

Particip.AGE Project Policy Recommendations

- Clara Beser Ramada (EPR Policy Officer)

Context

- Policy documents on persons with intellectual disabilities and ageing (separately) have been published.
- However, there is a lack of attention to the issue of ‘double vulnerability’.
- While policy and legislation can be tailored towards specific populations, there is a tendency to overlook the diversity within the ageing persons with intellectual disabilities population, therefore limiting the quality of life (QoL) improvements, which could be reached by promoting social inclusion (Turner & Cooper, 2015).

1. Following a holistic approach for decisions concerning ageing persons with intellectual disabilities



Challenge

- Values and preferences of ageing persons with intellectual disabilities are disregarded – lack of personal agency.



Recommendation

- Develop policies designed specifically for ageing persons with intellectual disabilities.
- Dissemination at local and regional level.



Target stakeholders

- EU institutions
- National, regional and local healthcare systems/authorities
- Associations of the disability sector

2. Increase awareness about the presence of ageing persons with intellectual disabilities & facilitate their community participation



Challenge

- Communities unaware of the presence of ageing persons with intellectual disabilities.
- This leads to marginalization, isolation & stigma.



Recommendation

- Increase awareness of staff and families about their role in supporting social inclusion of ageing persons with intellectual disabilities.
- Participatory initiatives such as mutual time-spending, outdoor activities, awareness-raising campaigns, and communication programmes.



Target stakeholders

- Public Authorities
- Healthcare services and institutions
- Competent authorities
- Communities
- EU institutions
- National, regional and local healthcare systems & authorities
- Disability sector associations

3. Facilitating the use of assistive technologies



Challenge

- Ageing persons with intellectual disabilities experience a high rate of medical, functional and psychosocial complications about 20-25 years sooner than persons without disabilities.
- Some ageing persons with intellectual disabilities cannot communicate verbally, and assistive technology is a necessity to express their wishes.



Recommendation

- Advocate and access adequate funding possibilities for the use of assistive technologies for ageing persons with intellectual disabilities.



Target stakeholders

- Healthcare services and institutions
- Competent authorities
- National, regional, and local healthcare systems/ authorities
- Associations of the disability sector

4. Promote up-skilling and re-skilling training programmes for service providers



Challenge

- Staff member's qualifications and skills differ across organizations.
- Lack of appropriate training programmes to address the complexities of ageing in persons with intellectual disabilities.



Recommendation

- Proactive planning, individualized care and teamwork in providing the best possible care in services.
- Collaborative efforts between family, client and healthcare professionals for quality care, led by staff.
- A specific training programme targeting individualized care should be developed.



Target stakeholders

- Staff (service providers)
- Healthcare services and institutions
- Competent authorities
- National, regional and local healthcare systems/authorities
- Disability sector associations

5. More Specific Data Collection



Challenge

- Limited Attention to age and ageing in research.
- Data and research gaps on ageing persons with intellectual disabilities.
- Gaps on data about digitalization & relationship with the community, which is crucial for the wellbeing of every person.



Recommendation

- Collection of specific data on the interests and needs of this specific target group and, consequently, make their transition into community participation smoother and less challenging.



Target stakeholders

- EU institutions
- National, regional and local healthcare systems/ authorities
- Associations of the disability sector

6. Increase of funding in the sector



Challenge

- Understaffing and financial constraints.
- Limited support and resources for inclusion activities.



Recommendation

- Allocation of funding in support of training programmes for ageing persons with intellectual disabilities and the staff working with them.



Target stakeholders

- EU institutions
- National, regional and local healthcare systems/ authorities
- Associations of the disability sector

7. Staff work-life balance



Challenge

- Understaffing has a detrimental impact on the quality of care and services extended to ageing persons with intellectual disabilities.
- Staff members suffer financial constraints on social inclusion activities.
- Not enough support for staff leads to burnouts and no distinction between work and private life.



Recommendation


- Work schedules reflecting better time management.
- More teamwork and multidisciplinary trainings.
- Friendly relationships with service users on support of different activities.



Target stakeholders

- Staff (Service providers)
- Healthcare services and institutions
- Competent authorities
- National, regional and local healthcare systems/authorities
- Associations of the disability sector

8. Increase of competences for service providers in maintaining ageing persons with intellectual disabilities' support

	Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Disparities between countries on the assistance provided to ageing persons with intellectual disabilities, and level of de-institutionalization of services.
	Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Legislation designed to protect the rights of ageing persons with intellectual disabilities with respect to social inclusionService providers play a crucial role in maintaining care and assure decent quality life conditions of ageing persons with intellectual disabilities – cooperation among providers to be increased to provide better integrated support.
	Target stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">EU institutionsNational, regional and local healthcare systems/authoritiesAssociations of the disability sector

Thank you!