

## 12.4 Parents with a Learning Disability

### 12.4.1 Where Are We Now?

12.4.1.1 *Valuing People* highlighted the need for services to support parents with a learning disability as did the Treasury and Department for Children, Schools and Families' Children and Young People Review<sup>20</sup> and the Social Exclusion Task Force.<sup>21</sup> This included a commitment that parents with learning disabilities and their children would benefit from all initiatives aimed at supporting parents and children.

12.4.1.2 The Department of Health and DfES (now the DCFS) have jointly issued good practice guidance on working with parents with learning disabilities. The Social Care Institute for Excellence have carried out a knowledge review and developed a resource guide for joint working across children's and adults' services to support disabled parents.

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<sup>20</sup> 'Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families,' 2007, HMT/DCSF:  
[http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/C/2/cyp\\_disabledchildren180507.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/C/2/cyp_disabledchildren180507.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social\\_exclusion\\_task\\_force.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force.aspx)

12.4.1.3 There is clear evidence that there are increasing numbers of parents with a learning disability in contact with services. Most are experiencing a range of difficulties, including poverty and social isolation. There is some evidence that such parents are at a disproportionate risk of losing their children into care. Parents and their children often continue to fall between children's and adults' specialist services, whilst mainstream services sometimes struggle to meet their needs. Research evidence illustrates a need for independent advocacy.

#### 12.4.2 The Next Steps

12.4.2.1 The joint good practice guidance has started to be disseminated within adult learning disability services and this now needs to happen within children's social care and mainstream health services.

12.4.2.2 The government has a significant programme of work aimed at supporting parents generally, and a range of programmes aimed at groups of parents experiencing particular difficulties. Parents with learning disabilities must have access to the same level of information and advice that is intended for all parents. Action will be taken to ensure that some of the more targeted interventions are properly inclusive of parents with learning disabilities.

12.4.2.3 The Department for Children, Schools and Families is supporting local authorities to improve the commissioning of parenting support, ensuring provision for the full range of local need with accessible support for parents through extended school and Sure Start children's centres. This will include an action research project – the Parenting Implementation Project – with families with parents with a disability, including those with a learning disability as part of the target group.

#### 12.4.3 Action Summary

##### 12.4.3.1 Nationally

- the Department of Health and Department for Children, Families and Schools will ensure that information they publish aimed at parents is available in accessible formats
- the Care Services Improvement Partnership will work with relevant government departments and the Working Together Network to disseminate the existing good practice guidance, alongside the SCIE resource guide

##### 12.4.3.2 Locally

- adult and children's services, supported by learning disability partnerships, should work together to use and implement the content of the good practice guidance
- inter-agency parenting support initiatives should be inclusive of parents with a learning disability

#### 12.4.4 The Vision For Three Years From Now

This will be different.....	We will know this because .....
<p>More parents and their children will be receiving appropriate support, resulting in a smaller percentage of children of parents with a learning disability being subject to care orders</p>	<p>Parents will say that they are getting all the support and information that they need</p>
<p>Children's and adults' health, education and social care services will be working together to provide personalised support to parents with learning disabilities and their children</p>	<p>Local services will report better joined up working, with parents feeling more supported</p>