



Sexuality Project

The views of young people with learning disabilities



1. How the research came about

In recent years CHANGE has done a lot of work Parents with learning disabilities whose babies have been taken away from them.



CHANGE has written books in easy words and pictures about the issues and has delivered training with trainee social workers and doctors.



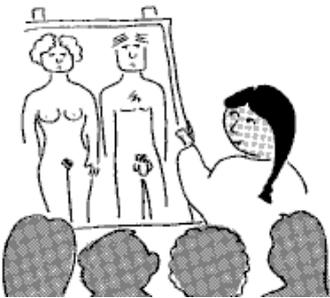
We have set up a national campaign and last year we hosted a National Gathering about the issues involved.



In all our work we have listened to people with learning disabilities.



People with learning disabilities tell us they don't want to be treated as problems.



Many tell us that they were never told about sex and relationships. If they had learned more about this when they were younger there might not be problems for them as adults.



The professionals we have trained say that sexuality and relationships are a priority area to be developed now that people with learning disabilities are living, working and taking their leisure with everyone else in the community.



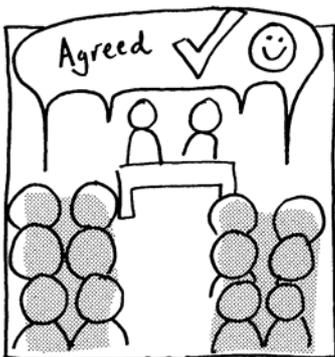
We decided that it was important to find out from young people with learning disabilities what their knowledge, hopes and dreams were in relation to sexuality and personal relationships.



2. How did we decide how to do the research?



We had a number of meetings where we decided how to do the research.



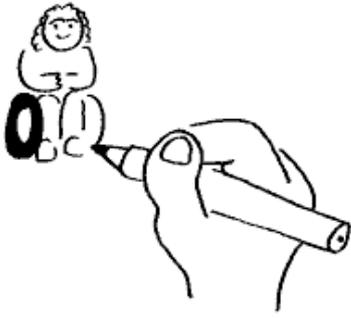
We agreed to work in the way CHANGE works.
We would:

*employ people with a learning disability to do the research with a researcher from the University,



*pay all people who were employed equally





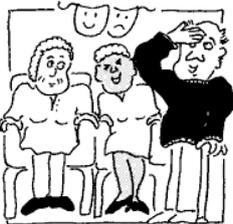
*make sure that all the public documents for the research were in easy words and pictures by employing an illustrator for the project.



3. Theatre with young people



It is very hard for young people to talk openly about relationships and sex.



We decided we wanted to use interactive/ forum theatre to collect information from young people because this would make it easier for them to express their feelings and views.



The Rainbow Group who meet at CHANGE have a lot of experience of doing interactive theatre which is theatre that allows people to express themselves and to join in making a play as they go along.



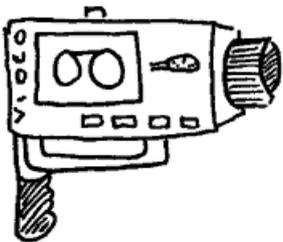
We have asked twenty young people between the ages of 16 and 25 to form their own theatre group.



We will talk to schools and colleges who have to work with the young people who use their services.



We will also ask permission from each person and their parents when the time comes.



Two co-ordinators (a person with a learning disability and a co-worker) will be employed to do the theatre workshops with a University researcher and they will video the session after gaining permission to do so.



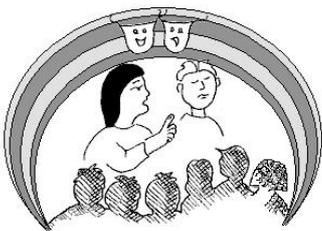
The research co-ordinators and researcher will look at the video of each session and make sense of what people said and did.



This will give us an idea about what the performers know, what they want to know and what they hope for in the future.



After twenty weeks we will tell the Rainbow Group at CHANGE what we have found. They will make a piece of drama based on what the performers have told us.



The second set of twenty theatre sessions will allow young people to work to change the drama made by the Rainbow Group as they see fit.



They will tell us what they think they should be learning, how to feel ok about relationships and how to talk to their parents.



At the end of the twenty weeks the performers will be able to put on a play and we will invite lots of people from around Leeds.



We will also talk to the performers to see what they thought they learned and if they enjoyed the sessions.



4. Interview 20 parents



When it comes to sexuality and personal relationships the views of parents who have children with learning disabilities are very important.



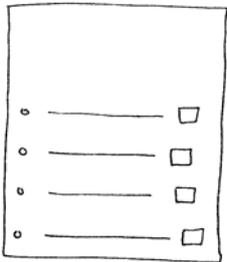
At the same time as the theatre is starting we will also find 20 parents to interview.



Each interview will be done by the University researcher and one of the co-ordinators.



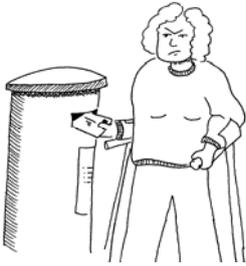
They will also look at what the parents say and work out what it all means.



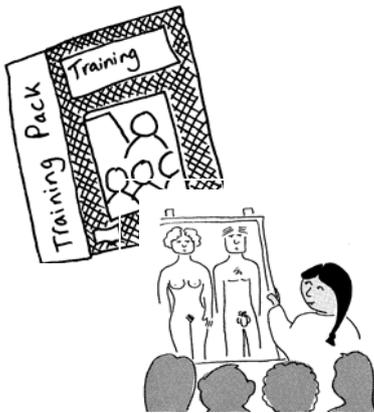
5. A national survey of schools and colleges



We have found that nobody has a full view of what is taught about sexuality and relationships to people with learning disabilities in England.



The researcher from the University will make a short questionnaire and send it to all schools and Further Education colleges for people with learning disabilities in the country to find out what they teach, what training packs they use and who is not taught.



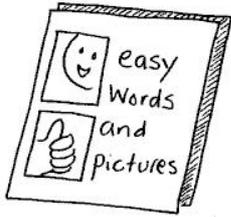
This data will be looked at by the University researcher to see how many people are doing training, what type of training they do and who is receiving training.



6. What will we do with all the information we collect?



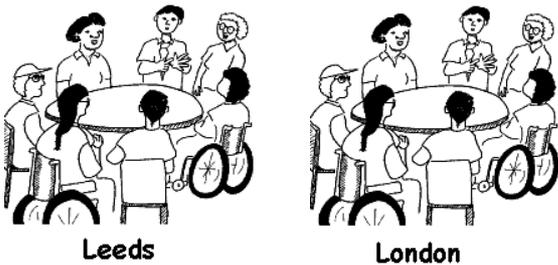
A) The young people involved in the theatre will put on a play. We will invite professionals, other young people, parents and others.



B) We will make leaflets in easy words and pictures about the findings of our work.



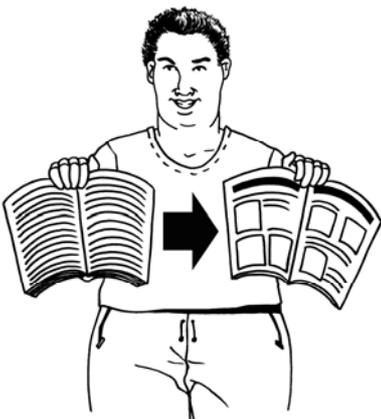
C) We will write a report in easy words and pictures for the Big Lottery Fund.



D) We will run two regional seminars: one in the South and one in the North of England.



E) We will put all our reports on the CHANGE website and ask other websites to host the reports.



F) We will try to get an article published in a national youth magazine and articles will be written for academic magazines



Most of all CHANGE will continue to work together with young people using the findings of the study to make things better for them as adults. We will also keep contact with the twenty young people who have done the theatre work.