

# What People Want Physical Activities for People with a Learning Disability

East Glasgow CHCP  
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**“People in Scotland will enjoy the benefits of having a physically active life.”**

## 1. Introduction

The vision above is laid out in **Let's Make Scotland More Active** (2003)<sup>1</sup>. It recommends equal opportunities and access, regardless of disability or health status and gives equal value to the social and emotional outcomes of physical activity as well as the physical health benefits.

We know from the 2004 Health Needs Assessment report **People with Learning Disabilities in Scotland**<sup>2</sup> that people with learning disabilities experience barriers in accessing and are less likely to be involved in physical activity than the general population. This is a contributory factor in them experiencing poorer health outcomes.

Research by Messant (1998) found that barriers to physical activity specific to the learning disability population included transport needs, staffing ratios, financial resources and unclear policy guidelines for day and residential service provision<sup>3</sup>.

Current government guidelines on physical activity state that adults should aim to accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on most days of the week. This means that the activity should raise the heart rate enough to make a person feel warm and slightly out of breath but still be able to hold a conversation. The target for physical activity is that by 2022 50% of all adults aged over 16 will meet the minimum recommended levels<sup>1</sup>.

Against the above background, a small group was therefore established to look at how East Glasgow CHCP and Culture and Sport Glasgow could increase physical activity levels for individuals with a learning disability.

A series of tasks have been undertaken including a mapping of current physical activities accessed by around 200 day centre service users. The group attempted a similar information gathering exercise delivered by other learning disability providers.

In order to establish preferences for sports and activities for adults with a learning disability in Glasgow East, the group compiled and distributed a survey questionnaire for people with a learning disability to complete. This would also provide further information, such as indicating their preferred location and whether or not they wished to take up a sport or activity in the area in the future. The results of the questionnaire would therefore enable a taster session of appropriate activities to be provided for service users.

The purpose of this report is to describe the development, administration and results of this survey.

## 2. Aims

The aims of this work were:

- To gather information about the preferences of people with a learning disability, in order for a physical activity taster session to take place, which meet the needs of this client group.
- To gather information about preferred venues.

And:

- To raise awareness amongst service users and carers of the accessibility and availability of physical activity services within Glasgow East.
- To encourage carers, service users, and providers to take part in supported activities.
- To improve carers' knowledge and understanding of the activities that are available for people with a learning disability.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/02/16324/17898>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/1040.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Messant P; Cooke CB, (1998); Physical Activity, Exercise and Health of Adults with Mild and Moderate Learning Disabilities, British Journal of Learning Disabilities<sup>26</sup>

### 3. Methodology

The survey was undertaken using a questionnaire based on previous work by the East Glasgow Local Area Co-ordinator, and developed with help from the Clinical Governance Support Unit, including their Patient Involvement Facilitator.

The questionnaire included pictures and descriptions in order to make it as simple as possible to understand and complete.

Health Improvement staff from East Glasgow CHCP contacted day centres and other service providers by various methods including letter, telephone, email and face to face visits to request help with distribution and completion of the forms.

During February and March 2010, questionnaires were distributed to a range of service providers and community organisations across Glasgow East. In addition we responded to requests for copies of the questionnaire from individuals.

Carers and/or support staff were asked to assist people to complete the questionnaire and large format copies of the pictures used were supplied as an additional aid.

Completed questionnaires were returned to the Clinical Governance Support Unit for collation and analysis.

### 4. Results

A total of 470 questionnaires were distributed and 155 were returned giving a response rate of 33%. Please note that for most of the questions, respondents were able to choose more than one option. The percentages quoted in the report are based on the overall response count and as a result will not necessarily total 100%. A small amount of data cleaning was necessary.

The numbers of questionnaires received back from the various service providers are shown in the following table.

**Table 1. Response numbers by service provider**

Service	Count	%
Glasgow Supported Employment Services	5	3
Key Housing	16	10
Parkhead Youth Project	1	1
Momentum Scotland	10	6
Riddrie Day Centre	66	43
G.E.S.H	12	8
Accord Day Centre	42	27
Not stated	3	2
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100</b>

#### Questionnaire Results

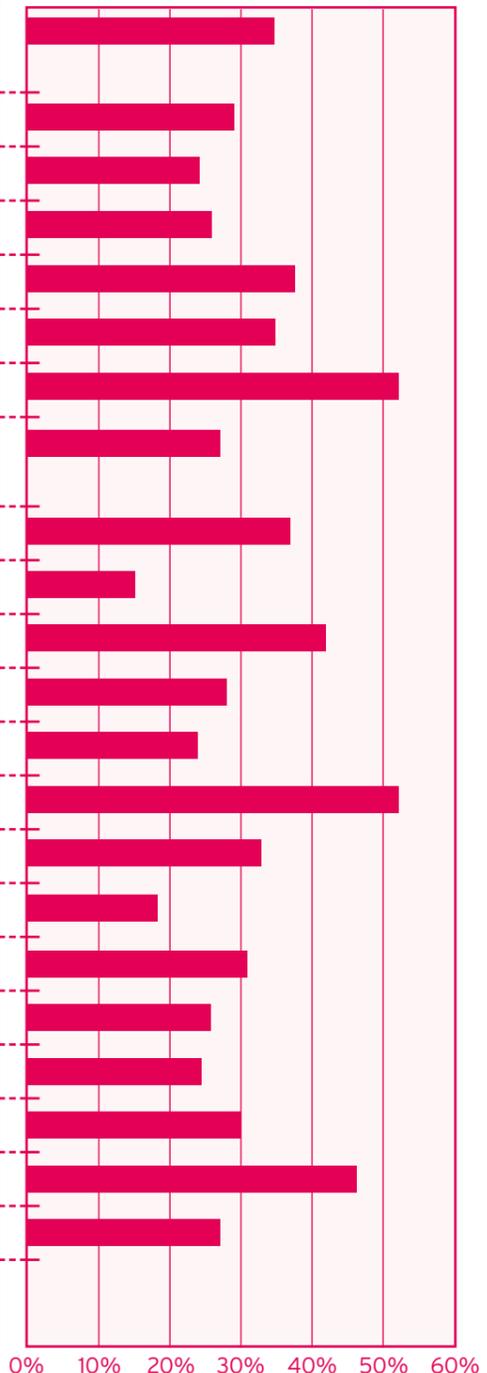
Respondents were given an illustrated list of sports and activities and were asked to select the ones that they would be most interested in trying at a taster session.

They were also invited to suggest alternative sports or activities that they would like to try.

**Table 2. Sports and activities that respondents would like to try**

Service	Response Percent - Total	Response Count - Total	Response Count - Men	Response Count - Women
Going to the gym	34.4%	52	28	24
Aerobics	29.1%	44	18	26
Yoga	23.2%	35	14	21
T'ai chi	25.8%	39	19	19
Tea dance	36.4%	55	29	26
Chair Exercise	33.8%	51	25	26
Line dancing	52.3%	79	32	47
Sequence dancing	26.5%	40	19	21
Dance fit	36.4%	55	21	34
Spin classes	14.6%	22	15	7
Boccia	41.7%	63	37	26
Short tennis	27.8%	42	27	15
Badminton	23.2%	35	25	10
Walking	53.0%	80	46	34
Football	31.8%	48	33	14
Cycling	19.2%	29	18	11
Basketball	30.5%	46	27	19
Jogging	25.2%	38	19	19
Golf	24.5%	37	27	9
Swim classes	29.8%	45	20	25
Swimming	45.7%	69	35	33
Aquafit	26.5%	40	13	27
Other Ideas (please tell us)	-	46	-	-

**Graph 1. Sports and activities that respondents would like to try, by percentage**



**Activity Preferences**

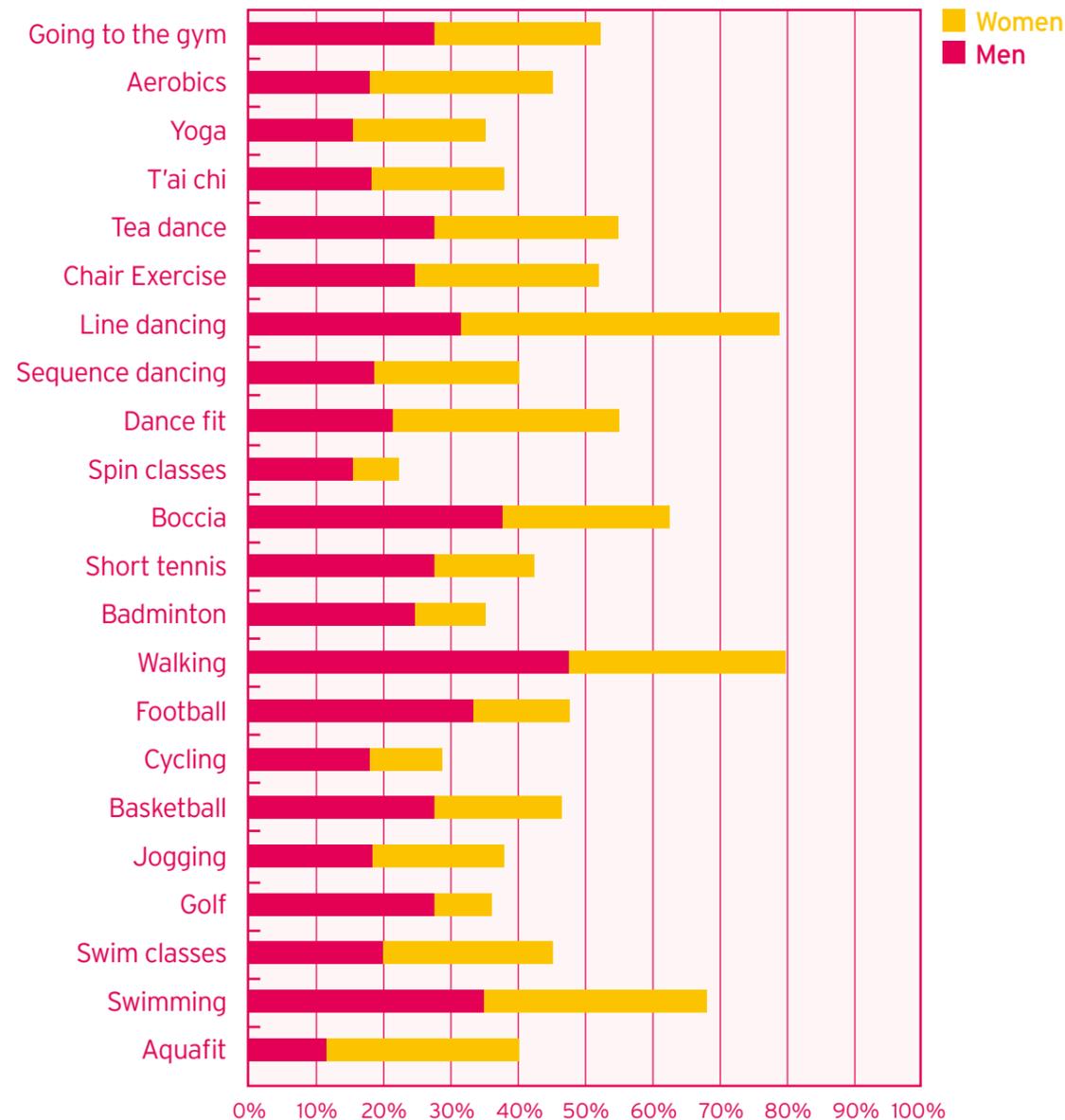
The activities that people with a learning disability would wish to experience were demonstrated in Graph 1. The top four preferences were as follows:

1. Walking
2. Line Dancing
3. Swimming and
4. Boccia

The activities that service users have identified in this report can be used by providers and carers to support their clients to become more physically active.

As an example Culture and Sport Glasgow, in partnership with NHSGG&C Health Board recently held a development session in Glasgow East around setting up walk leaders training. This can be accessed by both providers and clients and should be considered standard as part of care packages.

**Graph 2. Sports and activities that respondents would like to try, by number and gender**



**Gender Preferences**

Further analysis looked at the differences in numbers of men and women who expressed their preferences. Broadly speaking the top four appealed to both men and women. Interestingly there is little difference between the genders in activities such as tea, sequence dancing, jogging and going to the gym. However, it does appear that more men than women are interested in racket sports, cycling activities and football.

People were also asked to suggest other sports and activities that they would like to take part in, but which are not offered by service providers. These are summarised below.

- Table Tennis (6)
- Ice Skating (6)
- Baseball/rounders (5)
- Bowling (5)
- Hockey/Ice Hockey (4)
- Hydrotherapy (4)
- Horse Riding (4)
- Rugby (3)
- Snooker/pool (3)
- Fishing (3)
- Dodgeball (2)
- Archery (2)
- Massage/aromatherapy (2)
- Hillwalking
- Reiki
- American Football
- Carpet Bowls
- Dance/Exercise**
- Independance (2)
- Exercise class
- Disco Party Dancing

**Martial Arts**

- Kick Boxing (4)
- Judo (4)
- Karate (3)
- Boxing (2)
- WWE

**Wheelchair Activities**

- Wheelchair basketball (2) - would like more activities for people in wheelchairs
- Wheelchair dancing

**Winter & Water Sports**

- Snowboarding (3)
- Skiing (2)
- Water Racing (watching)
- Waterskiing

**Other Comments Received**

- Client may enjoy the dancing activities only due to the music and people - not the activity.
- Due to medical reasons I would find it very hard to be able to use these facilities.
- As a wheelchair user I need a sport that feel safe doing.
- Due to clients' mental health problems she would need support. Lots of encouragement to stay in group time.
- Client has heart condition and does a little exercise and rests when needed.
- Client finds it hard to access these facilities due to her mobility although she has been and enjoyed it. Support is a big problem.

Respondents were asked to choose from a range of options which venue(s) they would like to attend in the future and were also invited to suggest other potential venues. This question was answered by 120 people.

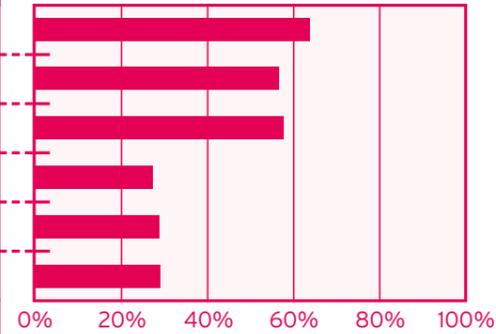


Venues

Table 3. Venues chosen by respondents

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Easterhouse Sports Centre	61.7%	74
Tollcross Sports Centre	57.5%	69
The Bridge, Easterhouse	55.8%	67
Whitehill School Swimming Pool	26.7%	32
Community Health Shop, Barlanark	27.5%	33
East End Healthy Living Centre	28.3%	34
Other Ideas	-	53

Graph 3. Venues chosen by respondents



Other venues suggested are summarised below.

- Budhill Community Centre (6)
- G.E.S.H. (4)
- Eastfield Leisure Centre (3)
- Hub Sports, Easterhouse (2)
- Newhills School (2)
- Time Capsule
- Springburn Pool
- Bannerman High School
- Haghill Sports Centre
- Ashcraig School Swimming Pool
- Gorbals Leisure Centre

The main sports and leisure centres in Glasgow East appeared to be the most popular venues chosen by respondents as ones they would like to attend. These included Glasgow Club Easterhouse Pool The Bridge. Glasgow Club Easterhouse and Glasgow Club Tolcross. This would appear to indicate venues are acceptable for service users across Glasgow East. Other venues highlighted included the Healthy Living Centre and more localised venues, such as the Community Health Shop. In order to better understand the preferences of people who engage with the three main service providers, a detailed analysis was carried out linking respondents' regular service providers with the venue they would prefer to attend.

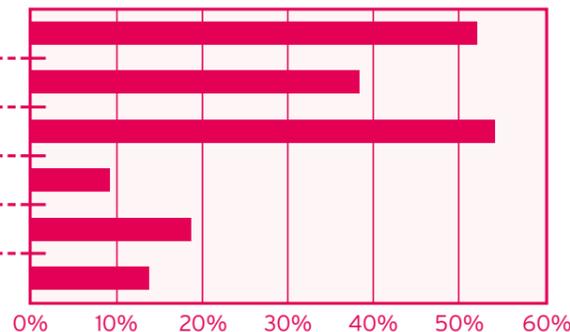
Riddrie Day Centre

Of the 66 respondents who attend Riddrie Day Centre, 44 answered this question.

Table 3a. Venues chosen by people attending Riddrie Day Centre

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Easterhouse Sports Centre	52.3%	23
Tollcross Sports Centre	38.6%	17
The Bridge, Easterhouse	54.5%	24
Whitehill School Swimming Pool	9.1%	4
Community Health Shop, Barlanark	18.2%	8
East End Healthy Living Centre	13.6%	6

Graph 3a. Venues chosen by people attending Riddrie Day Centre



Accord Day Centre

Of the 42 respondents who attend Accord Day Centre, 35 answered this question.

Table 3b. Venues chosen by people attending Accord Day Centre

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Easterhouse Sports Centre	62.9%	22
Tollcross Sports Centre	82.9%	29
The Bridge, Easterhouse	54.3%	19
Whitehill School Swimming Pool	57.1%	20
Community Health Shop, Barlanark	48.6%	17
East End Healthy Living Centre	60.0%	21

Graph 3b. Venues chosen by people attending Accord Day Centre



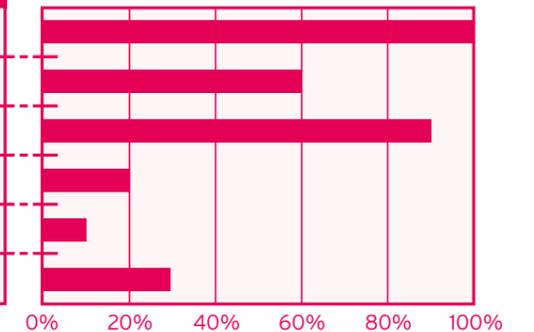
Key Housing

Of the 16 respondents who engage with Key Housing, 10 answered this question.

Table 3c. Venues chosen by people attending Key Housing

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Easterhouse Sports Centre	100%	10
Tollcross Sports Centre	60.0%	6
The Bridge, Easterhouse	90.0%	9
Whitehill School Swimming Pool	20.0%	2
Community Health Shop, Barlanark	10.0%	1
East End Healthy Living Centre	30.0%	3

Graph 3b. Venues chosen by people attending Accord Day Centre



The more detailed analysis linking responses with the three main return areas of both Riddrie and Accord Day Centres and Key Housing, indicated people preferred to attend venues closest to their day centre or service provider however this was not exclusive.

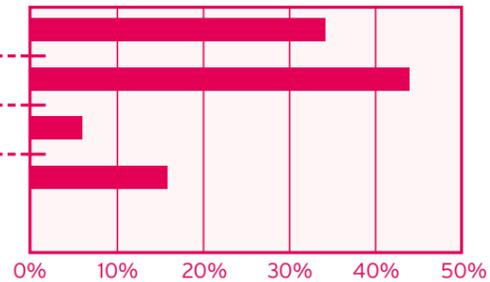


People were asked how often they would like to take part in sport or physical activity and the results are illustrated below.

**Table 4. How often respondents wish to participate**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
More than once a week	34.0%	52
Weekly	43.8%	67
Every two weeks	6.5%	10
Don't mind	15.7%	24
Total	100%	153

**Graph 4. How often respondents wish to participate**



**Frequency of Participation**

In order to promote and maintain health, current guidelines state that adults should aim to accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on most days of the week. Activity is of moderate intensity if the heart rate is raised enough to make a person feel warm and slightly out of breath, yet still be able to hold a conversation.

The questionnaire asked how often clients would like to take part in activities; There were 43.8% of respondents who indicated they would wish to participate on a weekly basis.

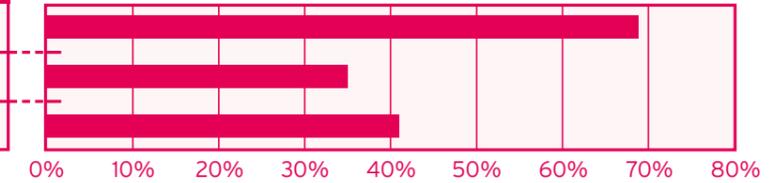
Encouragingly 49.7% indicated that they either wished to take part in activities twice a week or they didn't mind. Given the national guidance this may present a challenge to carers and service providers to obtain a balance between what is recommended for good health and what clients indicate they wish to do.

Respondents were asked at what time of the day and week they would like to take part in physical activity.

**Table 5. Times when people would like to take part in physical activity**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Daytimes	68.7%	103
Evening	36.7%	55
Weekends	41.3%	62

**Graph 5. Times when people would like to take part in physical activity**



**Times**

From our earlier scoping, organised activities would appear to be generally available during the day and often linked to day centres.

It would appear from this survey that while the majority of respondents indicated they would like to take part in physical activity during the day, it maybe this is based on their experience of what is available rather than what they may like if they had wider choices. Further work is therefore required to look in more detail at this issue.

Respondents were asked to provide some information about themselves with respect to their gender and age as below:

**Age & Gender**

**Table 6. Age of respondents**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
16 years to 24 years old	14.7%	22
25 years to 44 years old	50.7%	76
45 years to 64 years old	30.0%	45
65 years old or more	4.7%	7

**Table 7. Gender of respondents**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A man	49.4%	76
A woman	50.6%	78



**Support Needs**

Finally, respondents were asked whether they would need the help of a supporter or carer to be able to take part in the activities they are interested in, and if so whether there is someone who would be able to come with them.

**Table 8. Respondents who would need the help of a supporter or carer**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	84.4%	124
No	15.6%	23

**Table 9. Respondents who have someone to help them**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	57.2%	71
No	24.2%	30
No reply	18.6%	23
Total	100%	124

**Age, Gender and Support Needs**

The ages of those who responded is detailed in table 6 with the majority of respondents being between 25-64 years. There was an even split of men and women responding.

The majority of respondents indicated they would require help from someone to take part in physical activities. More detail was not requested around what that help would involve. It was disappointing to note that almost a quarter of respondents indicated they did not have someone to help them take part in activities.



## 5. Conclusion

In respect to the initial aim of this report the information received from the questionnaire will help the group to plan and develop a physical activity taster session based on activities that people with a learning disability would wish to take part in.

The group is continuing to meet in order to plan, develop and deliver on this taster session. All who provided their contact details will receive an invitation to this event which will also be widely publicised through service providers.

The report has further highlighted a number of issues which are relevant to service providers and as a result, these findings will be shared with providers at a feedback session following the taster session.

The report recommendations have been detailed in an action plan overleaf.



## 6. Action Plan

CHALLENGE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
Supporting adults to become more active	Provide a taster session for clients and service providers  Provide information on activities to service users via a leaflet	By June 2010	Working Group - led by Culture and Sport Glasgow Working Group
Increasing the opportunity for adults to become more active	Provide information on activities for carers and service providers  Health checks to include physical activity status in relation to national guidance	June 2010  September 2010	Working Group  Head of Learning Disability Services
Service providers provide more opportunity for clients to become more active	Publicise the findings contained within the report and engage with service providers on addressing issues contained within report  Where services are commissioned, providers to be asked how they will support clients to achieve national guidance in regards physical activity  Care plans to include details on achieving national physical activity guidance	May/June 2010  September 2010  June 2010	Working Group  Head of Learning Disability Services  Head of Learning Disability Services
Provide more opportunity at evenings and weekends for adults to be more active	Service Providers to consider actions	To raise at event June 2010	Service providers

### Action Plan

**Written by:** Janet Tobin in consultation with the working group

**Date:** May 2010

**Designation:** Health Improvement Lead

**Agreed with:** Raymond Bell

**Date:** May 2010

**Designation:** Head of Learning Disability Service

## 7. Acknowledgements

### Acknowledgments

This report would not have been possible without the work and support from the Clinical Governance Support unit. Further thanks to all day centre staff and service providers who supported the completion of the questionnaires, the working group for their support, direction and guidance and finally the adults who took part in the questionnaire.

### Working Group Members

- Margaret Black: Patient Involvement Facilitator (CGSU Partnerships).
- Elaine Daw: Sports Development Officer (East) Culture and Sport Glasgow.
- Gary Dover: Planning Manager East CHCP.
- Vivian Ferguson: Day Services Manager East CHCP.
- Bridie Linton: Day Services East CHCP.
- Debbie Miller: Local Area Co-ordinator East CHCP.
- Philip O'Hare: Clinical Effectiveness Coordinator (CGSU Partnerships).
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