



My son Ryan is 19 and has profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD). He can stand and walk with assistance, is non-verbal and has very little comprehension. He has a non-disabled twin brother and older sister.

Ryan has been using Watford Mencap's Children's Services since he was 8. He started at the summer play schemes and has gone every year since. At play schemes he can socialise and do activities that are good for him. When he was younger, play schemes were also good for his brother and sister because I could take them to the cinema or they could have friends round when he was at play schemes and it was respite for me.

He also went to After School Club on a Monday night until he was 13. As he went straight from school, this allowed me to do things with my other kids. He had his tea and used the soft play area and sensory room and really enjoyed his time there.

The Watford Mencap's staff are fabulous! Ryan has known some of them from when he was little. They always immediately welcome him and talk to him. They get him walking, taking part and enjoying the soft play area and sensory room. He is stimulated by the staff and his peers. They are great at what they do and it really helps Ryan's well-being.

School holidays have become more difficult as Ryan gets older and needs more stimulation. At home he will just sit on the sofa and play with a toy suitable for a child of 18 months and go to sleep. At play schemes he is awake, seeing what goes on and it makes such a difference.

Sarah, the Children's Services Manager, regularly seeks feedback on the services from parents and children. She actively seeks out what people need and actively seeks out solutions. Parents said they wanted more activities for PMLD children and so Watford Mencap adapted their services. Last year, Ryan went swimming; he has been bowling, went to a Christmas party and recently went on a visit to the Harry Potter studios. This has all given him access to sports and other social activities and he gets stimulation and exercise. The staff are great they are always prepared to listen and adapt and change what they do.

Sarah has been very good in looking at Ryan's needs and succession planning. Ryan is too old for play schemes this year and my worry was there would be nothing for him to do this

summer. Sarah and Ruth at Watford Mencap were great at responding to my need. They told me about Watford Mencap's new Learning and Leisure activities that are taking place this summer for young adults aged 16+. Ryan is now signed up to go to the London Eye, a beach party and Meet the Animals! This is fabulous. Ryan will know the staff, they will provide a one-to-one service, their hourly rates are less than other agencies and I know that they look after him and he gets a great level of care.

Lata, who works for Watford Mencap, runs the Herts Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities Network and I input to the working party. She has sorted out the summer Learning and Leisure activities that Ryan is going to and has been so supportive.

It would be fabulous if Watford Mencap won this award they really deserve it. The staff always go the extra mile, they are really focussed on the individual needs of each child and their parents and they actively seek and respond to feedback.

June Wilkinson

Mother and Carer