

## NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

## REPORT

TO: Social Work Committee	Subject: <b>THE SAME AS YOU? A REVIEW OF SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES</b>
FROM: J Dickie Director of Social Work	
DATE OF COMMITTEE: 3 October 2000	
REPORT AUTHOR: M Dendy	
REF: MD/AB	

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the response which has been submitted by North Lanarkshire Council to the Scottish Executive in respect of the national review of learning disability services The Same as You?

**2 BACKGROUND**

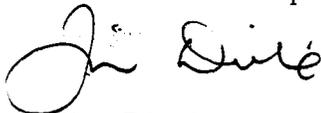
- 2.1 The National Review of services for people with learning disabilities The Same as You? is the first policy initiative on learning disability in Scotland for over 20 years. A report advising Committee of the publication of the review was presented to Social Work Committee on 6 June 2000. This advised Committee of the review's background, vision and principles, recommendations and local implications.
- 2.2 The national vision for people with learning disability is entirely consistent with the vision inherent in the community care plan and local strategy for Lanarkshire which has been developed in parallel with the national review.

**3 RESPONSE**

- 3.1 The recommendations of the national review were subject to discussion between the joint partners and the Convenor of Social Work. A copy of the proposed response can be found in Appendix 1.

**4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The Social Work Committee is asked to endorse the content of the response as the Council's position



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**Director of Social Work**  
**26 September 2000**

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## **The same as you? A review of services for people with learning disabilities North Lanarkshire Council Social Work Department**

### **The Scottish Executive**

#### **1. Partnerships in Practice Agreements**

The Learning Disabilities in Lanarkshire Strategic Framework 2000 "We want a life" has recently been produced in draft format and is currently out for consultation. The framework was produced in partnership with colleagues from Lanarkshire Health Board, Lanarkshire Primary Health Care Trust and South Lanarkshire Council and involved extensive consultation with carers, people with learning disabilities and other stakeholders throughout Lanarkshire.

The framework identifies the values of inclusion, individuality, autonomy, partnership, safety and equity. It sets out nine goals in relation to homes, health, listening, plans for leaving school, getting around, friends and relationships, being valued, having a break and things to do in the daytime.

The features of the proposed Partnerships in Practice agreements, particularly that partners work together to produce joint plans to form part of Community Care Plans therefore complement work underway locally and the local framework will form a sound basis from which to develop a Partnership in Practice agreement.

Highlighting the human resource implications both in terms of information and supporting people through what in some instances is significant change is an important feature of the Review.

The promotion of positive health from mainstream community settings is conducive to the ordinary living outcomes recommended in the Review. This will reinforce the role of health care professionals and the areas of expertise they have whilst going some way to equalise the health inequities which currently exist. The liaison with non health professionals involved in the support of individuals could also be enhanced through closer physical links within local communities.

#### **2. Local Area Co-ordinators**

North Lanarkshire Council welcomes the identification of the various roles would be are located in local area co-ordination, particularly:

- driven by the needs of people with a learning disability
- located within local communities - assisting people to make connections
- design supports individually
- funding direct to the person with learning disability
- provide information and advice
- come from different professional backgrounds
- personally known to a fixed number of people with a learning disability

- supporting families
- focus on planning to avoid interventions at a time of crisis - getting to know people well over time

North Lanarkshire Council has paid sustained attention to service improvements and in aiming to achieve the above objectives has invested heavily in the development of care management which has included the appointment of care managers. Care managers who come from a range of professional backgrounds, work in a person centred way to plan and design services individually, maximising and capitalising on informal supports and very clearly promoting social inclusion.

We would however wish to express serious reservations that the specific proposals contained in the review for development of local area co-ordinators is both insufficiently thought through and could indeed result in achieving the opposite effect to the one intended.

We have been involved in detailed discussions which indicate that the Western Australia model of local area co-ordination is significantly different to the proposals in the review. In Western Australia local area co-ordination is managed by a unified state-led government department ensuring that the programme is an integral part of a state wide strategy, capable of influencing state policy. The Western Australia model also complements the care management and commissioning role of the state rather than replaces it.

We would strongly seek to urge the Scottish Executive to consult further on this proposal. Consultation should particularly involve those councils who have invested heavily in progress and service improvement. We feel that North Lanarkshire Council is well placed to make a significant contribution to the further development of this objective and its implementation.

### **3. Personal Life Plans**

The move to better long term planning which pays particular attention to involving people in their communities and creating a desired lifestyle is strongly supported and leadership at national level on this matter is most welcome.

The proposal complements North Lanarkshire Council initiatives which include:

- ◆ development and promotion of person centred planning
- ◆ use of essential lifestyle planning for people with complex needs at a time of significant change
- ◆ development of improved person centred planning for young people at the time of future needs assessment; this work draws all professionals, family and the young person more closely together to plan jointly
- ◆ working jointly with health colleagues, families and people with a learning disability to explore person held records and aids to communication.

## 4. Change Fund

We would stress the importance of the availability of the Change Fund. This fund is particularly welcome in relation to:

- supporting the move from institutional or group living to living in more ordinary settings within the community
- supporting the move from buildings based day services and short breaks to community activities and employment
- supporting increased choice and control for people with learning disabilities and their families through direct payments and advocacy

Within the National Framework it is essential that resources are identified to support the relatively small number of people with learning disability with extremely complex and multiple needs.

## 5. Direct Payments

This recommendation is strongly supported. Work is currently being undertaken within North Lanarkshire Council to increase the access to direct payments for people with learning disability including those with complex needs. This work is facilitating the development of a range of options available, all aimed at promoting self determination, from employing staff directly or contracting with an agency to provide support. The work also includes the development of supports people with learning disabilities and their families would require to assist with for example employment advice, managing staff, without the process seeming overly burdensome and at the same time being shown to create equitable access to available resources.

The Council has recently promoted an innovative New Partnerships with Families Project to give learning disabled people and their families more direct control over the commissioning, management and funding of their service. We have now reached the stage of recruiting disabled people and their families to participate in these new partnerships. We believe this project will be of national significance.

In supporting the development of direct payments the availability of the change fund is an essential component. The fund will support the transition from releasing resources currently tied up in buildings based services to individualised community supports and direct payments.

## 6. Scottish Centre for Learning Disabilities

A new Scottish centre would create a focal point for information and advice, promote accessibility of information and provide valuable training, supports and sharing of best practices.

A potential drawback of the centre would be the lack of physical access for the majority of Scotland no matter where it is located. North Lanarkshire would urge consideration be given to the Council's area as a potential location.

Clear structures are required to reinforce the presence of people with learning disabilities and carers in a management and developmental role. The centre must also utilise existing expertise in agencies, organisations, academic institutions and networks rather than duplicate or replace them.

## **7. People with an Autistic Spectrum**

The development of a national network for people with an autistic spectrum disorder and training to help the earlier diagnosis are both welcomed.

Person centred practices and individualised, community based service highlighted throughout the Review design would assist the development of appropriate services more than aetiology centred services. Experience as demonstrated that with individualised planning, service design and appropriately trained support staff, mainstream services are able to offer a good service.

## **8. Information**

North Lanarkshire Council recognises the importance of accurate, accessible and comprehensive information for people with learning disabilities and those who care for them in enabling people to make informed choices and decisions about their lives and the need for significant improvement in the area. Within North Lanarkshire in developing a much more person centred approach to planning and recording information, much greater attention is being given to the removal of jargonistic, unnecessary information, instead concentrating on the information which is important and necessary for planning appropriately at an individual level.

The council also recognises the importance of accessibility at a strategic level, working in partnership with user and carer groups to facilitate more active participation in planning and development.

## **9. Local Register**

The creation of a register of people with learning disabilities could assist planning and service development, review of effectiveness of a range of services and supports, and assist health promotion work to address health inequities. Clarity on the purpose and nature of the register would require to be developed as people with learning disabilities and families need to be clear about what information is recorded for what purpose.

## **10. Speech and Language Therapy**

As people with learning disabilities move from institutional living and day centres to living in their own homes with individual supports, the nature of community health services needs to change. Currently many people receive specialist help such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy at the hospital they live in or at the centre they attend. The Lanarkshire Learning Disability Strategic Framework identifies the need for better access to mainstream health care and the health agencies have provided support staff in local surgeries and hospitals.

The educative role in the area of communication with speech and language therapy and potential for increased joint working is recognised locally and welcomed as part of the Review.

## **11. Advocacy**

The Review recommends that local independent advocacy services be developed and it acknowledges the benefits advocacy can afford to people with learning disabilities, particularly those with complex needs.

The link between advocacy and self-determination, social inclusion, choice and access to better health and social services is highlighted and this is welcomed

North Lanarkshire Council supports advocacy in various forms both in the community and in hospital settings.

The Council provides financial resources to support:

- ◆ North Lanarkshire Advocacy Group
- ◆ "Speak-out" advocacy for people in hospital
- ◆ Users Groups in resource centres
- ◆ Carers Groups in resource centres
- ◆ Lanarkshire Community Care Forum
- ◆ North Lanarkshire Carers Strategy

We would like to move to improve access and support advocacy for people in our area and will be giving this priority.

The Scottish Executive has sponsored research on commissioning and supporting advocacy services and it is clear that there is a continuing role for the Executive in this area. The existence of centrally funded advocacy services that are not closely linked to the commissioning or provision of services will help individuals and their families develop the skills and authority to become meaningfully involved as partners in the process of change and development of services.

## **12. Closure of Long Stay Hospitals**

One of the major contributions for which the Scottish Executive must be congratulated is the reviews unequivocal statement with regard to the closure of all long stay hospitals by 2005. This leadership is already assisting us to have a clearer direction in Social Joint Working.

## **13. Assessment and Treatment Beds**

North Lanarkshire Council welcomes the Review recommendations in the reduction of assessment and treatment beds. People with learning disabilities requiring assessment or treatment should be able to access assessment and treatment in primary health care

settings. The promotion of local health expertise reflects the conclusions of the Lanarkshire Learning Disability Strategic Framework.

We consider that much needs to be done to improve access to high quality primary and secondary health care and believe this will best be achieved through inclusive rather than segregated services. This has been identified as a joint priority with our partners in the Lanarkshire Primary Care Health Care Trust.

The promotion of community based rather than in-patient assessment will result in more person centred outcomes with accurate assessment detail promoting social inclusion.

#### **14. Health Boards with sites remaining after 2002**

The Lanarkshire Learning Disability Strategic Framework is addressing the re-provisioning of hospital services through the existence of a Project Board, which is adopting a project management approach to the closures of Birkwood and Kirklands Hospitals. The health needs assessment group will address the development of robust primary health care provision to support the needs of increased numbers of people in the community with learning disabilities, assuring that complete needs are understood and met.

#### **15. Day Time Activities**

The Review recommends that local authorities and health boards should provide more modern day services to support people in the community are most welcome. The Review highlights that day centres often do not meet the developmental needs or aspirations of people with learning disabilities which concurs with extensive consultative exercises within Lanarkshire in the production of the local Framework.

It is acknowledged that families and carers are concerned that a change from a centre-based service to participation in mainstream community activities may place an additional burden on them and also that they are anxious about potential risks and uncertainty. Carers as well as people with learning disabilities need to be fully involved in planning individual supports and in strategic service developments and change.

The Review refers to day services for those with complex needs and cites Carisbrooke in North Lanarkshire as an example of a small day service for people with significant physical and health needs which has close links with health services. Recent developments in partnership with Carisbrooke have resulted in the development of an ambitious community based service for young adults who have recently left school who have complex and multiple needs where there is significant emphasis on social inclusion.

North Lanarkshire Council currently supports around 500 people with learning disabilities in buildings based day services. In supporting the development of day opportunities the availability of the change fund is an essential component. The fund will support the transition from releasing resources currently tied up in buildings based services to individualised community supports including leisure, social, educational and employment opportunities.

## **16. Employment**

North Lanarkshire Council fully endorses the statements in the Review which reinforce that supporting people into employment offers the opportunity to be included, to gain more self esteem and to meet new people.

The Lanarkshire Learning Disability Strategic Framework has identified choice, diversity and social inclusion as goals in respect of daytime activities. Centres are helping people to access education and leisure activities in the community and in North Lanarkshire the Echo and PEP projects along with four locality based job coaches help people with learning disabilities to secure jobs. The Council will launch a corporate supported employment initiative in the near future to assist people with disabilities to gain employment within the Council and with other major employers totally.

When people with learning disabilities explore employment options they may face benefit reduction plus loss of income security. It is noted that the New Deal initiatives to assist people into work, including raising the therapeutic earnings limit and the increase in earnings disregard under the Independent Living Fund may remove some negative financial barriers to work, however most people with learning disabilities do not receive Job Seekers Allowance and have no access to The New Deal. North Lanarkshire Council has developed staff skills in providing information tailored to the individual, in respect of the implications of moving from benefit to wage.

Though supported employment can over time become a more cost effective method of support, the costs are more significant in the short term. As with the development of day opportunities, in the development of employment services, the availability of the change fund is an essential component. The fund will support the transition from releasing resources currently tied up in buildings based services to individualised employment opportunities.

## **17. Benefits**

North Lanarkshire Council supports the recommendation that the Scottish Executive raises issues concerning benefit and support to people with learning disabilities with the Department of Social Security. The Supporting People legislation will have an impact on re-provisioning options.

## **18. Transport Services**

The inclusion of recommendations on socially inclusive and accessible transport within the Review is very important. The Lanarkshire Learning Disability Strategic Framework calls for new plans to provide support for people who want to use public transport and to make the way people access day services better.

The particular needs of people who live in rural areas will require particular attention.

## **19. Community Based Short Breaks**

North Lanarkshire Council has been working on a review of respite services which has involved detailed consultation with people who use respite services, carers, providers and staff involved in assessment and planning. The findings of the local review concur with the national Review that short breaks are a welcome component of support arrangements for families and people with learning disabilities enjoy a variety of opportunities and experiences.

The range of provision of short breaks is being developed to include home based, community based and buildings based short breaks.

The availability of the Change Fund to support developments is welcomed to facilitate the availability of sufficient levels of service.

## **20. Flexibility of Arrangements**

The importance stated of the need for short breaks for families and the opportunity for people with learning disabilities to experience enjoyable, individually designed supports, is welcomed. Again work is currently underway within the Council to broaden the range of short break supports and address issues of access and equity.

The increased focus on individual planning and aim to promote social inclusion is consistent with the recommendation to develop more community based short breaks.

## **21. Public Awareness**

The raising of awareness of people with learning disabilities and inclusion is welcomed. This would augment the positive impact of the outcomes of a person centred approach to individually designed community based service design which would increase the presence of people with learning disability in ordinary settings in local communities.

## **22. National Care Standards Commission**

North Lanarkshire Council welcomes the formulation of the National Care Standards Commission. The emphasis this will give to training standards and quality in social care services will challenge local authorities and providers. However, it will be essential that standards are sensitive to the issues around supported people with learning disabilities to live in their own homes with the support they need.

## **23. Policies and Guidelines**

North Lanarkshire Council wholeheartedly supports the recommendation that there are effective inter agency policies and guidelines agreed to protect vulnerable adults. North Lanarkshire Council is currently involved in interagency working to ensure all partners consistently apply good practice.

## **24.Future Needs Assessment**

Improved arrangements for the transition from child to adult services is welcomed, with the link to the proposals in the Beatie Report.

Work is currently underway within North Lanarkshire to address the issue of improved joint planning at the point of transition, promoting much greater partnership working with the agencies involved including careers, colleges and employment services but also most importantly clarifying the central role of families and the person with learning disability.

## **25.People with Dementia**

North Lanarkshire Council welcomes the attention brought to the needs of older people with learning disabilities and the assertion that they will have the same access to health and social care supports as older people generally. Increased training to help the earlier detection of signs of dementia and ensure supports within mainstream services is important.

## **26.Life Plans**

Planning to avoid decision making in a crisis is essential in achieving the best outcomes for people with learning disabilities and those who care for them. The emphasis on Life Planning is welcomed. Sensitivity to the readiness of carers to plan is required

## **27.Appropriate Specialist Support**

Significant investment has been made within North Lanarkshire Council to explore appropriate supports for people with complex and challenging needs. The focus on the person with individually designed services, has proven to be successful in supporting people with complex needs in their own homes, many of whom would previously have lived in congregated or group settings.

PAMS, nursing, psychology and psychiatric disciplines will make an important contribution to support, training and joint working.

Within the National Framework it is essential that resources are identified to support the relatively small number of people with learning disability with extremely complex and multiple needs.

## **28.The Criminal Justice System**

North Lanarkshire Council welcomes the recommendation that the Scottish Executive should commission research into the number of people with learning disabilities in prison or in secure accommodation and the arrangements for assessing and providing them with care.

The Council would wish to endorse the treatment and ongoing support being in the community wherever appropriate, with detailed risk assessment, staff support and training.

## **29. People with Profound and Multiple Disabilities**

The recommendation of the establishment of a national network of support to local providers in the area of profound and multiple disabilities would improve shared learning in a specialist area. Strong community based health care support is also essential.

Comprehensive information, training and support for staff and families is an important element of the recommendation and the council welcomes the development of national standards for training in specific procedures to include moving and handling.

## **30. Resources**

There are significant resource implications for the substantial and very important task of modernising learning disability services and ensure people are properly integrated into their communities. The recommendation of a change fund is welcomed and will assist Authorities implement change. Recurring revenue is also important if the changes set out in the review are to be sustained.

The obvious and ongoing implications for the availability of resources specifically relates to:

- area co-ordination
- direct payments
- advocacy
- reshaping day and residential services
- hospital reprovisioning
- training

At a national level it is essential that resources are identified to support the relatively small number of people with learning disabilities with extremely complex and multiple need if they are to have any hope of inclusive services.