

Valuing People Now – Introduction & Executive Summary

1 Introduction

1.1 In 2001, the Government published *Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century*. It was the first major government policy statement about learning disabilities for thirty years. Importantly, *Valuing People* was a cross-government policy – with a foreword by the Prime Minister. It was not just about health and social care, but also covered jobs, education, housing and other areas of government policy. The vision was based on four main principles of:

- legal and civil rights;
- independence;
- choice; and
- inclusion.

1.2 *Valuing People* was widely welcomed by people with learning disabilities, their families and people working in the learning disability field. Many said it was a groundbreaking policy because it stressed how people with learning disabilities are, above all else, people and citizens. It said that the role of public services is to help people, no matter how complex their disabilities, to live full and equal lives in their local communities.

1.3 Since 2001, other Government policies have said similar things and have helped to take forward the *Valuing People* vision. For example:

- *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People* – with its focus on independent living. (Defined as people having choice and control over the support they need to live their lives they want.);
- *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say* – which confirmed the Government's commitment to individual budget pilots – giving people real control over their lives and services;
- by amending the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) in 2004 and 2005, rights for disabled people have been substantially improved and extended - for example in relation to employment.

1.4 In addition, the Human Rights Act (1998) has influenced the policies and principles of *Valuing People*.

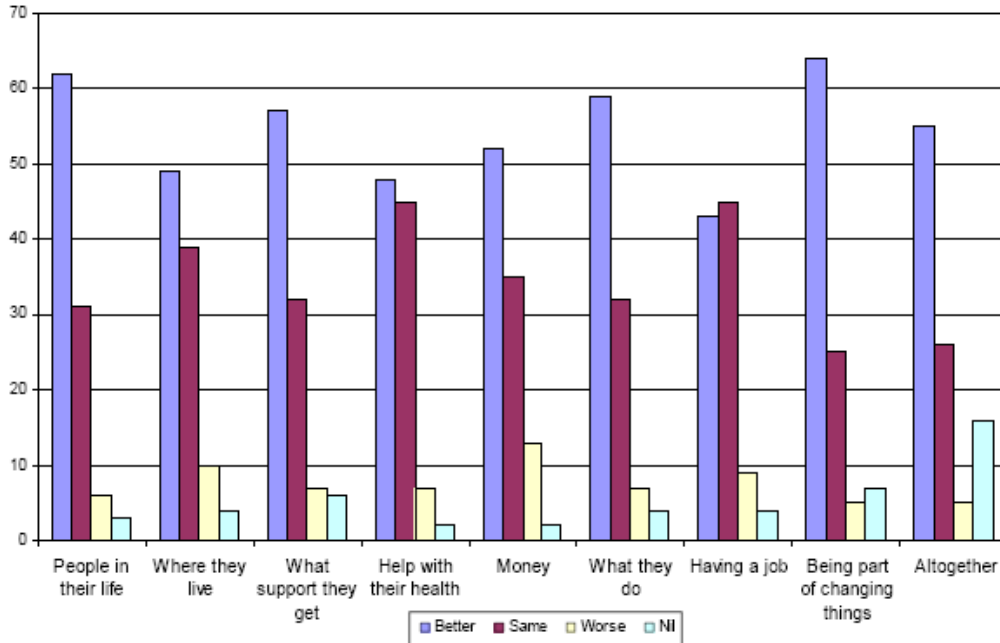
1.5 Six years on, some people's lives have changed for the better, but for others little has changed. In part this is because changing the lives of people with learning disabilities involves changing the attitudes of all of society towards disabled people – and that takes time. In part it is because, despite good progress in many areas, not everyone has taken forward the *Valuing People* vision as quickly and as positively as we had hoped.

1.6 In 2005, around three thousand people contributed to the National Director's review of *Valuing People - The Story So Far*. This described good progress in some areas:

- people are being listened to more – both about their individual lives and in service planning;
- Person centred planning done properly makes a difference to people's lives
- The Supporting People programme has helped many people to live independently
- Direct payments are helping to change people's lives
Organisations are working together better at a local level

1.7 Overall people said their lives were improving. People were asked whether their lives, or those of people they knew, were getting better in different ways. Figure 1 shows that people were generally very positive about how things have improved since *Valuing People*. However in some areas (eg paid work and access to good quality healthcare) progress has been disappointing. There is evidence that progress for some people – such as those with high support needs and from minority ethnic communities – has been less than for others.

Fig. 1 'Story So Far' Consultation



1.8A short summary of progress with *Valuing People* is:

- Good progress in many areas but disappointing change in others
- Getting some mainstream services to be properly inclusive of people with learning disabilities has been difficult
- Too many people and organisations have failed to deliver on the policy promises
- Where change has happened, some people now feel it is getting difficult to move on to the next stage of change

- 1.9 Government has therefore decided that it is time to 'refresh' the *Valuing People* policy. This document - *Valuing People Now: From Progress to Transformation* - is a draft of how government intends doing that from 2008 to 2011. It responds to what people have told us over the last six years about what is working and what is proving difficult to change.
- 1.10 *Valuing People Now* should be considered alongside other government policies that affect the lives of people with learning disabilities. In particular, the independent living strategy, which is shortly to be published from the Office of Disability Issues.
- 1.11 *Valuing People Now* does not repeat all the evidence and arguments behind why the policy says what it does. These can be found in places such as *The Story So Far, Our Health Our Care, Our Say, Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People* and *Valuing People* itself.¹ *Valuing People Now* is concerned with describing the action that is required in order to make good on existing policy commitments.
- 1.12 We would welcome your comments on what *Valuing People Now* says by 11 March 2008. Details of how to comment are contained on page 74. A final document will then be produced by summer 2008.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 *Valuing People* aimed to achieve equality of citizenship for people with learning disabilities. Its focus on promoting advocacy, person centred planning and partnership working to achieve change has led to improved lives for many people with learning disabilities. With only one long stay hospital still to close, thousands of people living in their own homes with help from Supporting People and over 5,000 people using direct payments, some people's lives have changed dramatically. However, for many people little has changed and delivery has been patchy across the country.
- 2.1.2 In response to this, *Valuing People Now* sets out the next steps for the *Valuing People* policy and its delivery. It describes the direction of travel and delivery priorities for the next three years. The aim is to support people with learning disabilities to live an ordinary life in the community alongside their fellow citizens as described by human rights legislation and the Disability Discrimination Act.

¹ 'The Story So Far.... *Valuing People A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century*,' 2005, Valuing People Support Team:
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4107054

'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say' White Paper,' 2006, Department of Health
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4127453

'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People,' 2005, Cabinet Office:
<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/upload/assets/www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/disability.pdf>

To help achieve this, *Valuing People Now* sets out policies and actions aimed at making sure that people get real choice and control over the services and support they need and that mainstream public services become more inclusive of people with learning disabilities.

- 2.1.3 *Valuing People Now* does not cover children with a learning disability because other policies (including *Aiming High For Disabled Children*) are already taking new action forward for children.
- 2.1.4 Perhaps the biggest challenge is making sure that the *Valuing People* policy is delivered across all of England. To help do this, *Valuing People Now* identifies five big priorities that government wishes local people (and government itself) to concentrate on. These priorities are what people themselves and their families tell us will have the greatest impact on their lives.
- 2.1.5 The main priorities for 2008 to 2011 are:
- **Personalisation** – so that people having real choice and control over their lives and services;
 - **What people do during the day** (and evenings and weekends) - helping people to be properly included in their communities, with a particular focus on paid work;
 - **Better health** - ensuring that the NHS provides full and equal access to good quality healthcare;
 - **Access to housing** - housing that people want and need with a particular emphasis on home ownership and tenancies;
 - **Making sure that change happens** and the policy is delivered - including making Partnership Boards more effective.
- 2.1.6 Sections 2.2 and 2.3 below summarise the main actions described in *Valuing People Now*. Knowing that we are achieving these changes is essential. Each section from Section 5 onwards outlines how we will know whether people's lives are changing for the better. Central to this will be:
- improving the ways in which data is collected and reported, both locally and nationally;
 - listening to the voices of families and carers;
 - giving a more central role to learning disability partnership boards as the voice of local stakeholders;
 - checking that lives are improving for some of the most excluded people, for example people with complex disabilities and those from minority ethnic communities.

2.2 Big Priorities

Personalisation

- 2.2.1 Too many people are still receiving traditional services rather than being supported to live the life they want. People having the choice and control over their own lives and services is the starting point for *Valuing People Now*. Action will include:

- government continuing with plans for individual budgets and giving more people control over their lives and services;
- a renewed focus on person centred planning;
- work continuing to help more people have a direct payment.

What People Do During The Day

2.2.2 Joined up working between adult social services, the employment and education sectors should be at the centre of people getting better lives. To address the problem of people going to traditional day centres rather than getting a job and education and a life, action will include:

- moving away from the concept of day services modernisation and instead having the policy objective of supporting people to live the lives that they want as equal citizens in their communities - in other words social inclusion;
- using outcomes from person centred plans to design new opportunities and supports for people, with paid work at the centre of this;
- a cross government Getting a Life programme to bring together funding and assessment systems for young people going through transition, with the aim of people getting a job, an education and a social life in the way they want;
- a review of government disability employment services with the aim of increasing the number of people with learning disabilities in paid work;
- a five-year 'Progression Through Partnership' programme to help make further education better meet the needs of learners with learning disabilities;
- government prioritisation of employment through the socially excluded adults PSA.

Better health

2.2.3 Several recent reports have raised concerns of how people with learning disabilities access healthcare. Actions to address this will include:

- initiatives to ensure the NHS meets its legal obligations in relation to human rights and disability discrimination;
- a new primary care service framework to support PCTs in commissioning comprehensive health checks and better primary care access for people with learning disabilities;
- issuing new good practice guidance on health action planning;
- local action by PCTs and NHS trusts to ensure that acute healthcare is properly meeting the needs of people with learning disabilities;
- the Department of Health responding to the independent inquiry into the healthcare of people with learning disabilities, chaired by Sir Jonathan Michael, when it reports to the Secretary of State later this year;
- good practice guidance on specialist learning disability health services and local action plans to improve bed-based learning disability services following the Healthcare Commissions audit of NHS and private sector services;
- clear statements in the forthcoming NHS operating framework about delivery in relation to learning disability.

Improving people's housing situation

- 2.2.4 People with learning disabilities should have more choice and control over where and how they live. Action to help this happen will include:
- a joint Department for Communities and Local Government and Department of Health programme to promote the inclusion of people with learning disabilities in mainstream housing initiatives;
 - an increased focus on access to home ownership and housing with assured tenancies;
 - funding to support the closure of NHS campuses;
 - government employment of housing through the socially excluded adults PSA;
 - support providers focusing on the social inclusion agenda described in *Valuing People Now*

2.3 The Wider Agenda

Advocacy and rights

- 2.3.1 The *Valuing People* commitment of 'Nothing About Us Without Us', remains at the heart of *Valuing People Now*. Action to ensure that people's voices properly heard and their rights are respected includes:
- a new learning disability advocacy development programme - including leadership development;
 - the development of user led organisations in each locality, being fully inclusive of people with learning disabilities, as recommended in *Improving the Life Chances for Disabled People*;
 - a full government response to Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights inquiry into the rights of adults with learning disabilities when its report is published.

Partnership with families

- 2.3.2 Family carers are essential long-term partners in achieving positive change for people with learning disabilities. Action to help make this happen will include:
- a Standing Commission on carers to ensure the voice of carers is heard by government;
 - updating and extending the Prime Minister's strategy of carers;
 - more practical support to carers; including the creation of an expert carers programme, a national information service/helpline for carers, and support for short term home-based care;
 - support for developing family leadership as part of the *Valuing People* delivery programme;

Including everyone

- 2.3.3 There is concern that changes so far have excluded some groups of people. *Valuing People* will only be a success once it is working for everyone. Action to help this happen includes:
- local planning to deliver *Valuing People Now* starting with people with the most complex support needs, with the principle of developing additional services and supports, rather than separate ones;

- full compliance with race relations legislation leading to proper information that helps develop culturally appropriate services for all people with learning disabilities;
- use of the government's advice note on people with autism to ensure people do not fall between different local services;
- a programme of work to improve the skills of the criminal justice system in working with people with learning disabilities.

People as Local Citizens

2.3.4 People want to be full members in their local community and so action outside traditional learning disability services is important. This will include:

- local and national action to stop hate crime against people with learning disabilities. This will include good practice guidance from the Home Office and the Department of Health;
- the Department for Transport working with the *Valuing People* delivery programme to ensure transport initiatives are inclusive of people with learning disabilities. Local learning disability partnerships getting involved with the development of local transport plans so this happens at a local level;
- a focus on relationships when planning with people about their own lives, including personal and sexual relationships;
- support to parents with a learning disability and their children as described in the existing good practice guidance and the inclusion of parents with a learning disability in new parenting initiatives supported by the Department for Children Schools and Families.

Transition to adulthood

2.3.5 As young people with a learning disability move into adulthood, they should have access to the same life opportunities as everyone else. Action to help achieve this will include:

- a £19 million transition support programme, part of which will be used to promote person centred approaches in transition;
- continued support for the person centred transitions national initiative;
- a focus on young people in transition for all aspects of *Valuing People Now* i.e. jobs, housing, individual budgets etc.

Improving The Workforce

2.3.6 New ways of working for staff who support people with learning disability have to underpin the changes from *Valuing People Now*. This will include:

- the adult social care workforce strategy board taking responsibility for overseeing the delivery of the learning disability workforce planning and development programme;
- Skills for Care leading national and local action to increase take-up of the learning disability qualification and sharing leadership of regional learning disability workforce networks;
- local training to ensure a focus on skills to support choice, control and social inclusion.

2.4 The Major Priority - Making It Happen

2.4.1 The biggest challenge facing *Valuing People* is that of making sure that the whole policy is delivered so that all people with learning disabilities benefit from the changes. Action to ensure this happens is therefore at the centre of *Valuing People Now*. In addition to the above actions, specific actions around delivery are set out below.

Local and National Leadership and Support

2.4.2 Strong local and national leadership is required for the next three years and beyond. To help this happen:

- local learning disability partnerships will continue, with an expectation that they review board meetings to reflect best practice across the country. Government will explore how to increase the statutory requirement on public bodies to consult and work with partnership boards;
- the Learning Disability Development Fund (LDDF) will continue, being paid directly to local authorities to support delivering the outcomes in the National Indicator Set for people with learning disabilities. The old long stay (OLS) census will come to an end;
- there will be continuing support for the National Forum of People with Learning Disabilities and the Learning Disability Task Force;
- the *Valuing People* Support Team will be redesigned to meet the changing agenda - with a twin focus on delivering the main national priorities and supporting local people to develop the skills to make the changes themselves.

Better commissioning

2.4.3 In order to help improve commissioning, action will include:

- funding for learning disability social care services will transfer from the NHS to local government. This means that local authorities, who are the lead commissioning authority for learning disability services, will have direct access to the resources they need to improve services;
- work to fully assess the impact of the increasing numbers of people with learning disabilities on demand for, and therefore the cost of, services;
- action to ensure that the only reason a person with a learning disability is an inpatient in an NHS or private sector hospital bed is because they are receiving an active programme of assessment or treatment prior to moving back home to their local community;
- re-issuing the Mansell report on people who challenge services, with a support programme to help its implementation.

Getting better at checking how we are doing

2.4.4 If *Valuing People Now* is to be delivered, we need to know what progress we are making and encourage managers to do things better. To help this happen, action will include:

- two new cross government performance indicators on employment and housing;
- a review of the NHS and adult social care performance framework in order to improve how we monitor learning disability services;

- joint strategic needs assessments including accurate information about the lives of people with learning disabilities (in order to comply with disability discrimination legislation);
- encouraging local learning disability partnerships to establish their own outcome indicators and publicly report on progress with them.

3. Children with a Learning Disability

- 3.1 *Valuing People* covered policy about children with a learning disability as well as adults. Shortly afterwards, Government produced several other policies about children which became the focus of change for children with a learning disability. Those policies have continued to develop and so there is less need for this 'renewal' of *Valuing People* to also cover children (though transition to adulthood is covered in paragraph 13).
- 3.2 Getting the right educational support in the right setting is key to helping children with learning disabilities reach their potential and be part of society. The 2001 Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disability Act strengthened parents' rights to have their child educated in a mainstream school if they wish. It gave schools and local authorities a duty to plan to increase schools' accessibility, both in terms of premises and the curriculum.
- 3.3 In 2004 the Government's SEN policy *Removing Barriers to Achievement* set out a programme of action on early intervention, removing barriers to learning, raising expectations and achievement and bringing improvements through partnerships between agencies. A £1.1 million programme delivered by the Training and Development Agency is helping to increase SEN skills in mainstream schools to increase the numbers of children participating in mainstream education.
- 3.4 Other government policies such as *Every Child Matters* and the *National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services*, have set objectives for children's health and social care - including a standard for disabled children and young people. A key aim of these policies is better inter-agency working. The *Early Support* programme focuses on this and recommends families are assigned 'key workers' to help them negotiate access to services.
- 3.5 Government has recently announced the £340 million *Aiming High for Disabled Children* programme, for 2008-11. It has three priority areas – access and empowerment, responsive services and timely support and improving quality and capacity. The funding includes £280m for increasing short-breaks/respite care for disabled children, £35m for a childcare accessibility project to improve access to childcare for disabled children and £5m for developing parents' forums in every local authority area.