



HERE I AM.

Here I Am



Mencap have launched a new campaign called Here I Am.

The Here I Am campaign is about helping people to understand what a learning disability is.



There are 1.4 million people in the UK with a learning disability.

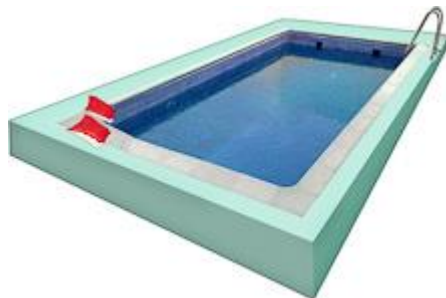
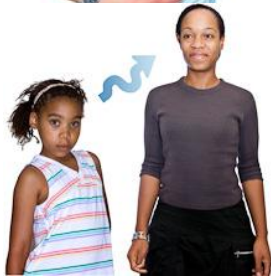
Mencap worked with Ipsos MORI to do a survey.



Ipsos MORI is a research company.

The survey was done to find out what the general public think about people with a learning disability

Here are some of the results from the Ipsos MORI survey



- 27% of people think that a learning disability is some kind of mental illness
- 27% of people think that learning disability does not last your whole life.
- Only 67% of people agree that people with a mild learning disability can be as good parents as anyone else.
- Only 68% of people are comfortable with someone with a mild learning disability representing them with their local council
- 6% of people would feel uncomfortable using the same swimming pool as someone with a severe learning disability.



- Just 10% of the public say they have seen someone with a learning disability in newspapers or magazines in the last six months.

Here are some of the things we already know about people with a learning disability.



- Every year **1,200 people with a learning disability die** in hospitals earlier than they should have.



- Only **6%** of people with a learning disability that social services know about have a job that pays them money.



- Children with special educational needs (SEN) are **two times more likely to be bullied than other children.**



- **Almost 1 in 3 18 to 35 year olds with a learning disability spend less than 1 hour a day outside their homes on a Saturday**



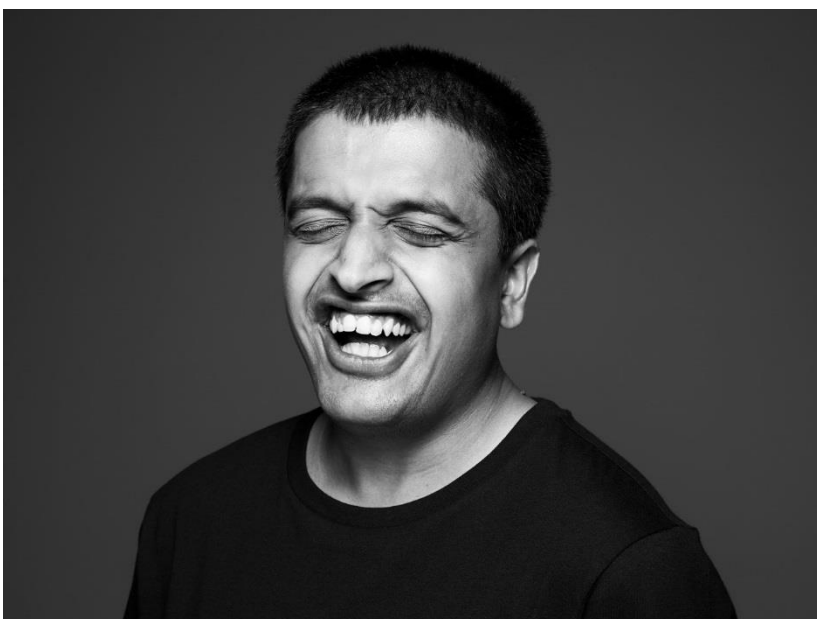
- **56% of disabled people say that they have experienced bullying, aggression or violence from a stranger because they have a learning disability.**

In the information below, Vijay Patel tells us about the changes he would like to see for people with a learning disability.

“To begin with I was nervous about being involved in a campaign like this. I can get nervous when I leave the house and go out in public, especially on transport, people stare and you never know what they’re thinking. But I also know I want to change things for me and other people with a learning disability.

“I have a job and work one day a week – but I want to have a full-time one. I know I can do this, but sometimes I think employers in interviews feel nervous around people with a learning disability and don’t know how to talk to us. It’s not because they have bad attitudes, but they don’t understand learning disability. I really think Here I Am can change this.

I hope the campaign can get the public to see what is possible for people with a learning disability. When given the chance



we can achieve so much, and hopefully Here I Am is that chance. I hope people with a learning disability are understood better than ever after this, and am proud to fight for this change.”



Here I Am - the battle for inclusion
“Learning disability has been invisible for too long, but now it’s time to see it”

Jan Tregelles, is the chief executive of Mencap.

You can read about why Jan thinks Here I Am is so important.



“**Here I Am** is different to anything we have done before. For too long people with a learning disability have been viewed with confusion, as objects of pity, or worse – with outright hostility. We want to change how the public think about learning disability, and we want people with a learning disability to be in charge of this.



People don’t understand learning disability until they come into contact with it.

For lots of people, contact, be it face-to-face or in the media, with people with a learning disability never happens.



With **Here I Am**, we want to change that, for people with a learning disability to no longer be invisible and misunderstood, and instead be seen, heard and listened to.

Learning disability has been invisible for too long, but now it's time to see it.



You can visit mencap.org.uk/hereiam and find out what learning disability really means.



This section explains what we know about how the public think about people with a learning disability.



As part of our work to change the way people think about a learning disability we asked Ipsos MORI to do a survey of UK public attitudes to people with a learning disability for 30 years.



Here are some of the first results from that survey.

You will be able to read more details about the survey at a later date.

Most of the UK public support people with a learning disability.



- Only 5% of people agree that spending more money on care and support services for people with a learning disability is a waste of money.



- 93% of the public agree that people with learning disabilities can be valued members of society.

There is also a lot of confusion about what a learning disability is.



- 27% of people think that a learning disability is some kind of mental illness



- 27% of people think that learning disability does not last your whole life.

What is a learning disability?

A learning disability is not a mental illness.



It isn't something that changes over time.



A learning disability means that sometimes people can struggle to do everyday things and activities.



Some of things that someone with a learning disability might struggle with would be:



- Household tasks like doing the ironing or shopping
- Going out with friends
- Or managing money



People with a learning disability can sometimes take longer to learn new things.



Sometimes they might need support to learn new skills, understand information and talk or communicate with other people.

The amount of support someone needs depends on the individual.

For example:



Someone with a mild learning disability may only need support with things like getting a job.

Someone with a severe learning disability might need fulltime support with every part of their life.



Someone with a learning disability might also have physical disabilities.

People with certain specific conditions can have a learning disability too.

For example:



People with Down's syndrome and some people with autism have a learning disability.

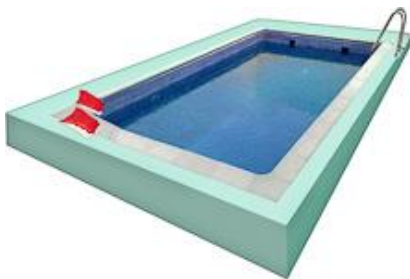
It is important to remember that with the right support, most people with a learning disability in the UK can lead an independent life.

Some people still have a negative attitude about what a learning disability is.



Most people are happy to support people with a learning disability.

But there are some who still show really negative attitudes towards people with a learning disability.



In our survey 6% of people would feel uncomfortable using the same swimming pool as someone with a severe learning disability.



This is what someone in one of our focus groups for planning this campaign said:

“We are still the people that were on the planet from the beginning, and when someone is out of the herd, they’re out of the herd. Look at the animals, the mother sits on the runt.”



These negative attitudes can have very big impact on people’s lives.

Richard and Esther, who are in a relationship together have told us their story.



“A few years ago it got very bad. We were walking in the street together and some school kids started to follow us, throwing stones and calling us names. A few days later Esther was sitting at a bus stop, and the same kids threw boiling water on her. We felt damaged and scared but we know the future can be better for us and other people with a learning disability. This is why we’re involved with Mencap and Here I Am”



Meeting people with a learning disability can help change the way people think, but people with a learning disability aren’t always seen in the news or on the television.

There is lots of confusion about what a learning disability actually is.



We know that the best way to change the way people think about learning disabilities is having contact with someone with a learning disability.



It might not always be possible to meet someone with a learning disability face-to-face.

This is why it is important for people with a learning disability to be seen in the media.



The problem is that people with a learning disability don't always get the chance to be on the news, television or radio.



Only 10% of the public say they have seen someone with a learning disability in newspapers or magazines in the past six months.



Only 14% of people have seen someone with a learning disability being talked about in TV news reports.



Ciara Lawrence, who has a learning disability and has been campaigning for the media to increase representation of people with a learning disability.



“I have a learning disability and growing up I never saw anyone like me on TV, in magazines or on the radio.



There is a lot of confusion and fear that the public have when it comes to learning disability, and the media can change this.



I want Here I Am to help us get more people with a learning disability on TV and in the news. There’s 1.4 million of us, were a huge audience and shouldn’t be overlooked.”



Most people are positive about what people with a learning disability can do.

But there are a lot of people who are not sure about what people with a learning disability can do.



The results from the survey showed that:

Only 61% of people strongly disagree that people who have a learning disability are a burden on society.



The survey shows that the public have worries about people with a mild learning disability making good parents.

Even though research shows that with right support people with a learning disability can be very good parents.



- Only 67% of people agree that people with a mild learning disability can be a good parent.



Ismail has a learning disability and has three children

“I have a wife and three children I am one of just 7% of people with a learning disability to experience the pride and joy of being a parent.



People with a learning disability need extra support in their lives, but it doesn't mean we shouldn't have the chance to show that with the right support we can be excellent parents. I know parenting isn't right for everyone.



But I want to change the attitudes some people have that having a learning disability means you can't be a good Dad”



When it comes to politics, the public are worried about someone with a learning disability making decisions

We know that people with a learning disability can do lots of great things when they are given the chance.



The results from the survey showed that **only 68%** of the public would feel comfortable with someone with a mild learning disability representing them at their local council meetings.



But we know there are great people with a learning disability that work and volunteer as public servants.



Sara Pickard was elected as a community councillor

“When I first joined the council I asked if we could change the way the meeting notes were printed because they weren’t accessible and were difficult to understand.



The response was very negative; I was told ‘you can’t change the way other councillors speak’. So I asked them what they would do if a blind person was elected to the council – if they would produce the papers in braille. That shocked them and they did eventually make the papers more accessible. But it is sad that I had to ask and challenge them before they would make any adjustments.”

Glossary

Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI is a research company who talk to lots of different people to find out what they think about things. They put all the results together and help people understand what they mean.

Survey

A survey is a way of getting information from people by asking them questions.

Public Servant

A public servant is a person who works for the state or the government. They might work for the council, be a judge or a teacher.

SEN or Special Educational Needs.

A child or young person has special educational needs (SEN) if he or she has learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for him or her to learn than most other children and young people of about the same age.

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