

**LEARNING DISABILITIES NATIONAL TASK FORCE ANNUAL REPORT 2006-07**

**Report to the Minister for Care Services Ivan Lewis**

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***Executive Summary***

*This is a summary of the Learning Disability Task Force Annual Report 2006-07. The Report says that some things have got better for some people with Learning Disabilities, however, there is still more work to be done. The report has come from the work that the Task Force has undertaken over the past year. It mainly looks at health, employment and Hate Crime. These are issues that the Task Force feels that the government needs to do more work on to make sure that people with learning disabilities have better lives.*

**1 Who the Learning Disabilities Task Force are and what they do**

1.1 Valuing People sets out Government's agenda for improving the lives of people with learning disabilities and their carers. The National Task Force was set up in 2001 to check that Valuing People is happening as it should and to make recommendations to the Government on Learning Disability issues.

1.2 Task Force members include:

- People with a learning disability
- Family carers
- People from organisations and agencies who work with or support people with learning disabilities
- People who know about learning disability issues
- People from government departments or agencies

**2 Key topics in 2006/07**

2.1 This year the Task Force has worked on three key Topics:

- Healthcare
- Employment
- Hate Crime

The report looks at each topic and explains:

- what the main issues are;
- how the Government has responded or what it says it will do about it;
- what the Task Force's recommendations to the Government are;
- what actions have been taken and any progress so far.

### **3 The National Task Force's key message on Healthcare**

- 3.1 A number of key reports have indicated that people with learning disabilities do not get the same quality of treatment as other people (e.g. 'Equal Treatment: Closing the Gap' Disability Rights Commission; 'Death by Indifference' Report Mencap).
- 3.2 The Task Force wants the Government and the NHS to give this greater attention and asserts that Learning disability has to be a higher priority for all of the NHS and recommends that:
- The recommendations in the Disability Rights Commission report should be fully addressed. In particular, the Task Force wants to see annual health checks for all people with learning disabilities
  - The review of commissioning learning disability services should move all learning disability commissioning (apart from mainstream healthcare and healthcare for people who offend) to local authorities

#### **The Local Perspective**

- 3.3 Wirral's Health Action Group (a subgroup of the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board) has recently revised the Health Action Plan for people with Learning Disabilities. Included in the plan are actions to obtain robust data on the health needs of people with Learning Disabilities living in Wirral and to extend health screening across Wirral. This will provide a clear picture of the health needs of people with learning disabilities in Wirral and the Primary Care Trust will be able to use the data to inform future commissioning of healthcare.
- 3.4 Other areas covered in the Health Action Plan are:
- Addressing obesity, poor diet , exercise and sexual health
  - Improving services to young people with complex needs in transition from children's to adult services
  - Improving the care of people with complex needs in day and residential services
  - Improving supported living services and assessment and treatment units run by health
  - Improving health screening for people with learning disabilities particularly people with complex needs
  - Improving people with learning disabilities' oral health in care settings
  - Making it easier for people with learning disabilities to see a specialist dentist
  - Improving people's oral health
  - Improving support for people with learning disabilities who have epilepsy
- 3.5 Work is underway between the Department of Adult Social Services and Wirral Primary Care Trust to determine the most effective means by which services can be contracted in the future. Currently both organisations contract separately.

## **4 The Task Force's key message on Employment**

4.1 People with learning disabilities have the right to work. At the moment many people with learning disabilities who want jobs cannot get them. The task force recommends that:

- The Government should make sure that there are systems and rules to support people with learning disabilities getting into and keeping work.
- It should support and check that the recommendations of the 'Joint Report' on employment ('Improving Work Opportunities for People with a Learning Disability'. Report of a Working Group on Learning Disabilities and Employment) are implemented.

### **The Local Perspective**

4.2 The Working Life Project, which has managed the Steps to Employment Project, has led on employment initiatives for people with a learning disability.

4.3 The 'Steps to Employment' programme started in September 2006, identifying 30 individual work placements and provided support and training for the participants. So far 14 people have been successful in taking up permanent posts, thus reducing dependence on Day Centres.

## **5 The Task Force's Key Message on Hate Crime**

5.1 The Task Force reports that Hate Crime against people with learning disabilities is as serious as any other kind of Hate Crime, and it needs to be treated as a serious crime by people working in the Criminal Justice System.

5.2 There needs to be a commitment from the Home Office to tackle Hate Crime and to take action on the Task Force recommendations.

- Advocacy Groups and Learning Disability Partnership Boards should be represented on community Safety Partnerships
- Learning Disability Partnership Boards should know about the role of the Community Safety Partnerships and vice versa
- Staff in different organisations need to talk to each other and share information about Hate Crime against people with learning disabilities
- Details of hate crimes should be fully recorded.

### **The Local Perspective**

5.3 Merseyside Police has signed up with 37 forces nationally to take part in an initiative designed to combat hate crime. 'True Vision' complements the work already being undertaken by police in Wirral to give victims of hate crime a voice that will be heard. True Vision is designed to:

- Provide support and advice to victims and other people affected by Hate Crime

- To enable the reporting of such crime to be made simpler, either through self reporting either on the internet or through agreed protocols
- allow victims and other people affected by hate crime to notify the authorities by self reporting.

## 6 Working on other issues

6.1 This year, there have been a number of significant events and publications which have involved the Task Force or had an influence on its work plans. These have been:

- 'The Big Event' for Partnerships Boards conference
- Closure of NHS Campuses
- 'Our Health, Our care, Our Say' consultation
- Care Homes guidance consultation
- Supporting People consultation
- Making Things Equal for Disabled People consultation

## 7 Looking forward

This coming year the Task Force will be looking at the following big issues:

- 7.1 **Post-16 Education** Evidence suggests that people with learning disabilities do not have equal access to further education courses. In March 2007, the Department of Health, the Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Work and Pensions launched a joint strategy to address these issues. *Progression Through Partnership* sets out plans for a five year programme of work. Members of the Task Force will now help the government to put together a proper delivery plan. The Task Force will stay involved in this work and monitor its progress. The message is we want a framework for lifelong learning that values and includes everybody.
- 7.2 **The 'Getting a Life' Project** The Task Force also wants a better focus on how post-16 education, employment and day service change can fit together in a way that helps people have more control over their daily lives. The plan is to find three or four places in the country that will try to bring together the work of the Learning and Skills Council, local job centres and Social Services. Members of the Task Force will be involved in this work and the Task Force will monitor its progress.
- 7.3 **Valuing People: The Next Steps.** The Government will be issuing a document in November 2007 which updates the "Valuing People" White Paper. This will build on the policies and procedures enshrined in Valuing People and gives details of how the Government wants the issues to be taken forward. Several members of the National Task Force, including a self-advocate and family carer representative have been incorporating the views of the Task Force into the new document. There will be a three month consultation which will be carried out by the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board.

**8 Financial Implications**

None arising from this report.

**9 Staffing Implications**

None arising from this report.

**10 Equal Opportunities Implications**

Several important reports have all shown that people with learning disabilities do not get the same treatment as other people. The National Task Force seeks to address these issues so that people with learning disabilities can live happy, full, independent lives in the community.

**11 Community Safety Implications**

Adult Social Care services assist in managing risks appropriately and therefore enable people to maintain their independence safely within the community. This said, people with learning disabilities can be targeted in the community by others who hate someone because of their disability.

**12 Local Agenda 21 Implications**

None arising from this report.

**13 Planning Implications**

None arising from this report.

**14 Anti Poverty Implications**

None arising from this report.

**15 Social Inclusion Implications**

The thrust of this report is to point up areas where people with learning disabilities are socially excluded and suggest remedies.

**16 Local Member Support Implications**

People with learning disabilities live in all parts of the Borough.

**17 Background Papers**

The Learning Disability Task Force Annual Report 2006-07 'could do better' <http://nationaldirectorld.org.uk/dynamic/ond24.jsp>

Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century [Department of Health White Paper]  
<http://valuingpeople.gov.uk/echo/filedownload.jsp?action=dFile&key=1382>

Equal Treatment: Closing the Gap. A formal investigation into physical health inequalities experienced by people with learning disabilities and/or mental health problems [Disability Rights Commission] [http://www.drc.gov.uk/library/publications/health\\_and\\_independent\\_living/health\\_formal\\_investigation.aspx](http://www.drc.gov.uk/library/publications/health_and_independent_living/health_formal_investigation.aspx)

Our health investigation: What we found out [Disability Rights Commission] [http://www.drc.gov.uk/PDF/DRC385\\_health2ER.pdf](http://www.drc.gov.uk/PDF/DRC385_health2ER.pdf)

Death by Indifference: Following up the Treat me right! Report [Mencap] <http://www.mencap.org.uk/html/campaigns/deathbyindifference/reports.asp>

Death by Indifference : Following up the Treat me right! Report – Easy Read Version [Mencap] <http://www.mencap.org.uk/html/campaigns/deathbyindifference/reports.asp>

Improving Work Opportunities for People with a Learning Disability. Report of a Working Group on Learning Disabilities and Employment (A report to Ministers and the Learning Disability Task Force) [Mencap] [http://www.mencap.org.uk/download/campaigns/employment\\_pwld\\_report.pdf](http://www.mencap.org.uk/download/campaigns/employment_pwld_report.pdf)

Disability Hate Crime - Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Disability Hate Crime [Crown Prosecution Service] [http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/disability\\_hate\\_crime\\_policy.pdf](http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/disability_hate_crime_policy.pdf)

## **18 Recommendations**

That this report be noted and to engage in the consultation process.

**JOHN WEBB**  
**Director of Adult Social Services**

Jean Doherty  
Valuing People Implementation Officer  
666 5260  
25 October 2007