

Leeds Learning Disability People's Parliament Council Chambers Takeover 2026



Introduction



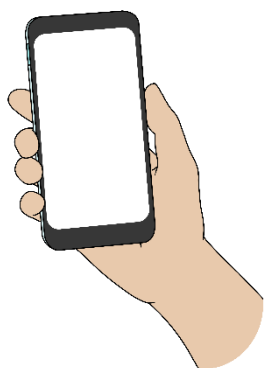
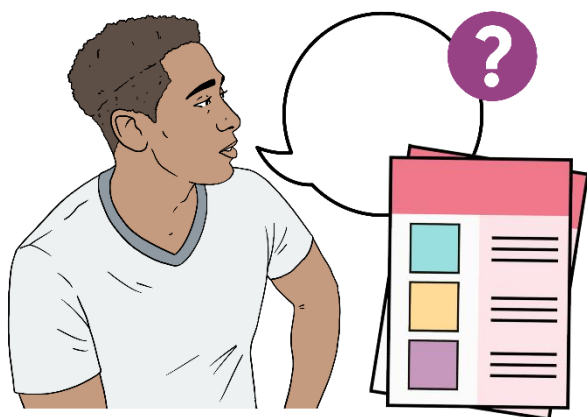
Council Chambers Takeover happens every year during Leeds Learning Disability Week.

The Leeds Learning Disability People's Parliament come together to ask questions to local **decision makers**.

These are people like Social Workers, Commissioners, the Police and the NHS.

Every year, there are 10 pre-written questions that are sent to decision makers before the session. These are all based on the Being Me strategy. There are also open questions in the second part of the session.

Introduction



The Leeds Learning Disability People's Parliament is a group of adults with learning disabilities that meet 5 times a year to try and make Leeds the best city to live in with a learning disability.

This document is to record what questions were asked and the answers. It is in easy read.

If you have any questions or would like to join the Leeds Learning Disability People's Parliament, please call 0113 244 0606 or email askingyou@advonet.org.uk

Opening



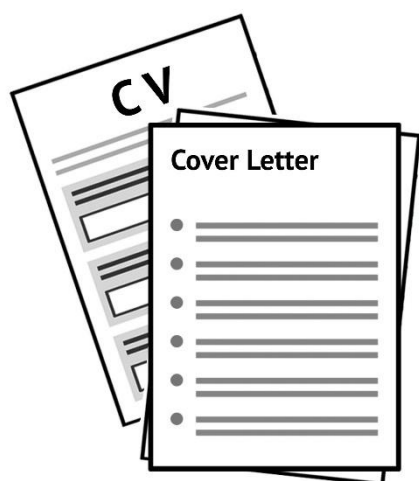
Lord Mayor Steven opened the event. He talked about the theme of this year's Learning Disability Week being 'Do you See Me?' and that the People's Parliament makes Leeds a better place where everyone deserves to be seen and valued.

Questions about Employment



Can we have more accessible job sites to find work?

Questions about Employment



This question was answered by **James Turner, Employment and Skills Senior Manager** at Leeds City Council.

He said:

The people who need jobs want their jobs to go on accessible job site.

At the moment there aren't many accessible jobs so it is sometimes easier if somebody helps you look for a job.

There are lots of ways people can support you to look for a job in Leeds.

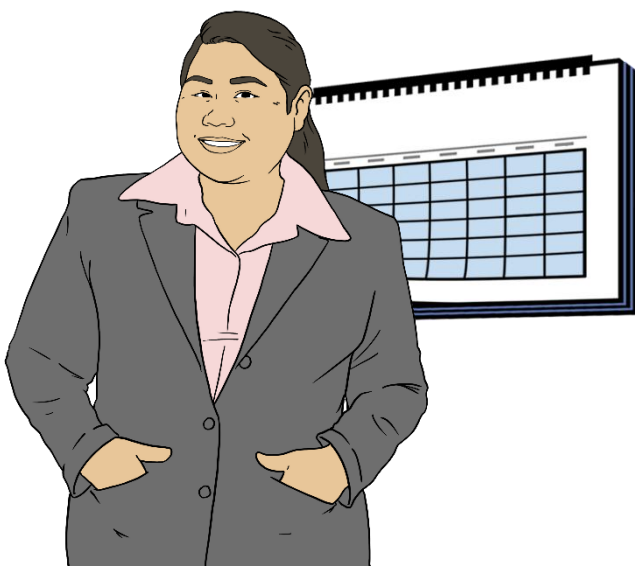
Questions about Employment



People from our team would meet you and find out what type of work you want and what the best way is to get it.

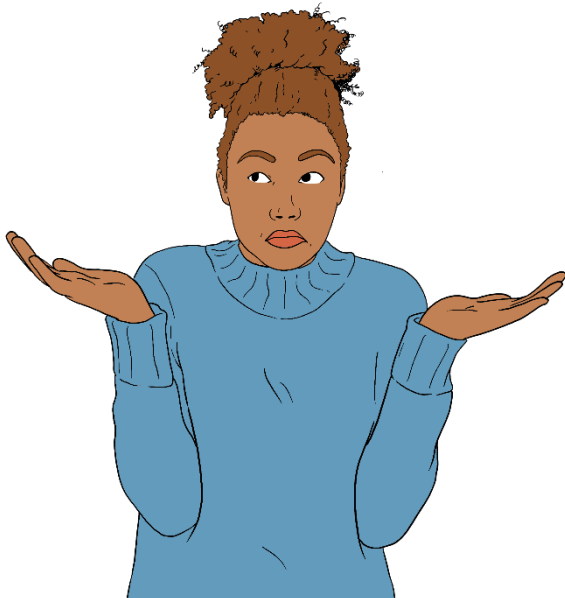
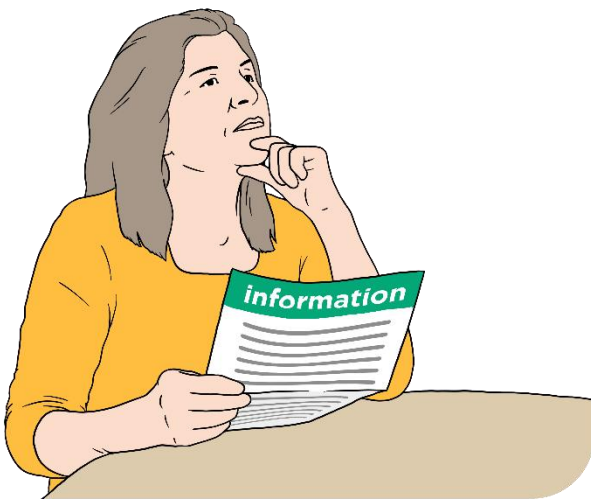


Our team in Employment and Skills know lots of people who give jobs so we could try and make a match between what you want and what jobs there are.



What has been done to make sure jobs are for long term and not just a year?

Questions about Employment



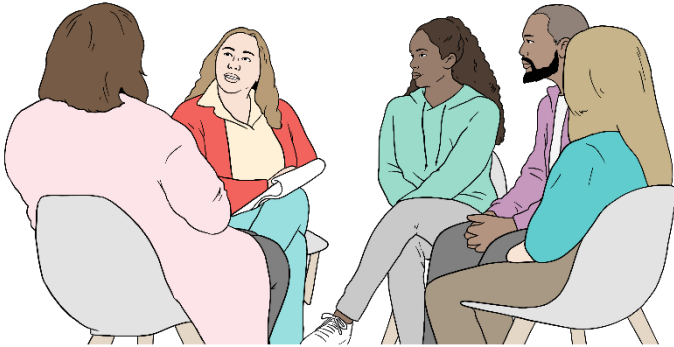
This question was answered by **James Turner, Employment and Skills Senior Manager** for Leeds City Council.

He said:

The decision on how long term a job is, is made by the people who give jobs. Sometimes they can't be longer than a year due to the money that is there for the job.

We would also like more jobs that are for the long term, but there aren't that many jobs at the moment.

Questions about Employment



We have been talking about this to people who give jobs and what we have done is set up lots of meetings where people who give jobs can talk to people looking for jobs and their carers, families, schools and other people who give support.

There is something happening all year:

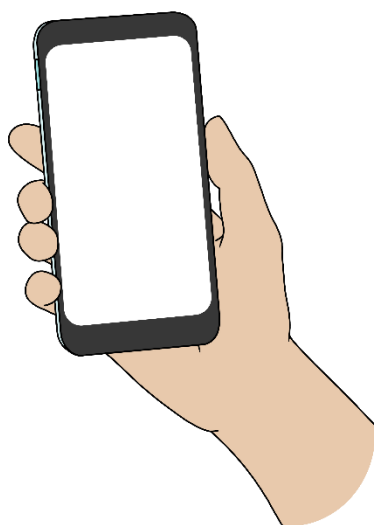
- Local Offer Live – March
- Scope Jobs Fair – June
- STEMFEST – July
- AutistiCon – July
- Next Gen – October
- Careers in Leeds – November 2026
- Leeds Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair – February 2027



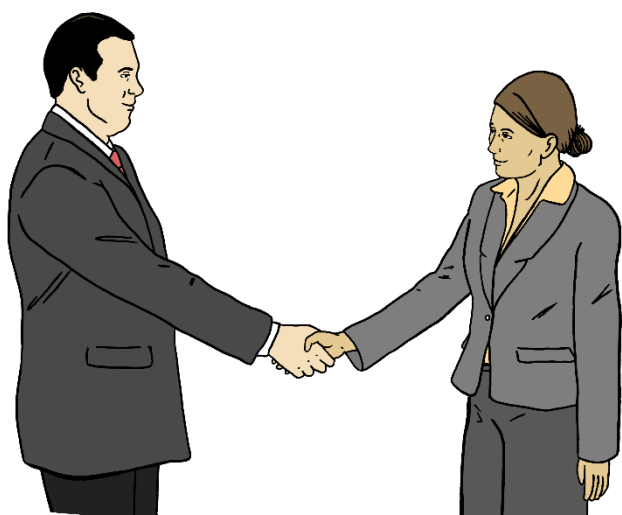
Questions about Employment



We can also set up work experience with support (Supported Internships) and give you support to get and keep a job (Healthy Working Life – Supported Employment Programme).

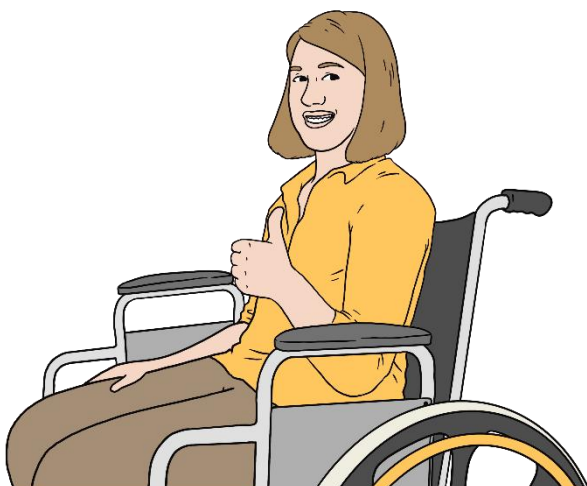


The best thing to do is ring our team on 0113 378 7003 or email employmentleeds@leeds.gov.uk and somebody will help you.



Can we have Disability Employment Advisors back at the Job Centre?

Questions about Employment



This question was answered by
James Turner, Employment and Skills Senior Manager.

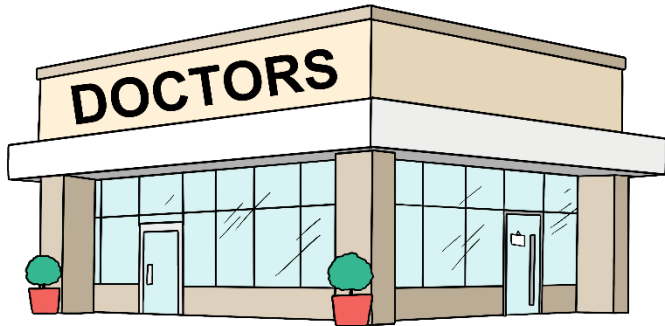
He said:

There are 10 Disability Employment Advisors in 6 Job centres in Leeds. These are:

- Guiseley
- Leeds Park Place
- Leeds Southern House
- Morley
- Pudsey
- Seacroft

Your work coach can help you speak to a Disability Employment Advisor.

Questions about Employment



Disability Employment Advisors are also in the Doctors in Harehills every two weeks and the Job Centre wants to do this at more doctors across Leeds.

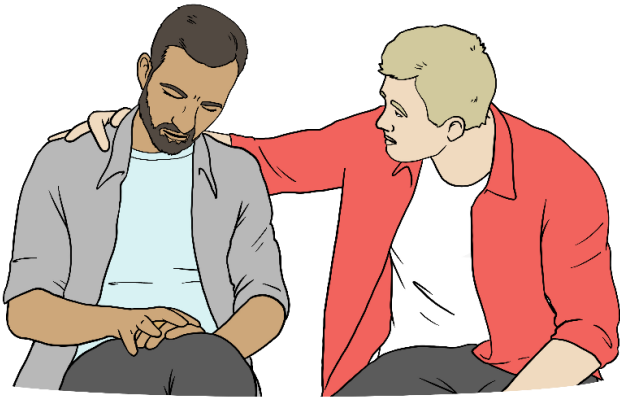


Disability Employment Advisors and Health Work Coaches help people with autism at the Merrion Hub in Leeds City Centre every two weeks.



Every two weeks there is a meeting at Scope in Leeds City Centre and every month at Scope in Guiseley, helping people who are feeling lonely or unhappy.

Questions about Health



Can we have a Men's Health Event where we can find out about screening?

This question was answered by **Stacey Atkinson, Lead Nurse for Learning Disability Services.**

She said:

I think that a day for exploring health is an excellent idea and I am sure more people would love the idea.

We can bring in speakers / health facilitation workers to talk about the screening work we have already done. We can work with the Community Learning Disability team (CLDT).

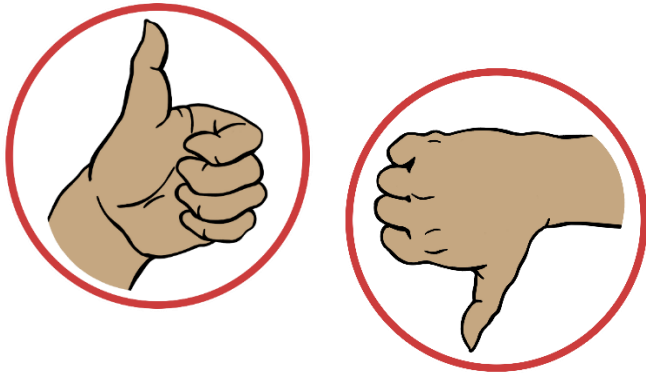


Questions about Health



Stacey asked the Council Chambers how they would like this service to look like.

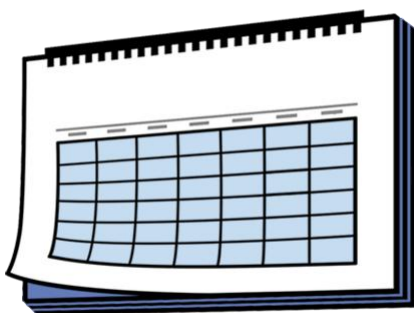
A vote was done in the chambers about having a Women's and Men's health event, and what everyone wanted them to include.



The decision was made to do a split day, one half for Men, one half for Women, and it would cover both physical and mental health.



This will be explored further in a future Being Well Partnership Board event.



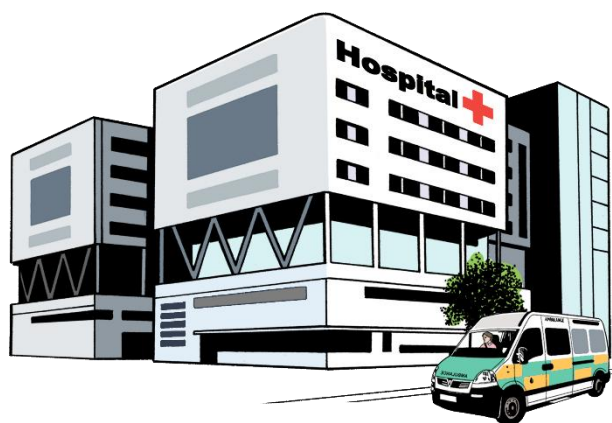
Questions about Health



Can we see the same doctor every time?



This question was answered by **Rachel Davies, Lead Professional for Learning Disability and Autism at LGI & Julie Royel-Evatt the Strategic Health Facilitation Manager NHS.**



Rachel said:

The hospital is a very big place with doctors working in lots of different areas. At hospital we believe it is best for you to see the doctor that has the best skills to manage a specific health problem.

Questions about Health



This might mean that you see a different doctor for different problems. At the hospital you will see more than one doctor, all the doctors have access to your notes.



The trust aims to offer the same doctor for the same speciality where it can, but this is not always possible.

Julie said:



It is not always possible to see the same GP each visit as the GP might not be working on the day that you have an appointment. They may be fully booked up or you may need to be seen by a more specialist GP in your surgery.

Questions about Transport



What learning disability awareness or autism training do bus drivers and taxi drivers get?

David Crake, Leeds City Council Travel Social Worker responded to this question.

He said:

The Leeds Taxi Driving Training Policy is in place to make sure taxi drivers are trained and tested in:

- adults safeguarding
- children safeguarding
- vulnerable passengers
- equalities/disability training
- recognising nonvisible disability

They must also take tests that they must pass at 80% to continue working for them.

Questions about Transport

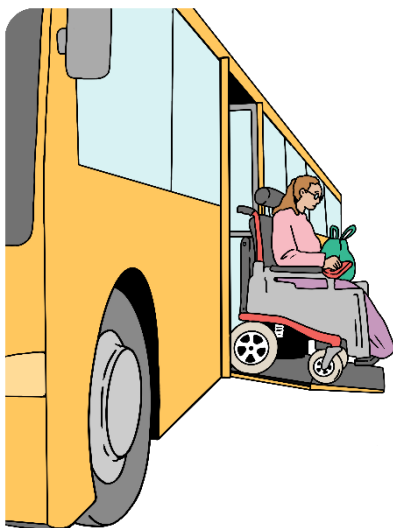
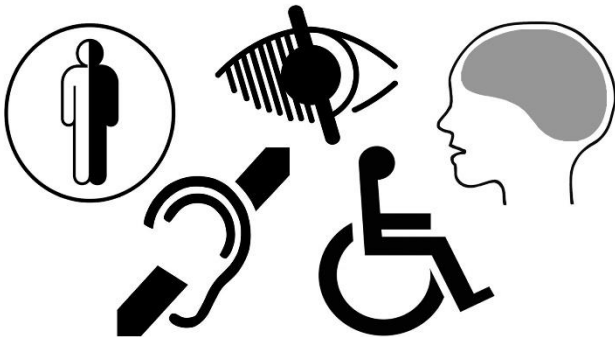


Taxis drivers also must do refresher training and tests in safeguarding and equalities and disabilities.

First Bus said:

Drivers must have a Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC). As part of this drivers do courses, including in customer care.

They are trained in understanding of and treatment of customers with disabilities, impairments and other needs, and training on support of service user mental health challenges.



There is practical training for operating wheelchair ramps and kneeling systems.

Questions about Safety



We would like the bus station to feel safer on a night-time.

This question was answered by **Beverly Adams and Anil Mander** from the **West Yorkshire Police**.

They said:

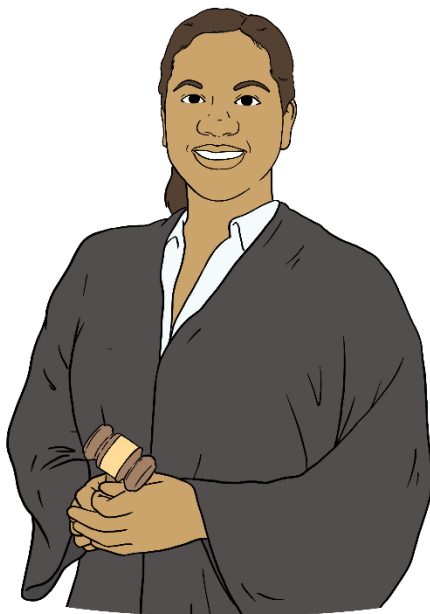
The Neighbourhood police team work with two PCSOs (Police Community Support Officers) who work in the bus station in Leeds to keep you and everyone else safe.

The team work with the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team and Youth Workers on an evening to prevent offending.

Questions about Safety



The police work with a team, including with surrounding shops like Leeds Market to report issues and make action plans to stop crime.



Police patrol the bus station daily to check for crime and anti-social behaviour. They can issue warnings and take offenders to court for a community protection order or criminal order.



They have the power to stop and search and run operations with other organisations to reduce crime.

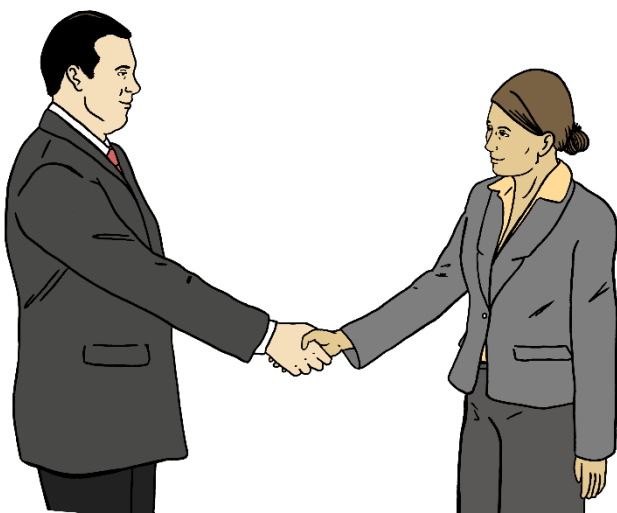
Questions about Safety



Some police will be wearing plain clothes to blend in to catch and stop crime. Some police will be wearing hi-visibility clothing.

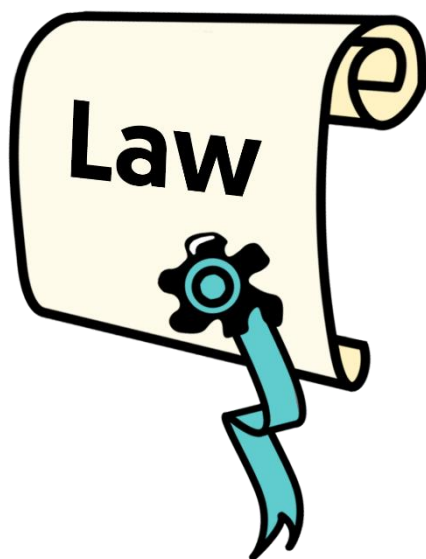
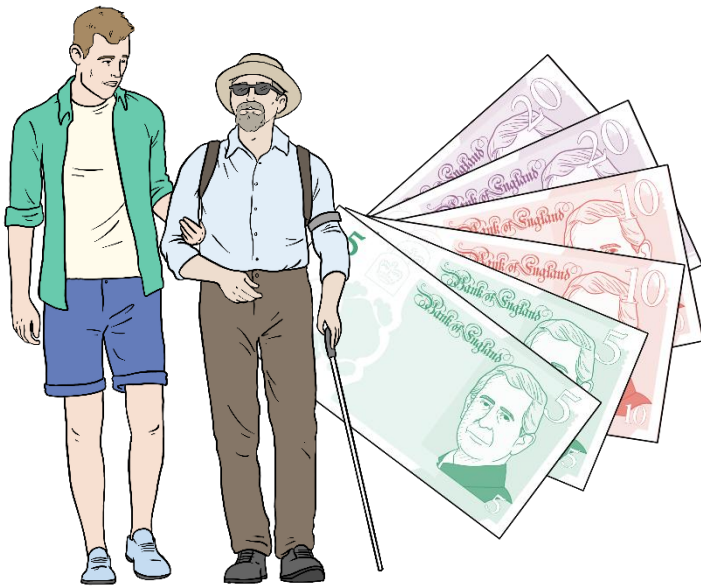


We run operations for Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) focusing on lone females leaving after work or youths leaving shopping. We work to stop unacceptable behaviour, attention and language.



You can set up a visit to meet the PCSOs at the station.

Questions about Being Social



Can we pay less towards our support, so we have money to have more of a social life? Lots of people have stopped going to friendship groups because of the cost.

This question was answered by **Matthew James, Senior Finance Manager, Adult Health & Social Care.**

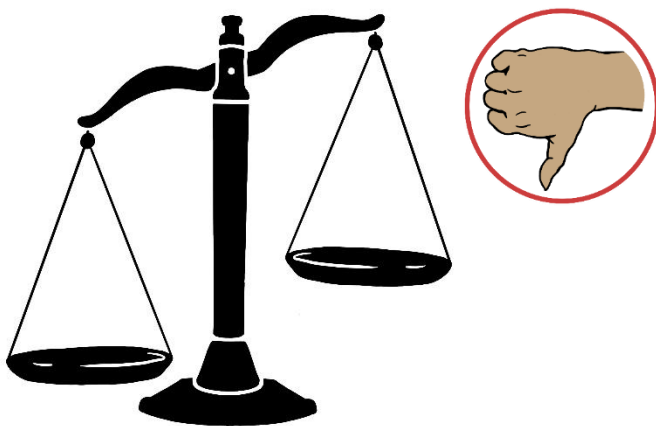
They said:

The law says how we work out how much someone can afford to pay towards their care and support. Most people get financial help to pay for most of their care costs. The financial assessment is used to work out how much they need to pay themselves.

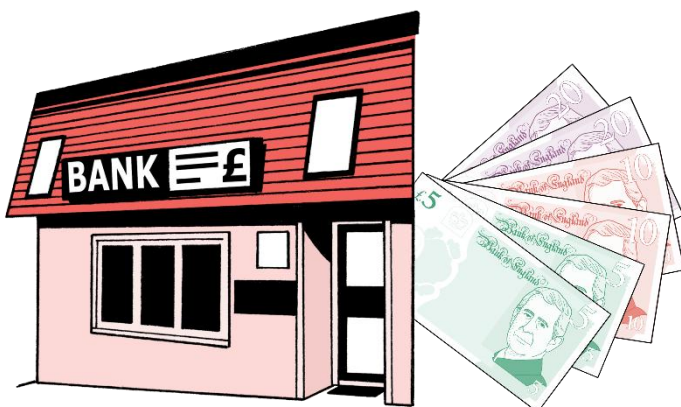
Questions about Being Social



Leeds City Council follows these rules. Each year, the Council looks at whether it can ask people to pay less than the law says. To do this, it must make sure there is still enough money to provide care and support for everyone who needs it.



Adult Social Care is a large part of the Council's budget - 40% of the budget. Because of financial pressures, the Council has not been able to reduce the amount people pay.



There is some good news. The Government increased the amount of money working-age adults can keep before paying towards their care. This means many people can keep more of their income before they need to contribute.

Open Questions - Transport



After finishing the 10 pre-written questions, we moved onto the open questions in the second half of the Chambers takeover.

Our first question came from Shirley:

My daughter attends day services and gets transport but this is very irregular, no specific time, they may come in the morning, it might be the afternoon. Drivers are often doing multiple runs as they are understaffed. Carers get frustrated with this and then get frustrated with the drivers when it's not their fault. The system is broken; we are paying with no help - £10.50 per journey.

Unfortunately, we didn't get a response for this.

Open Questions - Medication

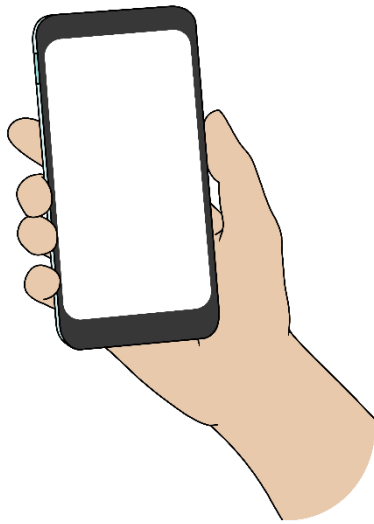
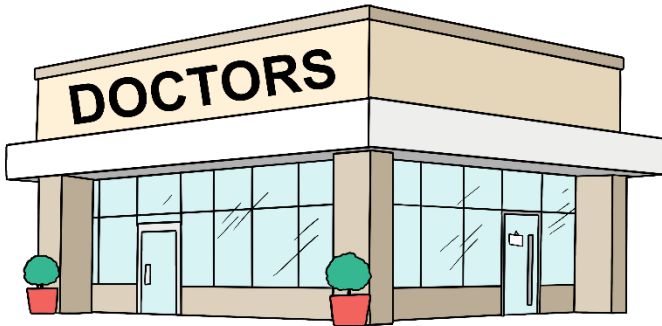


Our Second Question came from a student at Hamara:

When you visit the doctors, they typically only prescribe normal medication or paracetamol, not giving stronger meds. I feel there is a gap in people getting less, doctors don't call back and don't listen. If you pay and go private you will get better medication.

Sharon responded as there wasn't the person in the room who could answer the question fully.

Open Questions – Medical / E-Bike



Cheryl said:

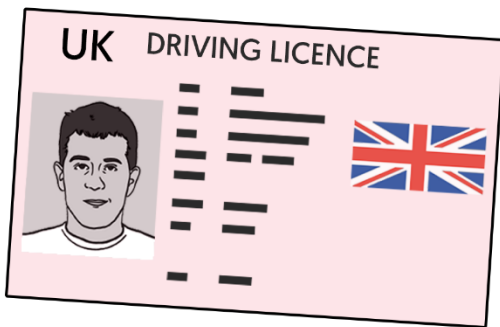
You can now refer to the Leeds GP Confederation that is a collective of 87 practices in Leeds.

They are open extended hours and weekends. You won't be seeing your normal doctor or at your normal GP surgery but you are more likely to get an appointment and they do online appointments too.

Our Third Question:

The new E-bikes could knock people over, people will get hurt. How can LCC help with this? Also worries about battery fires.

Open Question – E-bikes



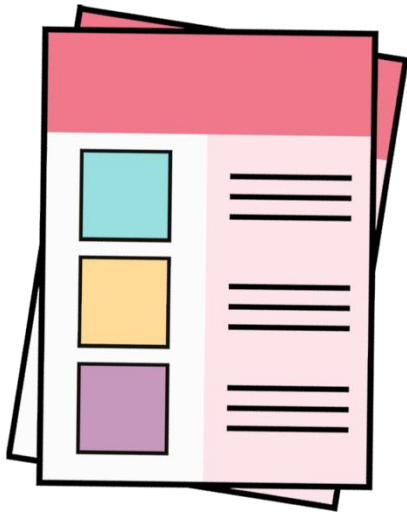
Bairbre, the Access Officer at the Disability Hub answered this question:

E-bikes/E-scooters with LNER are City Council bikes and you must have a driving licence to use them, so must be age 17 or older. These are legal and licenced bikes.

The police are addressing non legal bikes but they are likely to lift the ban and make all e-bikes and scooters legal, as they are eco-friendly.

There have been consultations on the concerns, as blind people have also raised this and have had an emergency meeting to cover concerns.

Open Question – E-bikes



Beverly from the Police said that they will make an easy read guide on the E-bikes, and will have ongoing monitoring of e-bikes.



Deliveroo and other delivery services also use these so the Police are working with them on safety.



Briggate has also had the hours and rules changed so there should be less bikes on Briggate during daytime hours.

Open Question – Bus times

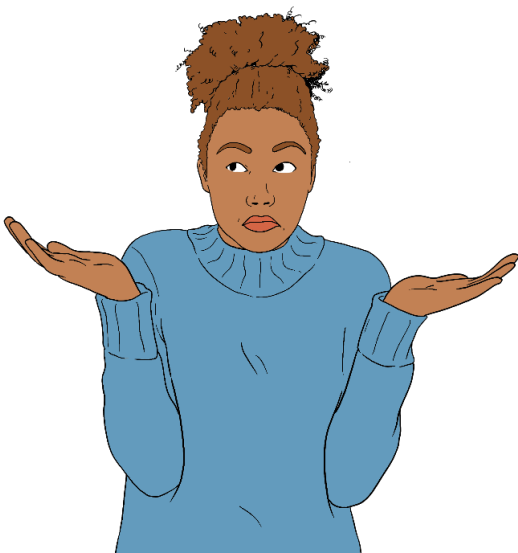
Our Fourth Question:

A service user of Asking You asks when can we use our bus passes before 9:30am?

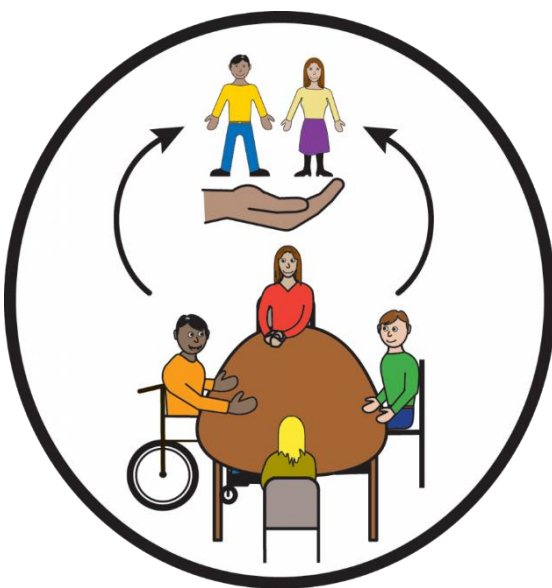
Ella from Lighthouse Futures Trust also said that this causes problems with their tailored employment support as students can't get to their placements earlier than 10:30am.

A representative for LCC answers this question:

This has been trialled in Wakefield and hopefully it will be rolled out across West Yorkshire eventually. This is not a guarantee, and we don't know any date when this will happen.



Open Question – Supported Living



Our Fifth Question:

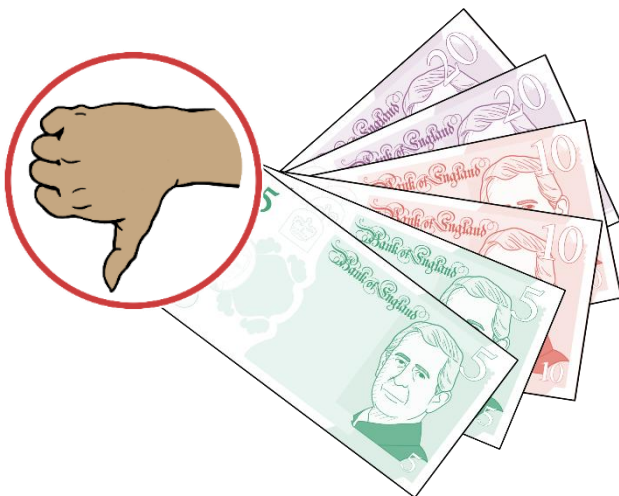
Jackie who is a carer asks:

How can we make sure there is enough supported living places in Leeds? There also needs to be more emergency respite care as there are not enough beds.

A representative for LCC answers this question:

Council, Commissioners and Social Workers are working together. Talk to your social workers and find what's right for you. Come to the Carers Reference Group to make sure your voice is heard and they will tell you what support is available.

Open Question – Accessible Gyms



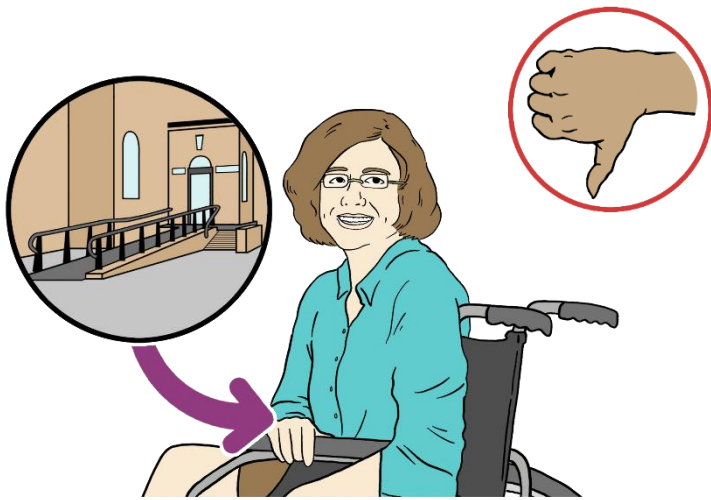
Our Sixth Question:

Jen Robinson asked about leisure centres in Leeds and how wheelchair accessible they are.

Jen lives in East Leeds, and there are no accessible gyms and swimming pools nearby. No matter your disability, it should be accessible.

Memberships are also expensive, especially when you can only use a very tiny portion of the equipment. Equipment is typically not set up to be easily transferable between equipment, so the positioning isn't accessible.

Open Question – Accessible Gyms

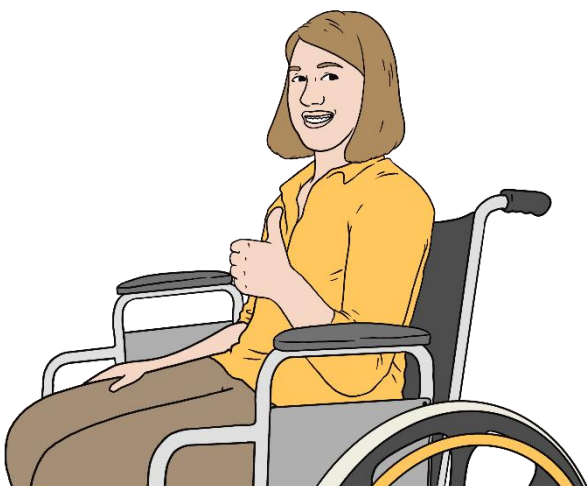


The weighing system to check your progression is also not accessible to disabled people and wheelchair users, so we are unable to access the same things as abled people.

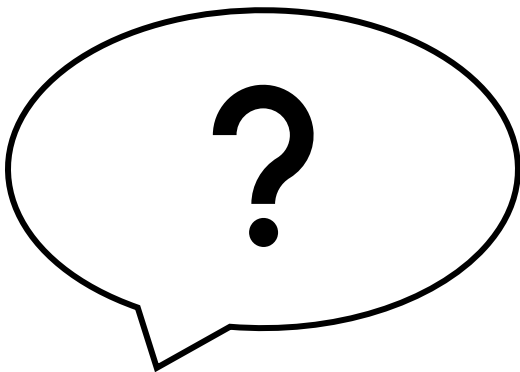
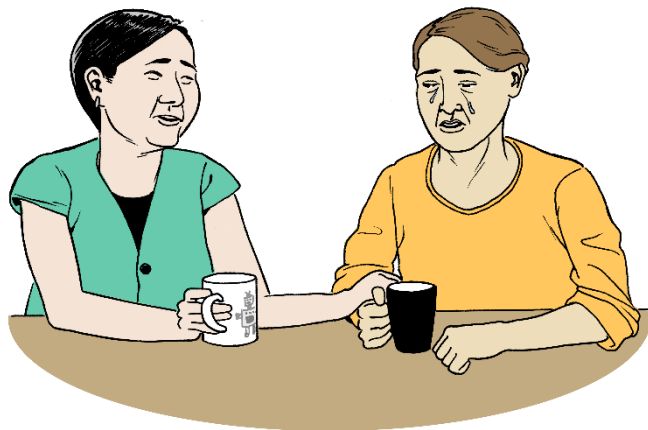
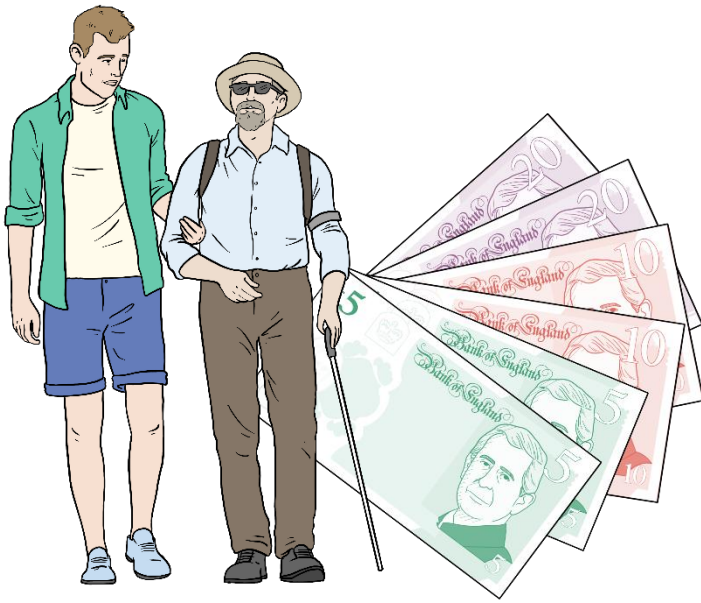
A representative for LCC answers this question:

Fearnville is currently going through the process of being closed, knocked down and rebuilt. They have gone through large planning stages of accessibility.

Fearnville will be accessible, disabled people consulted on equipment, then LCC should be working across all the centres to make them fully accessible. Rothwell has had some improvements too.



Open Question – Care Costs



Our Seventh Question

Care costs and benefits cuts, pushing us into poverty, income guarantee not high enough as not enough allowance on disabled peoples benefits.

For mental health support I have to go private as NHS wouldn't help as its too complex. This is more tax on disabled people – how will this improve?

Unfortunately, there wasn't the person in the room who could answer the question.

Open Question – LGBTQ safety on buses



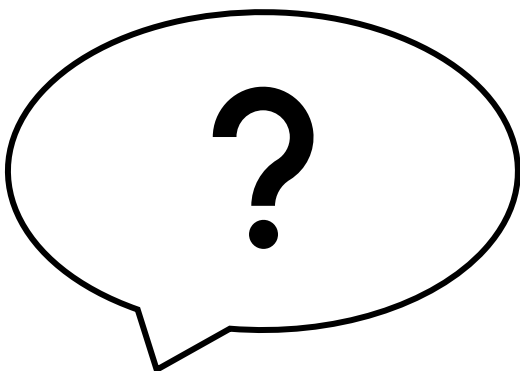
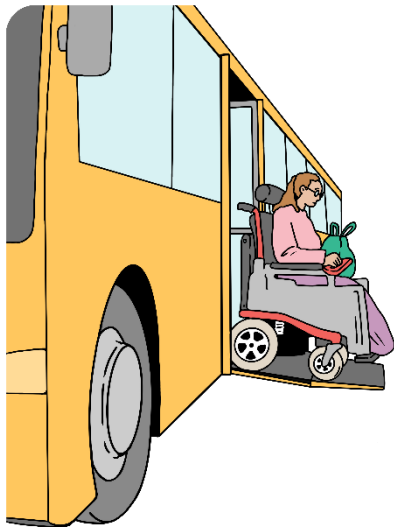
Our Eighth Question

Security at night on the bus - I was verbally attacked for being LGBTQ and the bus driver didn't help so I don't feel safe getting the bus anymore and have to get taxis. Will anything be put in place to stop hate crimes?

Beverly from the West Yorkshire Police responded to this:

Please report all hate crimes as this is evidence to make changes, bus drivers do need better training to deal with and report incidents. PCSOs can take reports too.

Open Question – Wheelchairs on buses

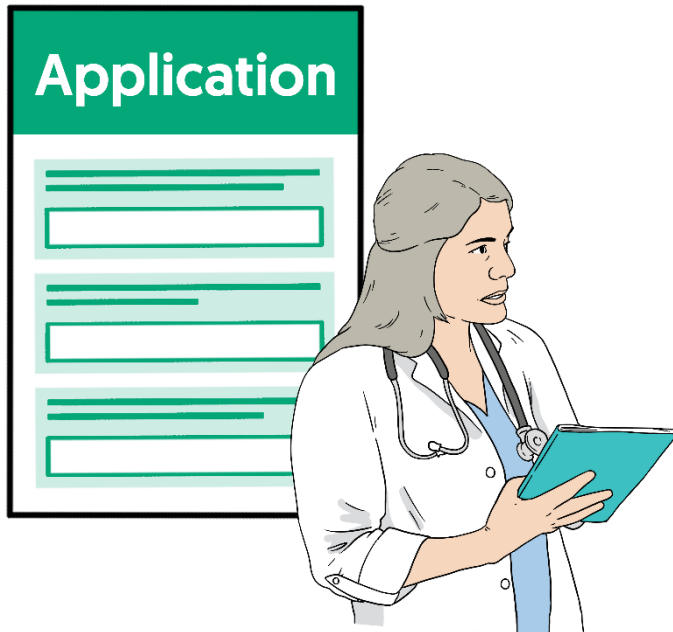


Our Ninth Question:

Bus drivers don't know their policies on accessibility for wheelchair users around the ramps and spaces. The policy says on the website that if they are unable to give me access to the bus, then a taxi should be provided for me. I have been left stranded without support by the bus companies many times. On one occasion a bus driver helped call around to get me support as he didn't know, but nobody else knew either. Can bus drivers be trained on this?

Unfortunately, there wasn't the person in the room who could answer the question.

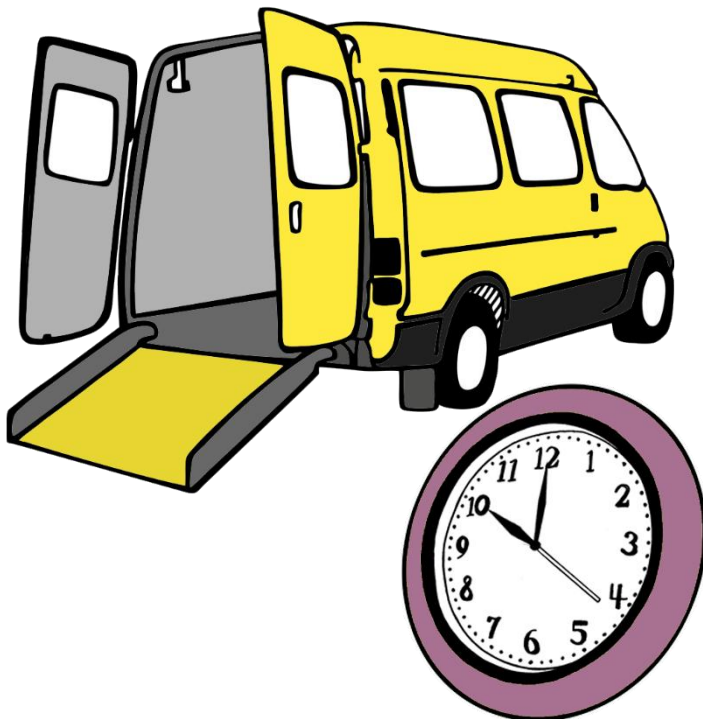
Open Question – GP & Transport



Our tenth question:

Why do you have to fill out a consultation form to be seen or speak to a GP?

Unfortunately, there wasn't the person in the room who could answer the question but it was advised to speak with your GP about your access needs.

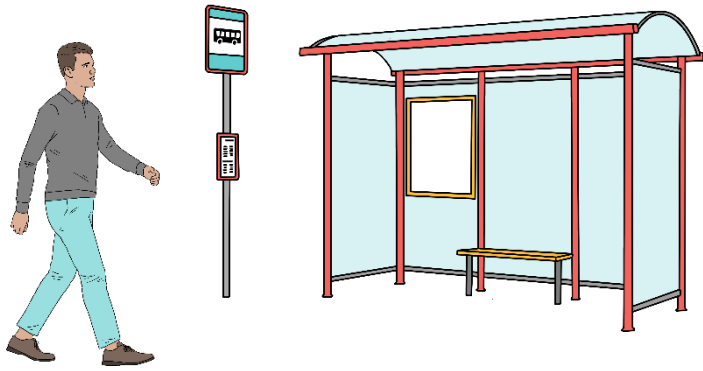


Our eleventh question:

I get transport for certain things, but it doesn't cover college, and I'm not able to get the bus before 9:30am to get to my course. Can I get extra transport for college?

Unfortunately, there wasn't the person in the room who could answer the question but it was advised to speak to your social worker and transport about this.

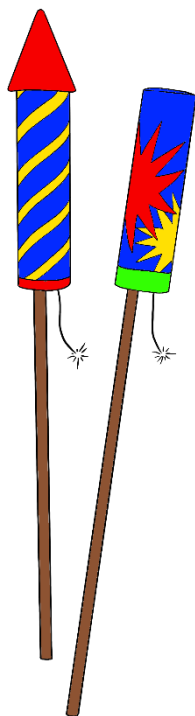
Open Question – Outdoor Safety



Our twelfth question:

Walking to bus stops can be very hard and a distance away from your home. If you miss it then you have to wait a long time. It can be difficult to walk with a stick

Unfortunately, there wasn't the person in the room who could answer the question

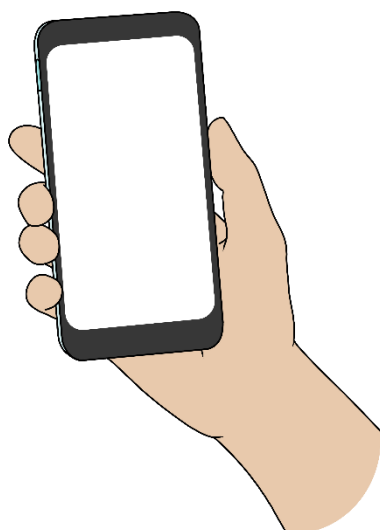


Our thirteenth question:

Will LCC be hosting a bonfire night and Christmas light switch on this year? Without these there is more antisocial behaviour.

Unfortunately, there wasn't the person in the room who could answer the question.

Next Steps



All unanswered questions will be taken to the Leeds Learning Disability Partnership Board with answers feedback at the next People's Parliament.

This People's Parliament session is Tuesday 29th September at **St Chad's Parish Centre**. It starts at **10:30** and finishes at **1PM**.

If you would like to hear more about Leeds Learning Disability People's Parliament or have any questions about this document, please call **0113 244 0606** and ask for Asking You. You can also email askingyou@advonet.org.uk