside Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) commissioned Consortium24 to review and enhance their care provision. The work spanned 9 local authorities across a diverse geography and many organisations to interact with. We were tasked with four key objectives:

- Launching a **housing strategy** and implementation plan for Cheshire and Merseyside.
- **Integrating data and insights** on spend, spread, and opportunities for action.
- Improving the **respite provision**, to develop a model and introduce lived experience-based measures of success.
- Engagement, mapping & explore investments across 200+ **meaningful occupation**, work, training and education & employment offers

We had a strategy with 4 clear objectives and what started to shine through first and foremost was the diversity of C24's team. The fact that they have very skilled people in different fields and work as a team. That teamwork started to shine through when we started our meetings.

It was very clear that they knew their own strengths, and they knew who would be best to lead on each of the objectives. That work-sharing, that ability to be able to allocate work, was very evident for me.

– Sayyed Osman



We were proud to be named as a Cheshire & Merseyside Anchor Institute from this project.

Region-Wide Housing Launch

The local context

Cheshire and Merseyside ADASS predicts that an **additional 1,679 supported housing and 382 general needs housing will be needed by 2032/2033** to accommodate those with LDA needs.

A widely and effectively launched housing strategy played a crucial role in enabling this – getting local organisations and housing associations on board with their vision was a key priority.



What we did

We designed and hosted a sub-regional launch event with 125 stakeholders from across the 9 local authority areas. The event shared the strategic context, evidence base, and lived-experience insights, highlighting the challenges and opportunities in delivering specialist and supported housing.

We focused on the strategy's core priority areas, including:

- People requiring specialist units with innovative modifications and care
- Those known as at risk of hospitalisation with particular needs
- The transition from children's care to adult services
- Those in unsuitable supported housing long-term
- Residents in care homes & those living with a family carer seeking independence

A national and local stakeholder meeting of minds

We invited high-profile speakers to highlight opportunities that aligned with the Cheshire and Merseyside Housing Strategy and enable actions to be carried out.

Homes England announced their Social and Affordable Housing Programme which included £39bn in funding opportunities for local authorities. They talked through how the funding could be accessed and invited attendees to apply for the scheme.



*Brilliant event today.
A real buzz in the room.*

– Sarah Houghton Grimshaw

*Well organised. All the
sessions and presentations
were excellent, informative,
and got important messages
across to the audience.*

*It was thought-provoking, and I have already
seen some messages highlighting facts that
were shared around the cost and impact.*

– Sayyed Osman

Making the strategy sustainable – generating joint responsibility

Every Strategy needs a clear set of objectives and a way to monitor how they are being implemented.

Alongside the housing launch event, we also negotiated the strategy's governance with the Liverpool City Region authorities, ensuring a joint responsibility with Cheshire and Merseyside. This united approach will drive forward the implementation plan, allowing councils to pool resources and deliver better outcomes across the region.



Data Modelling – Turning Information to Insight

Integrating data to understand costs, outcomes and opportunities across the nine Cheshire & Merseyside local authorities was an important foundation to the Programme.

From fragmentation to foundation – creating a common understanding

Existing data were fragmented between the local areas, making it difficult for councils to see the bigger picture. To resolve this, we;

- Implemented a data sharing and governance process for authorities to see both the regional and hyperlocal context when making decisions
- Collated and analysed data to create greater shared insight
- Revealed key strategic insights that would guide our work and recommendations further down the line

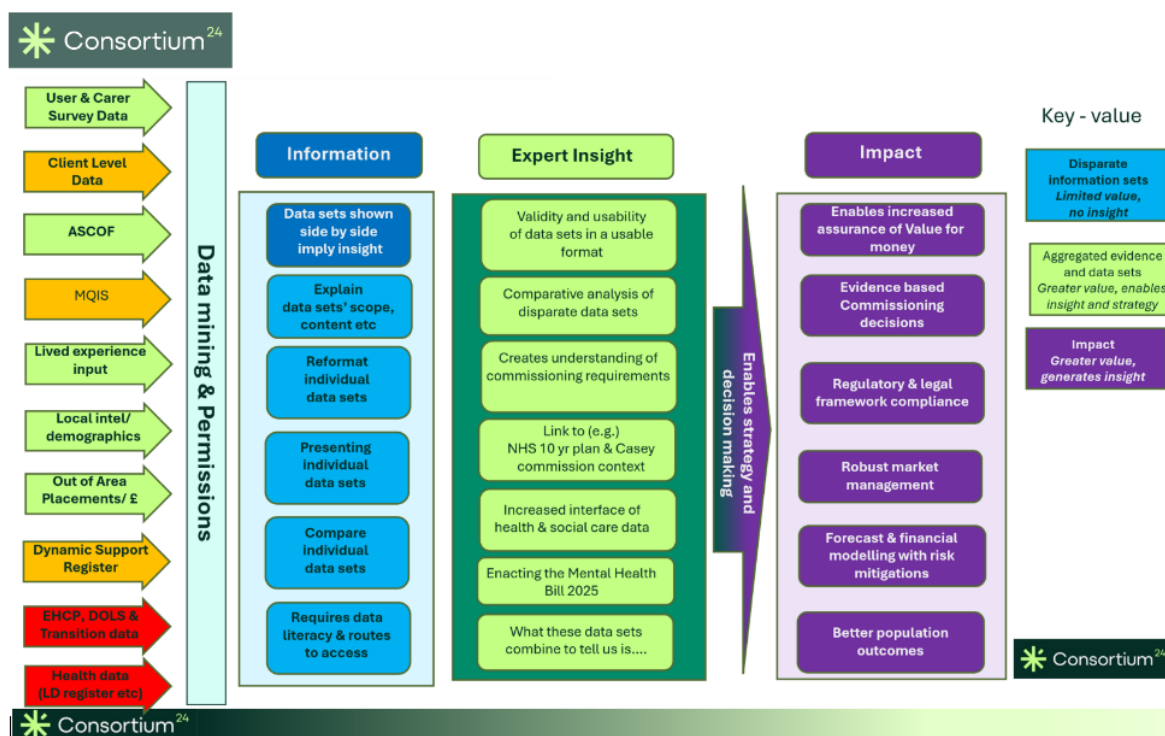
Through our analysis, we also highlighted a number of limitations in the data that needed more attention. We presented our analysis to the steering group, discussing limitations and outcomes. We included an Improvement Matrix and future opportunities for action.

Clarification and communication from Consortium24 for me, meant we were working with a quality organisation.

– Sayyed Osman

Moving insight into action

We compiled a logic model approach which assisted the understanding of inputs, activity, outputs and outcomes. We developed a detailed Opportunity for Action visual, setting out the stages of moving from the conclusions of specialist data work, through addressing the data constraints, towards measurable insight and into impact on delivery. This required both technical expertise (analytical, commissioning, practitioner) AND the authority of lived experience and peer knowledge.



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3

Respite Provision – A New Approach

The importance of respite care

Respite is a crucial service for carers and individuals to access. It helps manage their lives outside of caring responsibilities and gives them time and space to recharge, alongside the benefit of tailored support to meet people's needs. Cheshire & Merseyside ADASS wanted to enhance their offer, with a reliance on bed-based provision. We reviewed respite and short breaks provision across Cheshire & Merseyside to understand what people want, what is currently being delivered, where gaps exist, and what strategic improvements are needed, to deliver 6 co-produced actions for improvement.

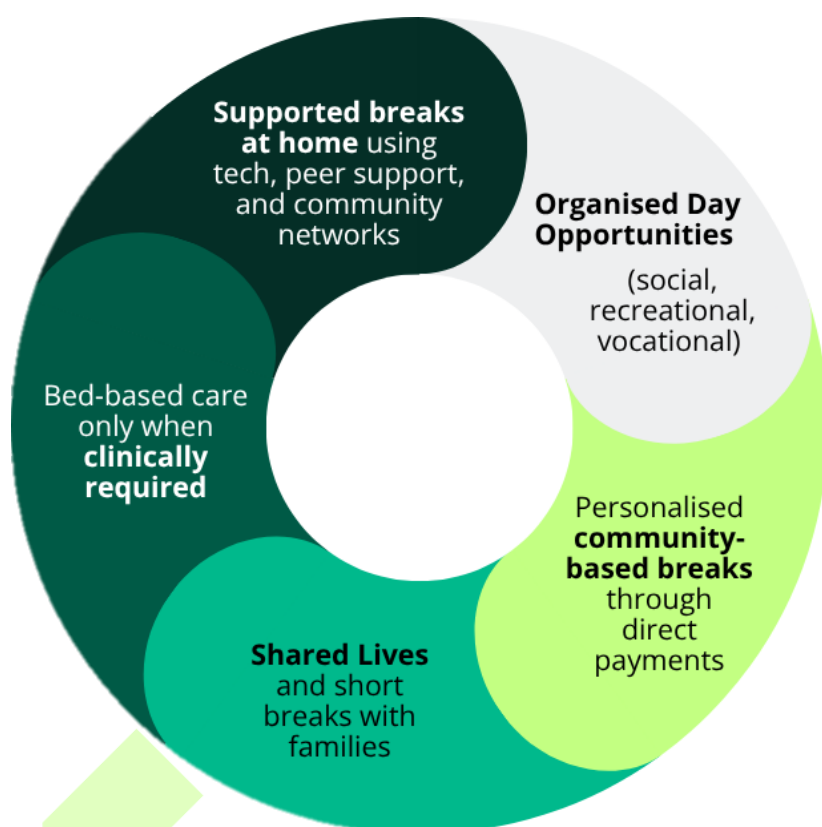
What we did

We hosted a 'confirm and challenge' session with 89 local people to understand attitudes towards respite. We learned about what barriers were preventing people from accessing respite, including a reliance on out of area provision, budgetary pressures, and a lack of understanding of the core offer.

A new model of respite care

Responding to and working alongside those with lived experience, we co-designed a respite provision model for Cheshire and Merseyside. It focussed on the type of support that people found most useful, enabling carers to make the best use of their downtime.

The model segmented the offer into clear and diverse opportunities, including:



The difference this will make

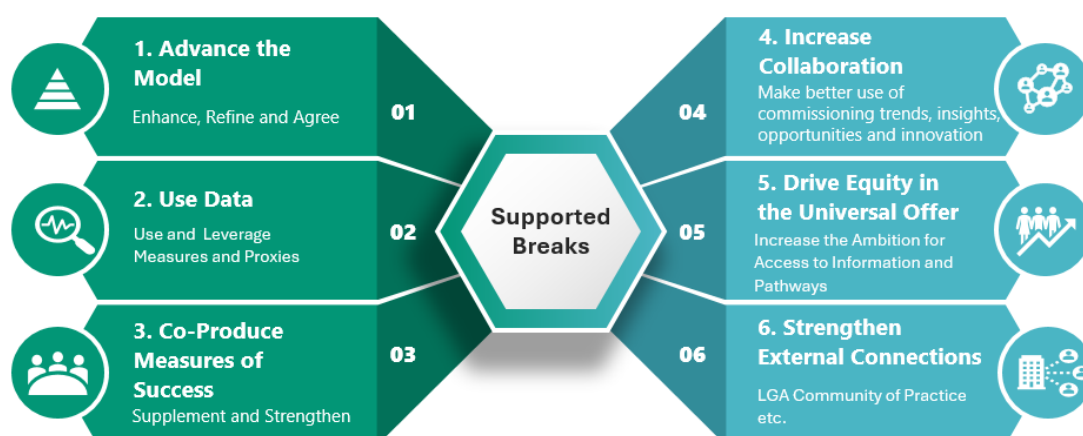
As a result, there will be a shift of focus from bed-based respite to wider opportunities for person centred, co-produced, cost-effective breaks. Six co-produced 'Actions for Improvement' will be implemented to support carers to access respite and breaks in ways that work for them.



* Consortium²⁴

[Image of pyramid model]

Supported Breaks: An Initial Plan on a Page



Initial Plan on a Page of co-produced improvement actions.

Meaningful Occupation – A Picture of Increased Opportunity

Everyone deserves the opportunity to do something with their time that is meaningful and fulfilling to them. There has been local and strategic intention to help people do and have access to things that matter to them.

The challenges faced by those with learning disabilities and autistic people

Many people with learning disabilities and autistic people have no meaningful occupation:

- around 95% of adults with a learning disability nationally are not in paid employment,
- around 70% of autistic adults are not in paid employment,
- 47% of those with learning disabilities and autistic people who are not currently in work would like a job

There is strong evidence that supported employment works and that being fulfilled in occupation or in work improves health, confidence, social inclusion, and independence for people. People with lived experience were telling us professionals weren't ambitious or accommodating enough and employers often miss out on a "rich pool of talent."

As part of our work, we engaged with over two hundred local people and businesses to determine what barriers hindered autistic and disabled people from finding secure work.

Deep listening

We conducted a listening exercise with three primary questions:

1. What does the **current employment landscape** look and feel like to local people?
2. How might we be able to **reimagine this over a one-year period**?
3. **What practical steps could the local authority take** to help autistic and disabled people find work?

Putting people with lived experience at the centre of our recommendations

On the back of this listening exercise, we co-produced a position statement alongside local people with lived experience to the Liverpool City Region Equity Panel. We generated a detailed mapping resource repository. Our engagement work played a coordinating role in outlining VCSE local services, boosted cohesion and connecting partners with community assets.

The innovative outputs from the workshop helped shape local service pathways and employment support and fostered collaboration and united investment opportunities. Coordination with the Health & Work Strategy and WorkWell Initiative will enable more funding to be accessed for to meet the needs of people with LDA.

What has shone through is that in Consortium24 we've got people who are not just good consultants and who can advise and support us in our business need, we've also got real people who are passionate and bring care and commitment with the outcomes that we are working towards.

– Sayyed Osman

Taking the Next Step

Our work at Cheshire and Merseyside took a holistic approach to improving outcomes for people with LDA. Working across 4 distinct objectives, we provided a framework for change that promotes tailored and accessible services to drive better support, health and work outcomes, and healthier lives for those with additional needs and their carers.

But this is only the beginning.

The strategies and outcomes that we delivered will now be implemented to their fullest, monitored closely with the governance structures we created to ensure that change is realised.

Delivering better outcomes for people will always be an incremental process. Work needs to be simultaneously driven by data from portals AND by relational lived insights. Our work in Cheshire & Merseyside in deliberately crafting services around the needs of people with learning disabilities & autistic people raises the standard for the whole population.

When systems work for those with the greatest barriers, they work better for everyone.

Interested in bringing together insight, partnership and lived experience to create meaningful change? Get in touch with Managing Partner, Tracey Callaghan-Hayes, to see how we can work with you.

I felt I could work with real confidence with Consortium24; it was a true partnership of equals. I was working with people who had the same principles and values embedded in them as the ones I was trying to deliver on behalf of ADASS.

I would be recommending Consortium24 very much from a strengths perspective.

That strength for me is that they absolutely have very skilled people who can do what is being asked of them.

But what gives me greater confidence is that the people that come with that brief are the ones that understand and have a real compassionate approach towards the people that we care for. Our outcomes are aligned with their values.