

- 1 *Valuing People Now: A new three-year strategy for people with learning disabilities* sets out the cross-government strategy for the next three years. In doing so, it takes account of the responses to the consultation, which ended in March 2008. In particular, this strategy:
- addresses what people have told us about the support people with learning disabilities and their families need;
 - reflects the changing priorities across government which impact directly on people with learning disabilities;
 - sets out the Government's response to the ten main recommendations in *Healthcare for All*,¹ the report of the Independent Inquiry into access to healthcare for people with learning disabilities, chaired by Sir Jonathan Michael; and
 - provides a further response to the Joint Committee on Human Rights report, *A Life Like Any Other?*²

The vision

- 2 The vision remains as set out in *Valuing People*³ in 2001: that all people with a learning disability are people first with the right to lead their lives like any others, with the same opportunities and responsibilities, and to be treated with the same dignity and respect. They and their families and carers are entitled to the same aspirations and life chances as other citizens. This vision sits firmly within the context of:
- the transformation of social care and the personalisation agenda set out in *Putting People First*;⁴
 - the Independent Living Strategy⁵ – a cross-government strategy for all disabled people; and
 - the Carers Strategy, *Carers at the heart of 21st-century families and communities*.⁶
 - *Aiming High for Disabled Children: transforming services for disabled children and their families*.⁷
 - *The Children's Plan: building brighter futures* (2007).⁸

1 *Healthcare for All*, Report of the Independent Inquiry into Access to Healthcare for People with Learning Disabilities, Sir Jonathan Michael, Department of Health (2008)

2 *A Life Like Any Other? Human Rights of Adults with Learning Disabilities* (2008 HL Paper 40-1 HC 73-1) House of Lords, House of Commons, Joint Committee on Human Rights (2008)

3 *Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century* (Cm 5086) Department of Health (2001)

4 *Putting People First: A shared vision and commitment to the transformation of Adult Social Care*, Department of Health (2007)

5 *Independent Living Strategy*, Office for Disability Issues (2008)

6 *Carers at the heart of 21st-century families and communities*, Department of Health (2008)

7 *Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families*, HM Treasury/Department for Education and Skills (2007)

8 *The Children's Plan: building brighter futures*. DCSF CM7280 (2007).

Delivering the vision

- 3 The key focus of this strategy is to make that vision a reality. Each chapter, therefore, sets out key cross-government commitments and actions to set the environment to enable change to happen, and summarises local and regional actions, based on good practice to grow capacity and capability for local delivery. The key partners who will all play a crucial role in the delivery of *Valuing People Now* are set out below:

Key partners in delivery of *Valuing People Now*

- **Government departments:** the Departments of Health (DH), Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Home Office, Communities and Local Government (CLG), Transport (DfT), Work and Pensions (DWP), Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and Cabinet Office (Office of the Third Sector (OTS)).
- **The National Directors for Learning Disabilities:** appointed by the Secretary of State for Health to lead on the delivery of *Valuing People Now* for the next three years. One is a person with a learning disability.
- **The Office of the National Director:** supports the two National Directors and provides expertise across a range of subject areas via a team of national leads.
- **The Valuing People team:** leads and supports the delivery of *Valuing People Now* at a local and regional level.
- **Government Offices of the Regions:** will lead on delivery across government in the nine regions.
- **Deputy Regional Directors for Social Care and Partnerships:** will lead on social care delivery in the nine regions.
- **Strategic health authorities (SHAs):** will set the strategic direction and performance manage primary care trusts (PCTs).
- **Directors of Adult Social Services:** have lead responsibility for commissioning the provision of social care services for people with learning disabilities.

- **Directors of Children Services:** have responsibility to link with adult services in the transition of young people with learning disabilities.
- **Chief executives of PCTs:** have the lead responsibility for commissioning healthcare services for people with learning disabilities.
- **Learning Disability Partnership Boards:** the 150 partnership boards bring together local partners including people with learning disabilities and their families.
- **National Forum for People with Learning Difficulties:** brings together representatives from nine regional forums for people with learning disabilities to inform government how Valuing People is working for people.
- **National Valuing Families Forum:** brings together representatives from nine regional family carers' networks to inform government how Valuing People is working for carers.
- **Third sector providers:** charitable and voluntary organisations which provide services for people with learning disabilities, including advocacy and peer support.
- **Independent providers:** organisations in the private and independent sector which provide services for people with learning disabilities.
- **Care Quality Commission (CQC):** will regulate organisations that provide health and social care services.

- 4 There is a well-established body of legislation and policy that already applies to service providers in relation to people with learning disabilities and their families, in particular the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and the Human Rights Act (1998). This strategy does not place many **new** burdens on services or frontline staff; rather it is about emphasising what best practice looks like and identifying the key levers to enable this best practice to become universal.

The key messages

- 5 This strategy is written from a human rights based approach, on the fundamental principle that people with learning disabilities have the same human rights as everyone else, and sets out further steps for this

to happen. It responds to the concerns set out in the Joint Committee on Human Rights report *A Life Like Any Other?* that adults with learning disabilities are particularly vulnerable to breaches of their human rights.

Chapter 1: Including everyone

- 6 The strategy has been strengthened to ensure that it is inclusive of those groups who are least often heard and most often excluded. This reflects concerns expressed by respondents to the consultation on *Valuing People Now* that service providers, commissioners and policy makers were not specifically addressing the needs of these groups, including:
 - people with more complex needs;
 - people from black and minority ethnic groups and newly arrived communities;
 - people with autistic spectrum conditions; and
 - offenders in custody and in the community.
- 7 DH will take forward programmes of work around ethnicity and complex needs and with families. These will be underpinned by regional and local action to support partnership working, particularly through Learning Disability Partnership Boards. We have worked closely with family carer groups to ensure that this strategy reflects the concerns they raised during the consultation – that they be seen as expert partners in the care of their loved ones and that the particular needs of people with more complex conditions are met.

Chapter 2: Personalisation

- 8 Person centred planning, advocacy and direct payments to give people more choice and control in their lives were at the heart of the original *Valuing People*. In December 2007, the cross-sector concordat *Putting People First* set out a vision for transforming social care. At its heart is the commitment to giving people more independence, choice and control through high-quality and personalised services. *Putting People First* is about empowering people to shape their own lives and the support they receive by allowing them to use resources more flexibly to suit their needs and lifestyle.
- 9 Delivery of this vision will depend upon central and local government working together with partners across the sector. *Putting People First*

recognises that services across transport, leisure, education, health, housing, community safety and the criminal justice system and access to information and advice are vital to ensuring people's independence and overall quality of life.

- 10 For people with learning disabilities and their families, transformation should mean using person centred approaches (such as person centred planning and support planning) and improved outcomes in terms of social inclusion, empowerment and equality. More people with learning disabilities should be able to commission their own services to live independently and have real choice about the way they live their lives. The Government will take action to ensure that this transformation programme includes the needs of people with learning disabilities and their carers.

Chapter 3: Having a life

Health

- 11 Better health for people with learning disabilities is a key priority. There is clear evidence that most people with learning disabilities have poorer health than the rest of the population and are more likely to die at a younger age. Their access to the NHS is often poor and characterised by problems that undermine personalisation, dignity and safety. The final report of the NHS Next Stage Review⁹ sets out the vision for the NHS that it will 'deliver high quality care for **all** users of services in all aspects'. Key issues for the NHS are to achieve full inclusion of people with learning disabilities in mainstream work to reduce health inequalities and to ensure high-quality specialist health services where these are needed.
- 12 The report of the Independent Inquiry into access to healthcare for people with learning disabilities, *Healthcare for All*, was published in July 2008 and made 10 key recommendations for improvement. This strategy sets out a programme of work to address *Healthcare for All* recommendations.
- 13 People with learning disabilities are entitled to be treated with the same dignity and respect as any other member of the community. Neglect or abuse of disabled people is absolutely unacceptable and the Government

9 *High Quality Care for All: NHS Next Stage Review Final Report* (CM 7432), Department of Health (2008)

is determined that lessons are learnt and that action is taken to improve healthcare for people with learning disabilities.

Housing

- 14 This strategy builds on existing programmes including Supporting People¹⁰ to increase the housing options available to people with learning disabilities. Many people with learning disabilities do not choose where they live or with whom. More than half live with their families, and most of the remainder live in residential care. The Government will deliver a programme of work to ensure that mainstream housing policies are inclusive of people with learning disabilities.

Work, education and getting a life

- 15 People with learning disabilities want to lead ordinary lives and do the things that most people take for granted. They want to study at college, get a job, have relationships and friendships and enjoy leisure and social activities.
- 16 Under *Aiming High for Disabled Children*, the Transition Support Programme will work to support local areas to improve transition arrangements across children's health and social care, including consolidating person centred approaches for people with learning disabilities. Adult services have an important role as equal partners in transition. This work will address the concerns of families and young people that the transition from childhood to adulthood is difficult and they feel excluded from decisions.
- 17 A cross-government employment strategy will be published in Spring 2009, which includes a significant expansion of employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities. This will be linked to the Public Service Agreement (PSA) 16 delivery plan on increasing the number of adults with learning disabilities in employment. The cross-government Work, Education and Life Group will also lead implementation of '*Progression through Partnership*'¹¹ (the post-16 education strategy) and the Getting a Life project, which aims to achieve an integrated assessment and decision-making process that will allow

10 The Supporting People programme funds local authorities to provide services which help vulnerable and older people to live independently. See *Independence and Opportunity: Our Strategy for Supporting People*. Department for Communities and Local Government. June 2007. www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing

11 '*Progression through Partnership*': A Joint Strategy between the DfES, DH and DWP on the role of Further Education and Training in Supporting People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities to Achieve Fulfilling Lives, The Stationery Office (2007)

people to use public resources flexibly to get the outcomes they want, including access to employment opportunities.

Relationships and having a family

- 18** This strategy emphasises the importance of enabling people with learning disabilities to meet new people, form all kinds of relationships, and to lead a fulfilling life with access to a diverse range of social and leisure activities. It also emphasises their right to become parents and the need for adequate support to sustain the family unit. There is evidence that people with learning disabilities have limited opportunities to build and maintain social networks and friendships. Parents with a learning disability do not get sufficient access to support, putting families at risk of enforced separation. However, Sure Start Children's Centres work together with other professionals to help parents with learning disabilities and their children receive the right emotional and practical support to meet the assessed needs of the child and family.

Chapter 4: People as citizens

Advocacy

- 19** *Putting People First* recognises the importance of ensuring the right level of support, information and advice and advocacy is available to people, including those with learning disabilities.
- 20** The Valuing People national advocacy fund will focus on supporting advocacy to achieve a greater impact. The programme includes:
- a quality tool for self-advocacy groups;
 - work to better support advocacy for people from black and minority ethnic communities and people with complex needs; and
 - strengthening leadership support for people with learning disabilities.

Transport

- 21** DfT and DH will ensure national programmes on inclusive transport include people with learning disabilities. We know that people with learning disabilities are less likely to make journeys than non-disabled people because of transport difficulties.

Leisure services and social activities

- 22 DH will work with the Department for Media, Culture and Sport to explore how local services can be made more accessible for people with learning disabilities. This is to address concerns that people with learning disabilities are often not connected to their communities or given meaningful vocational, social, leisure or learning activities.

Being safe in the community and at home

- 23 The Home Office will work with DH, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and related crime and disorder agencies and third sector partners to support the development and implementation of the Disability Hate Crime Strategy, making sure the specific issues for people with learning disabilities are addressed. This recognises that the lives of people with learning disabilities are still constrained by experience of abuse and neglect. Many people do not feel safe in their local communities and have been victims of hate crime.
- 24 DH will publish revised *No Secrets* guidance on safeguarding vulnerable adults following consultation,¹² including consultation with people with learning disabilities.

Access to justice and redress

- 25 The Crown Prosecution Service is developing a new policy on prosecuting crimes where people with learning disabilities are victims or witnesses. Valuing People regional leads will support partnership boards to engage with local crime and disorder partnerships to help people with learning disabilities and their families understand their rights and how to complain. This will help address concerns that people with learning disabilities are less likely to report a crime or take part in the criminal process as a witness, because they may lack the confidence or support to speak out and find processes complex. They may also have low expectations. Where young people with learning disabilities are in custody, the Youth Crime Action Plan provides for improved education and training.¹³

12 *Safeguarding Adults: A Consultation on the Review of the 'No Secrets' Guidance*: www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_089098

13 *The Youth Crime Action Plan* (2008) available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/youth-crime-action-plan/

Chapter 5: Making it happen

- 26** The delivery of this strategy needs to be rooted within the mechanisms and processes established to deliver the wider health and social care transformational agenda – in particular, Joint Strategic Needs Assessments, Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Area Agreements and partnership boards.
- 27** The National Directors will lead the delivery programme for *Valuing People Now*. The Government will continue to support and strengthen the national mechanisms to drive delivery, including:
- the National Forum of People with Learning Difficulties;
 - the National Valuing Families Forum; and
 - a new national Learning Disability Programme Board.
- 28** A key element of delivery will be the development of capacity and capability at local levels to design and commission the support services that people need to enable them to live independently and close to their families and friends. Local partnership with people with learning disabilities and their families will be crucial to this, and Learning Disability partnership boards have a vital role to play. The Valuing People team will develop tools to support local action to deliver transformation and support provision of robust data sets to inform local action, and enable partnership boards to benchmark progress. The National Directors and Valuing People team will target support on those areas which are underperforming and encourage good partnership boards to mentor poor performers. Directors of adult social services, PCT chief executives and local authority elected members have an important role to play. Third sector and independent sector providers will be vital to delivering this vision.
- 29** The responsibility for commissioning and funding social care for people with learning disabilities will transfer from the NHS to local government from April 2009 in line with guidance issued to local authorities and PCTs.¹⁴
- 30** The Office of the National Director will work with government departments to support the development of staff who work to deliver support for people with learning disabilities within the context of the National Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy to be launched in 2009.

¹⁴ *Valuing People Now: Transfer of the responsibility for the commissioning of social care for adults with a learning disability from the NHS to local government and transfer of the appropriate funding* (2008): www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH_087148

- 31** A detailed delivery plan is being published alongside this strategy and we will produce a summary position statement setting out how the existing performance frameworks relate to provision of services for people with learning disabilities in Spring 2009.



Principles

- 32** The new strategy reaffirms the four guiding principles set out in *Valuing People* which apply to both individuals and services:

Rights:

- People with learning disabilities and their families have the same human rights as everyone else.

Independent living:

- This does not mean living on your own or having to do everything yourself. All disabled people should have greater choice and control over the support they need to go about their daily lives; greater access to housing, education, employment, leisure and transport opportunities and to participation in family and community life.

Control:

- This is about being involved in and in control of decisions made about your life. This is not usually doing exactly what you want, but is about having information and support to understand the different options and their implications and consequences, so people can make informed decisions about their own lives.

Inclusion:

- This means being able to participate in all the aspects of community – to work, learn, get about, meet people, be part of social networks and access goods and services – and to have the support to do so.

Key policy objectives for 2009–12

33 The strategy sets out key policy objectives for the next three years:

All people with learning disabilities and their families will:

1. benefit from *Valuing People Now*;
2. have greater choice and control over their lives and have support to develop person centred plans;
3. get the healthcare they need and the support they need to live healthy lives;
4. have an informed choice about where, and with whom, they live;

5. have a fulfilling life of their own, beyond services, that includes opportunities to study, work and enjoy leisure and social activities;
6. be supported into paid work, including those with more complex needs;
7. have the choice to have relationships, become parents and continue to be parents, and will be supported to do so;
8. be treated as equal citizens in society and supported to enact their rights and fulfil their responsibilities;
9. have the opportunity to speak up and be heard about what they want from their lives – the big decisions and the everyday choices. If they need support to do this, they should be able to get it;
10. be able to use public transport safely and easily and feel confident about doing so; and
11. be able to lead their lives in safe environments and feel confident that their right to live in safety is upheld by the criminal justice system.

For services:

1. Leadership, delivery and partnership structures are put in place that will make sure the outcomes set out in this strategy are delivered.
2. Effective commissioning in a way that best supports the right outcomes for people with learning disabilities and their families is ensured.
3. The workforces across services are given the appropriate support and training to equip them with the values, skills and knowledge to deliver the *Valuing People Now* priorities for all people with learning disabilities.
4. Learning disabilities will have a clear position in the new performance frameworks for the NHS and local authorities, and there will be a comprehensive range of data sets and reporting mechanisms.