

**Reading of
People with Intellectual Disability living in
an intentional community**

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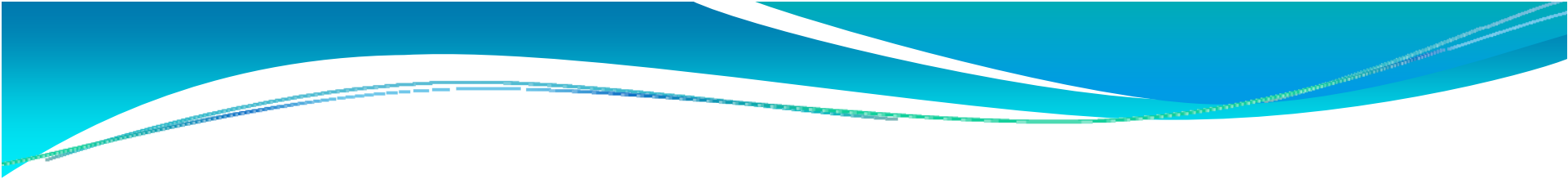
Background and Literature

- Hospitals closure programmes have sought a fulfilling life for people with ID in domestic style housing in urban settings.
- Few have been placed in intentional communities even though the research shows that they have better or similar outcomes for residents as those in dispersed clustered housing Emerson (1999)



Criticism

- Jackson (1999) criticised intentional communities as a return to segregation and a denial of the principles of normalisation.

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- On the other hand Emmerson (1999) when comparing quality of life and costs of different forms of supported housing found that on several indicators intentional communities provided less institutional regimes and a higher quality of life than other supported accommodation (dispersed and clustered housing)



Intentional communities were

- More likely to involve people with planning
- Were more likely to provide a skill training
- Were safer
- Engaged residents in more hours of scheduled activities
- Had a higher rate of health checks and contact with health and social care professionals and
- Provided more staff training
- Costs were also lower than the alternatives



Exploration of the comparative success of intentional communities

- the comparative success of intentional communities may be explained by the pattern of social relationships between residents and co-workers
- This paper reports results from research that explores the experiences of people living in intentional communities and to understand what the idea of community means to them.



Method

- Ethnographic
- Field work involving unstructured interview and researcher observation



Sample

- 15 people selected randomly from a population from 132 people with ID
- The sample was drawn from cohorts who based on length of residency 0-10 up to 41-50
- 10 men and 5 women between the ages of 38 and 78
- All lived with families of co-workers



Interview

- Open ended questions to minimise acquiescence
- Question wording varied to take account of communication styles
- Questionnaire was piloted and amended. Pilot not included in study
- Participants given option of pausing and resuming. Length of interview 90 mins
- The participants were interviewed about their household, employment, leisure, friendships, religion and community identity. They were asked what they liked and did not like as well.



Ethics and Consent

- Research approved by York Local Research Ethics Committee on a voluntary basis
- Consent was got from participants over two meetings
1 to explain and discuss the research and to make sure respondents understood what was being asked of them and ensure that they fully understood 2 to sign consent forms



Botton Village

- Background philosophy and aims are described
 - The central idea of the equal worth of all people expressed as each having a healthy inner personality independent of their physical characteristics/disability
 - Botton was organised as a new form of community living
- “which will accept the individual ,integral personality in such a way that the developmental otherness becomes variety instead of abnormality, that diversity rather than normality becomes the foundation of a healthy social life” (Weihs1988, pg19)



The formal aims of the Village

- To achieve the forgoing by providing a full life for members comprising
 1. A Cultural Life
 2. A community life
 3. An economic life



Households

- How long they lived in house. All have lived in more than one house-average three.
- Respondents reported positively about living in larger housed(congregated settings)
- People liked living in big house, living alongside families and valued the relationships established, the household, having tasks that contribute towards household, having leisure time in their house,



What they didn't like

- Lack of space
- Having too many people in house and
- Being limited by the cold weather in winter



Listened to

- All respondents said they felt listened to and were able to identify how they were listened to and how this impacts on their lives

Employment

- All 15 respondents had been in full time employment (National average 11% DOH 2001). One has retired and two are semi retired
- Most worked in tree or four work areas.
- All were positive about their work, it was an important part of their lives, enabled them to fully participate and contribute to the life of the village.
- All reported that they were listened to in their work



Leisure

- Activities within home, listening to music, reading books, drawing, knitting are some mentioned.
- Outside the home, visiting friends houses, having meals in friends houses, going for walks, playing games with friends, going to coffee bar.



Leisure

- The authors note that an active social life is dependent on a sense of personal safety in interacting with others.
- Emerson (1999) identified that people living in village communities experienced less incidents of victimization and verbal abuse
- Six respondents were involved in activities outside the village.



Friendships

- Two preferred their own company.
- All others described a wide network of friends
- Most enjoyed the company of other people with whom they could share things. Some had long term friendships that gave emotional support.
- Friendships developed through working or living together

Religion

- Religious expression and the celebration of Christian festivals, weddings and christenings are an important part of life in Botton.
- Six people went to church regularly and one goes to Methodist church outside the community. All go to church for major festivals.



A community identity

- In summarising their experience of living in community respondents felt included, important and listened to.
- They liked having a job within the community
- Socialising with friends and knowing a lot of people, living with people who are supportive and caring were good
- Coffee bar popular

“It is my home and always will be” “Its good here I enjoy everything, the family I live with and the work I do.”



Conclusion

- The generalisability of this research is limited-small sample from a single community
- The high levels and sociability provoked the authors to regard the community more positively than they expected.
- Broadly confirm Emerson's (1999) on the quality of life and the degree of satisfaction where with where they live



Conclusion

- The absence of the overt subordination of residents to staff
- Facilitation of friendships with other people with ID
- High levels of meaningful employment
- Sense of community