

SCRUTINY PANEL

9 SEPTEMBER 2008

INDEPENDENCE AND WELLBEING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Comments from the Parliament for People with Learning Disabilities

The Parliament is a group of 15 people with physical and or learning disabilities who use various Council services and who are elected by fellow service users to represent their views.

The Vice Chair met 3 members of the Parliament to talk about their views on the Strategy and Action Plan.

The following point emerged from the conversation

1. People who are able to live independently still need a lot of support with everyday activities. This is not always realised.
2. There are people who may be judged to have only a mild degree of disability who currently live with family or friends but who probably 'slip through the net' of the Plan. The concern was that in the case of death or illness of family/friends the person with learning disabilities would be unknown to the services and would be unable to find out about them as they would not know how to go about this without the sort of help provided by a Care Manager or Support Worker.
3. People are told they are not eligible for services but not about how they can find out about help that they could have or where they could find this
4. It is hard to find out about services, even for people who can read. All members of the Parliament have had difficulties in accessing services. Looking at some 'Easy Read' versions of leaflets and documents the pictures used are often not familiar to people with learning disabilities – an example given was the international information symbol “i” which didn't tell many people that this was where you could find out about things. Information needs to be given in different ways and in ways that people can cope with
5. The Internet can be helpful, many younger people with learning disabilities have learnt how to use this through school, but may still need support with this. Older people would need to be shown how to use it, in a way suited to their needs but would still need support to use it.
6. The help that people who live independently but cannot necessarily deal with everyday things was explained in some detail and the need for this to continue to be available. Tasks that people need help with are – some types of phone calls when there are multiple choices – press button 2 for appointments etc; letters and bills, buying new appliances; household maintenance form filling – repeat prescriptions are a particular area of difficulty; eye tests- which are very complicated even for readers, food shopping – what are healthy choices; social activities and exercise.
7. The Parliament is keen to have further involvement in the development and review of the Strategy and Action Plan and will be organising a Forum to explain what it is and what it offers for people with learning disabilities.