

# Supporting people with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD)

Achieve together provide skilled and knowledgeable teams to support people with PMLD, with access to proactive and forward thinking specialist clinical support. The people we support live in the community in adapted living environments to ensure they have access to specialist equipment, while benefiting from ordinary living. Achieve Together are committed to support using the national PMLD Core and Essential Service Standards.

**Key aspects of the support Achieve together provides includes:**

## **Total Communication Approaches:**

Staff are skilled and creative when communicating and listening to people with PMLD, in line with the Five Good Communication Standards (RCSLT). Staff use a range of communication tools and resources to ensure support is individually tailored to maximise expressive and receptive communication. Skilled staff teams use intensive and sensory interaction and hi and lo tech communication technology to support a person's ability to communicate and gain control over their environment. Assessment and support is also sought from Speech and Language Therapists.

## **Health and Wellbeing:**

Each person has a comprehensive personal Health Assessment and Health Action Plan; Hospital Passport; Disdat Tool (for discomfort/distress recognition) and access to multi-health professional support i.e. Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapist, working in partnership with families.

Where needed, 24-hour Postural Support Plans are in place to maintain and protect body shape with appropriate multi-professional assessment, staff skill development and individualised equipment. This also includes regular specialist wheelchair reviews from external local wheelchair services and orthotics i.e. spinal jackets and specialist footwear. Such support also focuses on skin integrity to prevent pressure damage.

## **GP Enhanced Services:**

In Brighton and North London we have enhanced GP services to ensure excellent medical support to people with PMLD. Regular clinics are held with GPs to provide preventative and proactive health support.



### Dysphagia

Our Healthcare Facilitator works closely with Speech and Language Therapists, Dieticians and other health professionals to ensure people have detailed assessment of eating/drinking. Support also focuses on respiratory health and the risk of aspiration. Achieve together support people who are enterally fed, providing teams with in-depth training and competency assessment.

### Epilepsy

We provide staff teams with thorough training in epilepsy awareness, risk management and use of emergency medicines including buccal midazolam. Training is in line with ESNA guidelines and facilitated by a qualified nurse.

### Hydrotherapy

In Essex, Brighton and Norfolk, people we support have access to hydrotherapy and where needed, staff work in partnership with local physiotherapists. Hydrotherapy programmes developed compliment daily movement and postural support plans.

### Social Inclusion and Meaningful Activity

People are supported, through a person centred approach, to access personally meaningful educational, work, sports and leisure opportunities. Creative, multisensory approaches, Active Support and partnership working are critical to ensuring the best possible life opportunities for people with PMLD. Samir, Frankie and Bradley three of the people we support in Brighton is an active member of 'Campaign 4 Change' a self-advocacy group who campaign important topics to them and people alike. One of their campaigns is making sure there are changing places in public places.

### Emotional and Psychological Wellbeing

Achieve together focus strongly on the emotional wellbeing of people with PMLD, and factors that impact upon emotional wellbeing including loss and change, physical health and communication barriers. Our emphasis is on the person being more empowered and others being able to 'tune' in to non-verbal cues as to what the person is feeling and wanting. People we support enjoy a range of different therapies including music/drama therapy; massage and aromatherapy; pet therapy; reflexology and many more.

### Clinical Input and Staff Development

Support teams have access to Achieve together's highly specialist nurse practitioner, Learning Disability Nurse, Physiotherapist, Healthcare Facilitator and access to sessional Occupational Therapy.

The team provides specialist and bespoke training and competency assessment in a range of areas including; Postural Management, Enteral Feeding, Airway Suction, use of BiPAP, Epilepsy Management, Continence Care, Pressure Area Care and Infection Prevention and Control. Two members of our team have taken train the trainer courses to deliver training to our staff for them to gain accredited PMLD and Postural Care qualifications.

Achieve together facilitates a quarterly PMLD Forum. The forum has a focus on health care needs, postural management, communication, community participation, social inclusion and engaging in meaningful activities. The forum aims to share good practice, develop new initiatives and advocate for people we support.

### Supporting the Needs of Individuals with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities

This is a practical qualification that focuses on the needs of individuals with PMLD. It is offered to Achieve together staff at level 2 and 3, being registered with Ofqual and accredited through OCN (Open College Network).

The award aims to develop a person's understanding of the needs of people with PMLD and equips staff with the skills to effectively support, communicate, respond, engage and develop appropriate strategies to support people with PMLD. This national qualification is currently the only one of its kind and is facilitated by our Clinical Support Team in partnership with Disability Learning.

### Annual supportive therapies Day

Our Supportive Therapies Day offers a range of opportunities for individuals to take part in sensory stories, massage, pet therapy, hydrotherapy, art classes, music therapy and drama sessions.

The aim of the day is to offer a range of supportive therapies and sensory activities to create effective communication between individuals, enhance greater social interaction and provide great benefits on an individual's overall physical health & wellbeing.

Individuals with PMLD often need practical support from support staff to engage in meaningful activities. Assistive technology is used to communicate and assist people and to maintain control over the environment. The day ends with a sensory disco and the infamous 'Pimp my Chair' (inspired by the TV programme 'Pimp my ride').

It's not only a great day out, but is integral to providing people with opportunities they may not have experienced before and overall the day aims to motivate and inspire staff to consider the range of therapy and sensory based activities.