

Welcome to EQual Citizens

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Can Anne deliver the goods?

Seán Kelly interviews National Director Anne Williams

Anne Williams has a reputation for making things happen – so the sub-title of the latest Valuing People document 'Making it happen for everyone' is appropriate. Many people feel they were left out of the reforms promised in earlier versions. What does she hope will be achieved by this 'three-year strategy'?



Here are some of the key questions Seán put to her.

Some local authorities think personalisation will save them money. Will it?

“The evidence so far is that personalisation delivers better outcomes and we should start with that. It is not a cost-cutting exercise”.

A big criticism of Valuing People is that some groups – for example, people with more complex needs – have been neglected. How are you going to tackle that?

“I really want to see those with more complex needs included in this process. They are often placed miles away from their family homes and have the least person-centred care. We need to look at different ways of getting them more engaged”.

How can we make progress with personalisation when local authorities continue to renew large block contracts?

“This is a big challenge for local authorities. They have to ensure there is enough provision so that people can make real choices. There is a lot to be gained from providers and commissioners working together”.

Read the full interview in the Summer edition.



“...something had kicked in, maybe it’s the shock reaction.. but suddenly I was feeling.. okay, alright, it’s Downs’ Syndrome. So what? I remember thinking Down’s Syndrome is not really a disability... you think of all the worst things that could happen in life. I just felt that was my baby and there was no way I was going to part with him”

Paulo Nono says why she decided to go ahead with her pregnancy knowing she was expecting a baby with Down’s Syndrome.

(Left: Paulo with son Alex, picture by Seán Kelly)

Read her story in the Summer issue.

Better planning needed for people with complex needs

Councils and primary care trusts (PCTs) need to plan better for people with learning difficulties and complex needs to ensure care is accessible, personalised and allows them to lead full and independent lives.

How councils and PCTs commission services has been jointly examined by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), the Healthcare Commission and the Mental Health Act Commission (MHAC). The three organisations are shortly to merge into the Care Quality Commission. In their report* the watchdogs said that while improvements have been made, the pace of change was ‘too slow’ and ‘uneven’.

The review focused on nine local authority areas in England representative of areas across the country. The watchdogs believe the findings are relevant to all organisations that commission or provide care for people with learning difficulties and complex needs.

Other findings were that:

- Joint strategic needs assessments of local populations – which councils and PCTs have been under a duty to conduct since April 2008 – did not contain sufficient information about people with learning difficulties and complex needs.**
- Councils and trusts had underdeveloped strategies for commissioning services for this group, while only a minority of service users had a person-centred plan, and in many of these cases the plans were poor.**
- Few people with learning difficulties and complex needs had a direct payment or personal budget despite many users and carers wanting them, while carers rarely received assessments and too few were involved in service planning.**

The report echoed previous findings of the poor experience of healthcare of people with learning difficulties and complex needs, finding too few people had annual health checks or health action plans, and many had poor experiences of acute hospitals.

(See Focus on Health in Volume 22, No. 2 of Community Living).

www.healthcarecommission.org.uk/guidanceforhealthcarestaff/nhsstaff/annualhealthcheck/reviewsandstudiesofservices/2008/09/servicesforpeoplewithlearningdifficulties-commissioning.cfm



In the Spring issue:

Coming alive as Olivia

Olivia Lightfeet, a man with learning difficulties, wants to become a woman

Focus on personalisation

This is nothing less than a real shift of power towards disabled people

Glimmers of good news alongside unimaginative services

The provider's conundrum: moving from a one-size-fits-all to a bespoke service for individuals

PLUS

Rape case – these sentences are too lenient, says Respond

The Credit Crunch – Will there be any money left for us?

Harness new technology to give people more independence

News from Heavy Load

**Support the Stay Up Late campaign - fighting for the right to party
Help Heavy Load become the first band of people with learning difficulties to get into
the Top 40! Download the Stay Up Late single from Ditto Music at
www.dittomusic.dloadshop.com/artists.asp?martist=461&gid=**

**Mencap has joined the campaign. There is a link from Be Mencap
(<http://www.mencap.org.uk/page.asp?id=9478>) where people can put in their details
and email the appropriate Director of Social Services to express support for Stay Up
Late.**

'Stay up Late Cymru' is to be launched on 20/21 June.

Here's a simple idea. Why not post up the names of staff happy to 'stay out late'?

There's still time to get your MP to sign up to the LDC's Early Day Motion

The Learning Disability Coalition reports that 164 MPs have signed their Early Day Motion about cuts to services and the under-funding of social care.

If you haven't already contacted your MP, you can still do so using their online form:

<http://e-activist.com/ea-campaign/clientcampaign.do?ea.client.id=78&ea.campaign.id=2185>



Hi, I'm Fiona – can you help me to get In Control?

I live in Hertfordshire and I'm looking for people who are able to support me in my daily life and help me become more independent. If you are looking for interesting paid work as one of my PAs and are keen to be involved at the cutting edge of social care, I'd love to hear from you.

You must be: female, able to work hours that suit me and committed to helping people with learning difficulties be a full part of the community. Experience is not as important as attitude and energy, although I will need at least one person who is used to support planning to help me co-ordinate everything. I am looking for people to start straightaway.

Interested? Get in touch with Andrew Young at Choiceshapers

Tel: 01923 802255 e-mail: choiceshapers@aol.com or via www.choiceshapers.org.uk

Because of the personal nature of some of the tasks that I will want my assistants to help me with, it is a genuine occupational requirement that they will be female. This advert is exempt under section 7 of the Sexual Discrimination Act 1975.

Extra funding for Access to Work

An additional £8 million to help disabled people remain in work will be made available this year through the Access to Work programme, Minister for Disabled People Jonathan Shaw announced at the Beginnings Conference on 17 March.

This extra funding will ensure disabled people who are in employment or have a firm job offer do not miss out as a result of the economic climate. In the longer term the Government is committed to doubling the budget from £69m to £138m by 2013/14.

You need a label, they said

**You need a label, they said
I thought, that's got to be good
They're sending me somewhere nice
Where there's sun, sea and good food**

**We've had a meeting, they said
But we still haven't quite decided
On the label that suits you best
Our members were strictly divided**

**You've got it wrong, they said
When I asked where I was to be sent
This label is just to ensure
You get your entitlement**

**We've discussed this for hours, they said
And we're sure you'll be glad to hear
We've consulted the great and the good
To make sure your label is clear**

**They said, now you will be a PMLD
Well, I thought that was strange**

So I asked around and guess what I found?

No one knew what on earth that could be.

Elected council members sceptical about personalisation

Despite the emphasis by government that personalisation should become ‘the standard operating system’ not everyone is convinced. Researchers Melanie Henwood and Robert Hudson, writing in the current issue of *Community Living*, found that while outright opposition was rare among professionals and council officers, consistently negative or sceptical positions were taken by elected members.

See Glimmers of good news alongside unimaginative services, Community Living, Volume 22, No. 3

NDT widens its remit

A new organisation reflecting the trend towards cross-client policies has been created by amalgamating the National Development Team and the Older People's Programme

The National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) will come into existence in April 2009 and will be lead by the current Chief Executive of the NDT Rob Greig.

As a development, research & evaluation consultancy, the NDTi will cover all aspects of public service reform that aim to improve the life chances and inclusion of older and disabled people.

Welcoming the new organisation, Rob said: "Government policy is increasingly being made on a cross-client group basis. Key policies such as Putting People First, social inclusion, consumer involvement, the Independent Living Strategy and disability and human rights legislation are no longer being developed on a single 'client group' basis. Whilst retaining 'client group' expertise, it makes sense for a development agency concerned with policy influence and delivery support to be able to take an holistic approach when supporting Government, local authorities, the NHS, providers and other organisations in developing policy, commissioning and delivery strategies. A desire to achieve this is behind the creation of the NDTi".



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Support and empowerment packages for staff on the front line of community organisations who have to adapt to the challenges and opportunities of economic uncertainty

Consultancy packages are individually tailored to give 'value for money' avoiding the 'one solution suits all approach'. My emphasis is always on achieving practical and measurable outcomes.

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Building Bridges Training

Delivering training about learning disabilities by people with learning disabilities

Building Bridges Training is an experienced, independent training group of people with learning disabilities based in Sandwell. With their facilitator Liz Tilly they provide training and consultation for both staff and people with learning disabilities on a wide range of topics.

Contact them on 0121 559 9197 or 07766 245053 mail@building-bridges-training.org

Web site (from end March 2009) www.building-bridges-training.org

Subscriptions

Why you should subscribe to



Support our aims to achieve for people with learning difficulties everything we would want for ourselves.

Our editorial policy:

- To promote equality of citizenship
- To promote the inclusion of people with learning difficulties in every aspect of society
- To encourage people to express themselves in the magazine
- To keep readers up to date with essential information using accessible language
- To encourage people to work together to produce their own solutions
- To challenge laws, regulations and traditional ideas which hamper people from achieving their aspirations
- To publicise examples of radical ideas being put into practice.

Community Living is owned by a small charity – the Elfrida Society – and is sponsored by other small charities – Three Cs, Generate, KeyRing, Integrate and

Southdown Housing Association. *All income we receive is invested in the magazine.*

Click below for options to subscribe

<http://www.communityliving.co.uk/>

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