

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

### Progress and Challenges

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

Yes  No

Yes, however, our concern is that, whilst significant progress has been made over the past 10 years, there is a real danger of things now going back the way as budgets are decreasing. We must work to ensure that this doesn't happen. People are certainly much more visible in community settings now but few people have the values social roles they deserve. We must work to recognise what has been achieved and to ensure that progress continues. Unemployment rates for people with learning difficulties and individuals on the autistic spectrum remain significantly high and much work at all levels is required to address this.

**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?***

- Fewer people in long-stay hospitals
- Local area coordination
- Day centre closure
- Closure of other services due to cuts
- Greater access to mainstream education
- Increase in small privately run group activities
- Increase in the number of people taking up direct payments

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

- Monitor and ensure that the significant progress made around people leaving long-stay hospitals to independent living opportunities does not start to reverse in these times of austerity
- The evaluation recognises that, for many, group living can be challenging. No-one should be forced to live in a group living setting
- For others, group living can be fun and e.g. sheltered housing complexes, core and cluster etc. can give people opportunities for independence whilst at the same time provide safety, prevent isolation and loneliness (big factors which can affect people living in their own accommodation)
- Individuals must receive information about the range of living options available to them and have complete choice and control over deciding on their housing option
- Whilst many young people are now in mainstream education there is a general feeling that educators do not have the skills to adequately support people with learning difficulties and individuals on the autistic spectrum. This is particularly evident for pupils who could be labelled as having behaviour that challenges. More training for educators is required so that people can enjoy a meaningful, inclusive education
- Transition remains a challenging and difficult time for young people and their families. Better joined up approaches to planning and supporting the person's transition are required. A named person responsible for helping the young person to go through their transition has for many offered a much more effective and seamless transition process for individuals and their families. The transition process should start 2 years prior to people leaving school, there is evidence that planning for adult services can often start a few months before the leaving date.
- Whilst many people with learning difficulties and individuals on the autistic spectrum enjoy a college education, the evaluation didn't state whether the courses attended were mainstream or specialist. Anecdotally, we have found that there is little or no access to mainstream college courses for people with learning difficulties and individuals on the autistic spectrum . If we are serious about increasing access to employment, this must be addressed. When people do have access to mainstream courses, it is usually after a fight with the education establishment. This needs to change and access to mainstream courses with support should be the norm.
- Disappointingly, people's access to employment hasn't changed significantly since the Same As You? strategy was developed. The National Framework for Supported Employment was a welcome document. We would like to see more local authorities adopting this and a greater emphasis on helping people to gain meaningful paid employment as opposed to long term training, work experience or voluntary work
- Better programmes of education, support and capacity building for employers is required to enable them to recruit and retain people with learning difficulties and individuals on the autistic spectrum as part of their workforce

- Day opportunities. VIAS welcomes a move towards more personalised supports but is concerned that a significant number of people have lost their day centre places and this hasn't been replaced by any other resources or supports.
- VIAS was also concerned that only some of support workers saw their roles as being that of friendship facilitators for people. All should see this as part of their role and significant values based training is required to change the attitudes of support workers who do not see this as part of their role. Support staff need to be much greater involved in developing opportunities to develop (and maintain) friendships, and to encourage and support their clients to keep regular contact with family members.
- Shift patterns and support worker availability should not dictate whether or not someone stays out late. This could also form part of the above mentioned training.
- It would be useful if the Welfare Reform committee could consider granting access to travel passes for people with learning difficulties who currently don't qualify under the current criteria
- VIAS as with Mental Welfare Commission is concerned about indefinite guardianship orders
- VIAS is also concerned about some Local Authorities not getting involved when someone is being exploited/neglected/abused by their guardians.
- Local Authorities and people who have knowledge/experience of Self Directed Support should be involved in promoting and encouraging people to take up the opportunity to access services through SDS. People are very cautious about this opportunity and need to hear from people 'in the know' how it can work for individual people i.e. power and control, great opportunity, person centred, ambition and outcomes.
- VIAS is concerned that disability hate crime is on the increase. Work is required with all key stakeholders including the person, families, the police, the courts etc to ensure that hate crime is reported addressed and eradicated
- VIAS agrees that people with learning difficulties and individuals on the autistic spectrum should be better supported within the criminal justice system whether they are the perpetrators or victims of crime. Specifically, more work is required in training lawyers on disability awareness to ensure that people have good representation if they find themselves in this situation
- There are no specific learning disability services currently for people who are in prison. This needs to be addressed so that people can experience maximum rehabilitation as part of this process
- VIAS is concerned that there are inadequate family centred supports for people with learning difficulties and individuals on the autistic spectrum who become parents. This needs to be addressed
- The report shows that many individuals and families still feel that they have to fight for services. A concerted effort must be made at all levels to reduce the pressure on individuals and their families – e.g. by having contact with professionals or other people with good knowledge and experience of how to go about getting individualised services.

- We would like to see more specific questions in eSAY around employment as we would like to know specifically how many people are in paid employment rather than employment or training for employment
- We are concerned that some local authorities now only support people whose need is considered critical or substantial. This approach is not conducive to effective preventative services and could prove detrimental to the lives of people with learning difficulties and their families. This will cost more in the long term too
- More could be done to encourage people with learning difficulties to use self-directed support

### **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?**

- Delivered job coach training throughout Scotland  
In partnership with SCLD
  - Developed Young Scotland's Got Talent to inspire and motivate young people to work
  - Piloted Geeza Life Geeza Job - training in supported employment for personal assistants
  - Wrote the SVQ module Systematic Instruction - Facilitation for everyday living  
In partnership with others
  - Developed the Campaign for a Fair Society manifesto and Scottish campaign
  - Delivering training for personal assistants and support workers in Aberdeen/shire/ Highlands and Glasgow
  - Validated an SQA qualification in Supported Employment
  - Developed a range of accessible career planning tools that will be available on the Skills Development Scotland World of Work website
- VIAS has also
- Developed a range of self-help tools for people looking for or in work
  - Developed a range of easy read publications and policies
  - Supported a local group who wish to develop better employment supports for young people with learning difficulties and individuals on the autistic spectrum in their area
  - Employed staff with a wide knowledge and experience in the field of learning disability
  - Recruited and involved professionals with knowledge and experience
  - Developed, promoted and maintained a website that is easy to read and provides lots of information to people who have learning disabilities, family members and professionals

### **Good Practice - Individuals**

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

- Campaigned against the closure of a long established supported employment service
- Supported a young person with high support needs and their family going through transition
- Supported someone to gain meaningful paid employment in their chosen field
- Advised two families whose child was experiencing difficulty within the education field
- Produced an easy read evaluation document for a local event

### **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?**

- Better training for healthcare professional on disability awareness
- More accessible information on all aspects of healthcare
- Hospitalisation –Unless people who have learning difficulties or autism have someone to speak up for and fight for their rights, they can be left to suffer needlessly, have poor hospital care and treatment because of untrained staff, poor staffing levels – e.g. no one bothering to encourage and support with feeding, not knowing how best to communicate with people etc.
- Self- directed support for health care should also be available for those with long term conditions particularly those who need nursing care in a community setting

### **Future Priorities - Education**

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

- Better training for educators in mainstream settings
- Adequate resourcing for classroom assistants
- More flexible arrangements for those labelled as having behaviour that challenges in mainstream settings
- Better access to mainstream courses with adequate supports in colleges
- A greater emphasis should be placed on career planning all young people with learning difficulties particularly for pupils in specialist education

### **Future Priorities – Independent Living**

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

- Better marketing of self-directed support
- Reduce and monitor the number of people living in group living situations
- Better quality of support from support workers/ personal assistants to ensure that they promote maximum independence for people they support
- Prevention of loneliness and isolation
- Better funding to support people moving into their own houses i.e. to purchase all housing requirements.
- Promotion of support networks
- More emphasis should be placed on preventative services. Local authorities who only offer services to people categorised as critical or substantial should reconsider this policy

## **Future Priorities – Employment**

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

- Greater investment in training all stakeholders in how to help someone to find and keep a job including the person, families, supported employment staff and personal assistants/ support workers and classroom assistants
- More emphasis on paid employment as opposed to voluntary work/ work experience and training for work
- Work with employers at a strategic level to encourage and show them how to employ people with learning difficulties and individuals on the autistic spectrum
- Ensure that supported employment agencies are meeting the National Occupational Standards
- Early intervention to ensure that people can access paid employment at the earliest opportunity
- Work to ensure that all relevant personnel appreciate the benefits of full time work e.g. social workers, teachers, families etc.
- Better training for and flexibility within mainstream employability services to ensure that they can provide adequate support for people with learning difficulties and individuals on the autistic spectrum
- More investment in services that can deliver a holistic 5 step approach to employment support as described in the National Framework for Supported 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)**

- Capacity building and training within the criminal justice system
- Mitigating the circumstances of the Welfare Reform Bill
- Tackling disability hate crime

**Thank you for taking the time to read the consultation document and taking the time to respond to the question. Your continued input and support is vital in ensuring that we continue to close the inequality gap that people with a learning disability face daily.**

**All completed questionnaires should be returned to Sarah Grant either by e-mail or at the address below. The closing date for responses is 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012.**

Sarah Grant  
The Scottish Government  
Learning Disability Strategy  
Adult Care and Support Branch  
Room 2ER  
St Andrews House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG  
Tel: 0131 2444749  
[Sarah.Grant@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Sarah.Grant@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)