**Discussion topics**

*It’s easy to get access to the services I need in my area.*

* There are probably good services but only if you know where they are.
* Information isn’t clearly displayed.
* Services can take time to get to you, you can give up while you’re waiting.
* There are long waiting times to see your doctor.
* Self- referrals save time.
* Housing services aren’t good- there are always big delays and they don’t consider people with disabilities.
* Barrhead council are good. Money advisers are brilliant but there is a long wait, problems often get worse.
* There are issues about how you promote information to gain access to better services.
* There is a lack of money meaning it’s hard to promote services and they aren’t able to help as many people.
* Long waiting lists for prescriptions/GPs/medication.
* There is a lot of support to a point but what happens when those services leave? I’m scared of how to cope.
* Cut backs effects our access.
* Pavements have no wheelchair access in my local area.
* Word of mouth seems to be the best way to get information.
* Local libraries are closing in my area.

*Social isolation is an issue but there are plenty of options for people.*

* Needing help with the first step if you have no confidence means you often don’t go out.
* We don’t feel safe at night.
* Some people are ashamed and face a lot of stigma.
* I am afraid to go out at night.
* There are a lot of groups in Barrhead but they are hard to get to because of the public transport.
* There aren’t many options for socialising group wise- some people will only come to one group and then that’s it- people don’t meet out with those groups.
* Most ‘normal’ socialising is around drink, I can’t drink and find it difficult to go out at night because of it.
* Isolation is hard, particularly in the evening.
* I think quite a lot about how I’m going to fill my day to make it pass.
* Lack of knowledge about groups and activities/groups and activities closing.
* If you have no internet, a laptop or you’re not confident with technology, you miss out on so much- a lot of people don’t have the money for a laptop or phone that gives them access to information.
* I am judged in my local community because of my disability.
* Having someone with you helps going out.
* Yes there is lots of written information out there but a lot of people find written information hard to read yet we keep getting leaflets with loads of writing on them.

*It’s easy to get about on public transport.*

* Transport is appalling in our local area.
* Access to transport is very difficult if you are disabled- you have to phone ahead to get on a train and sometimes there is no space for you on the bus if some one is already using the disabled space.
* Bus timetables don’t necessarily correspond with the time buses turn up.
* The buses stop really early so you can’t go out after 7pm.
* Bus routes themselves are poorly connected and in most cases not connected at all. This causes major problems for accessing local services.
* Bus drivers can be rude if you need the bus to be lowered to get on.
* Bus tickets are expensive.
* Workers keep telling us that the Foundry has loads of information about services and groups in our area, but how are we supposed to get there? I have to take two buses to get to Barrhead.
* You can access a free travel pass once you’re 60
* The state of transport is bad- buses need better maintenance.
* Travelling by public transport can be less stressful than driving, you can relax and read!
* Travel passes make things easier but not everyone has them or knows how to get them.

**Action planning**

*We Can*

* Become more aware on how to challenge stigma.
* Develop training to make more people aware of the issues people face.
* Contact our local Councillors to make them aware of the issues we are facing.
* Use existing supports that are good for us, such as health centres, advocates and friends.
* Use our supports to help us speak up and be assertive.
* Talk first to the people who listen and plan from there.

*We know who can*

* Raising awareness with local MSPs.
* Making links with community councils.
* Help from Citizens Advice Bureau.
* Use good contacts from local authority.
* Contact the bus company.
* Contacts who help from Churches, libraries and local councillors.

*We can’t we don’t know who can*

* When services are stopped.
* Lack of accessible information.

**Key themes**

*Access to information*

The group highlighted that there are pockets in East Ren where there is an abundance of written information, leaflets, info on screens in LA buildings etc but these forms of sharing information is not accessible to a significant amount of people, particularly if you have difficulties with literacy or are struggling to leave the house. It is generally taken for granted that people have access to the internet but this is often not the case- people cannot afford laptops, phones for personal use or do not feel they have the skills needed to navigate their way online. Word of mouth seems to be the preferred way to find out what’s happening- relationships are key to trying new things.

*Public transport*

Public transport across East Renfrewshire is viewed as something that impacts people’s lives in a number of different ways. On the whole people felt the service was extremely poor, meaning they were unable to access health, education, information, new groups or be able to socialise past 7pm at night out-with their immediate area. There is real frustration with the fact that this lack of basic infrastructure plays such a significant role in undermining people’s equal access to services and the things they enjoy doing.

*Stigma*

People feel judged in their local community because of their disability, often facing stigma within their social groups. The group highlighted a prevalent lack of understanding of mental illness at all levels of their community, including in service provision. People said that they were frequently left out of decision making processes affecting them “decisions being made for you” because ‘they’ “forget you are a person.”