



CITY BRIDGE
FOUNDATION

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUAL HEALTH

From the Lewisham People's Parliament

December 2025





WHY THIS MATTERS

- Relationships and sexual health affect confidence, safety, happiness and mental health
- People with learning disabilities are often not involved in conversations about relationships
- This presentation shares what people said



THE PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT



- 53 people with learning disabilities came to the people's parliament
- The meeting was chaired by Ife, one of the People's Parliament reps



GUEST SPEAKERS



- Dr Claire Bates spoke to us about the Sexuality and Relationships Rights Charter, which you can find on the Tizard Centre website



- Megan and Ena from Turning Point Sexual Health spoke to us about healthy relationships and contraception



WHAT WE ASKED



We asked people with learning disabilities to share their views on:

- Healthy relationships
- Sexual health
- Relationships in the media

Here is what they said...

WHAT IS A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?



- Being respected
- Honesty and trust
- Being supportive and reliable
- Being gentle and respectful
- Not taking people for granted
- Seeing someone as much or as little as you want

WHAT PEOPLE THINK ABOUT IN RELATIONSHIPS



- Finances
- Emotional support
- Communication
- Being there in hard times
- Negative patterns – “if they won’t stop, I walk away”



WHAT PEOPLE SAID ABOUT SAFETY AND ABUSE



We need

- More support to recognise signs of abuse
- Support to cope with break-ups
- To be taken seriously
- To feel safe in relationships

PRIVACY AND INDEPENDENCE



- People don't always get the privacy they want alone or with a partner
- People are stopped from having sleepovers
- Sometimes staff ask them to leave the doors open
- Privacy is part of dignity and rights, and everyone should have it

WHAT PEOPLE SAID ABOUT CONTRACEPTION



- “give us all the options”
- “don’t make decisions for us”
- “don’t assume we don’t have sex”

- Men and women should both learn about all contraception, even if it’s the other gender using it

WHAT SUPPORT PEOPLE WANT



- Information that we understand
- Accessible services
- Trusted people to talk to
- To be involved in decisions about our bodies and to know the risks

RELATIONSHIPS IN THE MEDIA



- Social media relationships aren't realistic
- TV relationships are made exciting for viewers, normal relationships can be boring
- People can be misled or catfished on social media
- Media can be helpful to show us how to have relationships, but it can be harmful too



REPRESENTATION FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES



- People with learning disabilities are rarely shown in romantic relationships on TV and film
- People with learning disabilities are shown more having relationships with their family
- When romantic relationships are shown, they are sometimes made into a drama
- We want to see normal, happy relationships like everyone else



WHAT PEOPLE TOLD US OVERALL



People with learning disabilities want

- Their rights respected
- Privacy and dignity
- Clear, accessible information
- Support for healthy and safe relationships
- To be taken seriously
- To be included, not protected from life



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR SERVICES?

Services should

- Avoid assumptions about sexuality
- Support choice and consent
- Provide accessible sexual health information
- Respect privacy
- Teach relationship skills and safety



“RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUAL HEALTH
ARE PART OF A NORMAL, HAPPY LIFE”

Thank you!