

Cabinet
27 January 2026
My Life My Choice County Councillor Deal

Report by the Director of Adult Social Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- Acknowledge and endorse this report developed with My Life My Choice (MLMC) Campaign Champions.
- Confirm the council's commitment to work with the MLMC Community Champions on the three pledges that they have set out as part of the Councillor Deal where these fall within the council's remit and where they are within the scope of the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan 2025-2035 (see annex 1a and 1b).

Executive Summary

2. MLMC Campaign Champions want the county council to continue to work with learning-disabled people to support them to live their best possible lives. A team of learning-disabled people (Campaign Champions) created a document titled 'County Councillor Deal', focusing on three key areas of life they want the council's work to focus on (see annex 2).

Anup Upadhyaya, MLMC Trustee and Campaign Champion at MLMC commented: "This is about making sure we get a better life"

3. MLMC requests that the Leader of the Council endorses the three pledges of the Campaign Champions. MLMC would also like the county council to concentrate its efforts on these commitments to support individuals with learning disabilities. The three pledges are:

- **Pledge 1:** Social Care – Workforce and Support
- **Pledge 2:** Education and Employment
- **Pledge 3:** Good Places to Live.

4. These three areas are already an integral part of the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan 2025 – 2035 and the current work that MLMC are involved in with the district and city councils

5. For each of the key areas, the Champions have highlighted something that is:

- going well,

- could be better, and
- what learning-disabled people could offer the county council in terms of co-working.

6. The Campaign Champions have produced a 'We will' and 'We want' statement for each of the three key areas, as follows (annex 2):

Pledge 1: Social Care – Workforce and Support

- *We want*: the Campaign Champions to collaborate with the county council to improve the promotion of social care jobs and careers, increasing public awareness of the value of working in this sector.
- *We will*: help by sharing our stories of good support and why it is so important to our lives.

Pledge 2: Education and Employment

- *We want*: to work with the county council and local employers to understand how the adult employment scheme can be improved so it leads to more real jobs, paid or otherwise.
- *We will*: help by sharing our lived experience of being in work and why it is so important towards having a meaningful life.

Pledge 3: Good Places to Live

- *We want*: MLMC to work with all parts of local government, to ensure there are enough accessible and well-connected communities for everyone.
- *We will*: help by sharing our stories of what it is like to live in a good place.

7. The MLMC Campaign Champions want council leaders and county councillors to endorse the County Councillor Deal to enable the council leader to sign up to the pledges.

Context

8. MLMC (a local self-advocacy group), want the county council to continue to work with learning-disabled people (Campaign Champions) to help them live their best lives. In Summer 2025, they produced the 'County Councillor Deal' highlighting three pledges MLMC can work with the county council on. (See annex 2 – County Councillor Deal).

9. MLMC have worked jointly with the county council and other partners to ensure that these areas are reflected within the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan 2025 - 2035, where it has been identified that the remit of the pledge delivery falls within the county council responsibilities.

10. MLMC has acknowledged there is currently a Local Government Reorganisation decision being progressed. Once Central Government have made their decision this may require MLMC to review the pledges to realign them with the outcome.
11. Based on wider feedback from MLMC self-advocacy groups across Oxfordshire, the Campaign Champions identified the following pledges, that they believe the county council could focus on, which are identified against the appropriate Themes within the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan 2025 – 2035 (see annex 1a and 1b):
 - **Pledge 1:** Social Care – Workforce and Support (Theme: cross-cutting)
 - **Pledge 2:** Education and Employment (Theme 1: Having a Good Life)
 - **Pledge 3:** Good Places to Live (Theme 3: Having a Place to Live)

Focus on the Campaign Champions three pledges

12. The Campaign Champions examined the three key pledges in depth, gathering member feedback to create the ‘County Councillor Deal’. This document sets out their pledges using what they ‘want’ and they ‘will’ do statements, highlighting a joint approach between the county council and MLMC.

Pledge 1: Social Care – Workforce and Support

13. Social Care in this context relates to ‘paid’ people or services who help people with a learning disability with their day-to-day needs.
14. The Campaign Champions report strong support from social care teams in Oxfordshire. For instance, members of the Chipping Norton Self-Advocacy Group described staff as caring and vital to their daily lives. However, despite a well-developed care market, there remain some unfilled social care vacancies across all sectors which has been observed through the number of job advertisements and their review of the online data which highlights local vacancy rates in the social care sector.
15. The Campaign Champions ‘want’ the county council to help promote social care careers, which include lived experiences and stories. By sharing good practice and through existing social care and quality reviews, everyone benefits from the excellent support available in Oxfordshire.
16. The Campaign Champions ‘will’ help by sharing their stories of good support and why it is so important to our lives.
17. The county council have co-produced the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan 2025 – 2035 (annex 1) where workforce and support features as a cross-cutting theme to enable the effective delivery of all of the themes across all sectors. This includes all social care workforce who support people with a learning disability regardless of which organisation they work for, to undergo Oliver McGowen training.
18. The Oliver McGowen Training is a mandatory course for health and social care staff to help them better understand learning disabilities and autism. It aims to

improve care by increasing awareness, empathy and inclusivity. More details are available at The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism can be found at [The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism](#)

Pledge 2: Education and Employment

19. Education in this context means colleges, schools or training available to people with a learning disability to gain new skills and acquire appropriate employment.
20. The Campaign Champions note that successful adult training and work opportunities have existed through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and Oxfordshire Employment Services. Building on these strengths and increasing visibility can help more people access volunteering or paid roles. According to the 2023–2024 ASCOF report, 8.18% of working-age adults (18–64) with a learning disability and long-term social care in Oxfordshire are in paid employment.
21. Employment and training falls within Theme 1: Having a Good Life as part of the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan 2025 – 2035, which will continue the positive work with the Oxfordshire Employment Network and Connect to Work scheme.
22. The Campaign Champions ‘want’ to continue to work with the county council and local employers to enhance the adult employment schemes, so it leads to real jobs, paid or otherwise. MLMC highlighted how important this training is for them currently and that it should continue to equip people with a learning disability with the necessary skills for job applications, interview preparation, and in-work support if required.
23. The Campaign Champions ‘will’ share their lived experiences of education and employment, and the importance in enabling individuals with a learning disability to lead fulfilling and inclusive lives.
24. MLMC will also work with local employers to connect with the county council offer to enhance volunteering and job opportunities for people with a learning disability and ensure these links are maintained between the Oxfordshire Employment Network and Connect to Work Scheme.

Pledge 3: Good Places to Live

25. Good places to live means offering housing choices with local amenities and community integration for people with a learning disability. MLMC will work with districts and city housing leaders to ensure new housing developments reduce social isolation. The Campaign Champions think some people live in good places and are happy with their life, but some newly built houses can be in areas that make it hard for people with a learning disability to visit the people and places they like.
26. MLMC will keep working with the county council on future supported living housing projects and continue the positive co-production currently taking place. A Witney member highlighted, when planning new supported living sites, it is important that

there are sufficient accessible amenities for people with a learning disability. MLMC understand social housing remains the responsibility of district and city councils.

“This is about making sure we get a better life” – Anup Upadhyaya, MLMC Trustee and Campaign Champion.

27. The Campaign Champions ‘want’ all parts of local government to work together so that new communities are well connected and they can influence the best living arrangements. This should continue to include considering who lives together in supported living where appropriate, ensuring homes meet peoples’ needs, and are close to local amenities where possible.
28. The Campaign Champions ‘will’ help by sharing their lived experience of having good homes and places to live.
29. This pledge falls within Theme 3: Having a Place to Live of the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan 2025-2035. Oxfordshire County Council will continue to develop, and co-produce supported living accommodation with people who have learning disabilities, their carers, friends and family members.
30. In summary, MLMC would like the Council Leader to support and sign the County Councillor Deal where the responsibility falls with the county council, as working together means making a difference to ensure everyone has a good place to live, with the right support and opportunities close by. When councils, social care leads, community organisations and people with lived experience collaborate, it directly improves people’s day-to-day lives, making it easier for individuals with learning disabilities to access essential services, social activities, and maintain friendships.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

31. The MLMC Councillor Deal will contribute towards the council’s Strategic Plan and links to Theme 1 (Having a Good Life), and Theme 3 (Having a Place to Live) in the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan 2025 – 2035. Additionally, workforce including paid support, are cross-cutting priorities that span all four themes of the Plan.

Financial Implications

32. There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Comments verified and checked by:

Stephen Rowles, Strategic Finance Business Partner,
Stephen.rowles@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

33. The Care Act 2014 sets out the current statutory framework for the provision of care and support services. Duties for local authorities under the Act include:

- promoting individual wellbeing when exercising functions under the Act,
- developing services that prevent people developing needs for care and support, or delay deterioration in the same,
- providing information and advice about care and support options for local people,
- helping develop a market that delivers a wide range of sustainable, high-quality support services,

principles which need to be considered when developing local strategies for the delivery of care and support under the Act.

Comments verified and checked by:

Janice White

Principal solicitor, ASC & Litigation

Staff Implications

34. There are no direct staff implications related to this report.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

35. Equality and Inclusion has been considered and reviewed, with any associated mitigations put in place.

Risk Management

36. The MLMC Councillor Deal aligns with key areas in the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan 2025 – 2035, with the delivery overseen by the Learning Disability Improvement Board. Updates for the MLMC Councillor Deal will be delivered to this board.

NAME: Karen Fuller (Director of Adult Social Care)

Annex List

Annex 1a: Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan 2025-35

Annex 1b: Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan Dynamic Work Plan

Annex 2: MLMC County Councillor Deal

Other Documents: Nil

Contact: Bhavna Taank (Head of Joint

Commissioning – Live Well, Housing, Education and Social Care)

Supported by:

Anup Upadhyaya (My Life My Choice Campaign Champion)
James Sheard (My Life My Choice Inspections and Campaigns Co-Ordinator)

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