

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

### Progress and Challenges

**Q.1 Do the findings of the evaluation broadly reflect your views about services for people with learning disabilities/carer?**

Yes  No

We agree that broadly the findings are representative of the changes. There have been a number of fundamental changes in the circumstances of many people with learning disabilities in terms of where people live, and the type of services they receive. For many people there remains a sizeable gap between the intention for greater citizenship outcomes expressed through policy and the reality of life, choices and services available.

Services such as Local Area Coordination have not been employed nationally in as widespread a manner, or at arms length from Social Work as envisaged.

For many people their experience of the type of service, choice, opportunities for citizenship including employment, and answerability of services remains largely affected by what the local authority provides, and the approach of the individual professionals planning and delivering services.

This has been exacerbated by the reductions in funding with a real danger that through the drive for savings, people will be grouped together in increasing numbers for economies of scale that would repeat the well documented mistakes of the past.

We envisage the Self Directed Support Bill, if implemented effectively will help positively impact on some of these outcomes.

**Q. 2 Can you give examples, either locally or nationally, of what you think has worked well over the last 10 years of *The same as you?***

- There has been an increase in the flexibility and choice of services for many.
- Reduced number of people in long stay hospitals.
- Pockets of real innovation that have enabled answerable, person led services that meet people's expectations and outcomes, these remain the minority nationally.
- Move away from day centres to more individual support options.

- Local Area Coordination
- Opening of The Info Hub in Aberdeen
- Some increase in Self Directed Support
- Some effective employment programmes and awareness raising such as Geeza Life –Geeza Job, Young Scotland’s Got Talent, Project Search and Café Academy in Aberdeen
- Some support for Citizen Leadership
- Greater numbers of children in mainstream education

**Q. 3 Can you give examples of issues in current work and/or policies that still need to be addressed?**

- Need to ensure that simplistic economies of scale solutions are not reverted to as cost saving measures, due to lack of funding.
- Clear expectations are needed in terms of accountability to this and other pieces of legislation such as the Self Directed Support Bill, to ensure that the spirit and intent of these are adhered to in all services and planning processes.
- We need to move away from the current focus on short term grant funding that does not support sustainability and can be wasteful through the focus on what is new and different, rather than what is effective and working well. Resources would be better allocated to longer term development of effective models rather than the boom and bust of reinvention based on funding criteria rather than genuine innovation.
- Ensure that there is real accountability at all levels and this cannot be achieved with real representation of people with learning disabilities in the planning, delivery and evaluation not only of their own service, but also local and national initiatives.
- Greater support for citizenship, in particular a focus on valuing contribution and inclusion / community engagement as people are often still not integrated into their community despite living there.
- There is a danger that due to increasingly high eligibility criteria for access to support and services, proactive work is reducing which is likely to increase the number of breakdowns in independent living, and move to more expensive, intensive services. This makes no sense either financially or ethically and ways must be sought for imaginative proactive solutions that allow just enough support for optimum independence and wellbeing
- Life for those in long stay hospitals has not moved on to the same extent as for people in the community. There needs to be a focus on a greater shared understanding across health and social work of how to successfully support the transition from hospital to community.
- Real care needs to be taken in the context of the impending benefits changes to take proactive steps to protect people with disabilities from unfair cuts while increasing the number and scope of employment options.
- A greater focus on support services as enabling community connecting, creation of time banks, etc. rather than filling the gaps.
- Cuts to pupil support assistants in many places is a short sighted cost saving measure that is likely to see increasing numbers of young people with learning disabilities and autism frustrated and

ultimately excluded from mainstream education. There should be national guidance on this so the level of PSA support that children receive does not become a postcode lottery.

### **Good Practice – Organisations**

**Q. 4 Can you provide examples of what you have done over the last 10 years, within your organisation, to improve services and access to services within your local area?**

- We have developed the range of services we offer to create a greater range of options, including –
  - The operation of a Local Area Co-ordination service
  - Opening of an Info Hub and website that when fully operational will provide community connections and natural supports as well as increased information on services and self directed support
  - Holiday Activity Scheme for 8 to 18 year olds
  - Café Academy an employment training programme
  - Employment and training opportunities through our social enterprise – Café Coast
  - Arts and Soap making activities
- We support a representative campaigning group – Positive People who have got involved in delivering staff selection, including providing training to others, writing of our Company's involvement policy, and are involved in our Self Directed Support Working Group.
- We are working with others to deliver better services, including a Transitions project for secondary school pupils in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire with Autism, in conjunction with the National Autistic Society, and the Stronger Together politics group at The Info Hub in conjunction with the Learning Disability Alliance Scotland.
- We are working more widely with others, instigating the In Control Northern Network to support the development of Self Directed Support through closer links between Providers and Local Authorities, involvement in the Changing Support – Changing Lives programme as part of the In Control delivery, and as part of the ARC led consortium in Aberdeenshire. We are also part of the Moray Self Directed Support Planning and Implementation Group.
- We have signed up to the National Involvement Charter and are working on ways to improve our commitment to involvement at all levels.

## **Good Practice - Individuals**

**Q.5 What have you done, as an individual, to make positive changes within your local area?**

- Actively supporting the involvement of individuals to contribute to our organisations planning and delivery of services
- Diversifying the services offered and focussing on person centred value led development
- Campaigned for increased rights and involvement

## **Future Priorities - Healthcare**

**Q.6 What still needs to be done to ensure that people with learning disabilities have access to better and more appropriate healthcare?**

- More work to build on the understanding of learning disability within mainstream health services.
- Building on initiatives such as the Fairer Scotland Fund to reduce Health inequalities, and Health funding for social care support that contributes to positive health outcomes.
- NHS 24 can take too long and require too much repetition of information, waiting times can be intolerable for some people, so alternatives to having people coming in and waiting for a slot should be sought.
- Simplify systems for complaints / clarification – the Scottish Health Council does good work explaining the current system, but it is cumbersome and could be streamlined in terms of the number of bodies that could be involved.

## **Future Priorities - Education**

### **Q.7 What still needs to be done to ensure that people with learning disabilities have access to better educational opportunities?**

- Increased support for mainstream opportunities through resourcing of pupil supports and the use of Circles of Support to create greater understanding and natural supports.
- Improved training for mainstream school and college staff in learning disabilities and Autism followed by real action plans to ensure the knowledge is acted upon.
- Ensure people do not simply get trapped in a holding pattern of repeating college courses rather than moving forward.

## **Future Priorities – Independent Living**

### **Q.8 What still needs to be done to ensure that people with learning disabilities are able to live independently?**

- Avoid overly simplistic messages or a focus on one type of support as a solution for all.
- Ensure all planning is person centred rather than service or budget centred.
- Increased support for community engagement, natural supports, time banking and other sustainable low cost solutions that support the individuals contribution and connection to their local community.
- Consistent and effective risk enablement
- Raising the expectations of people with learning disabilities to demand better services and provide peer support and evaluation.

## **Future Priorities – Employment**

**Q.9 What still needs to be done to ensure that people with learning disabilities have access to better employment opportunities?**

- A focus on individual's skills and gifts rather than a focus on deficits and disability right through education and planning for work.
- Increased support to cope in mainstream settings.
- Increased expectations of what people can achieve.
- Greater use of community benefit clauses to create employment opportunities through Local authority contracts.
- Real effort to support paid employment and people's transitions from benefits to employment

## **Future Priorities**

**Q.10 What other future priorities do we need to focus on?  
(Please list these in order of importance with the most important first)**

- Ensure the consistent application of the principles of policies like SAY, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Social Work Review, and the Self Directed Support Bill across the country.
- Support empowerment at every level of society.
- Make sure that the cultural shift to equality and citizenship is followed through, and we are not left with a different way of organising what we already do