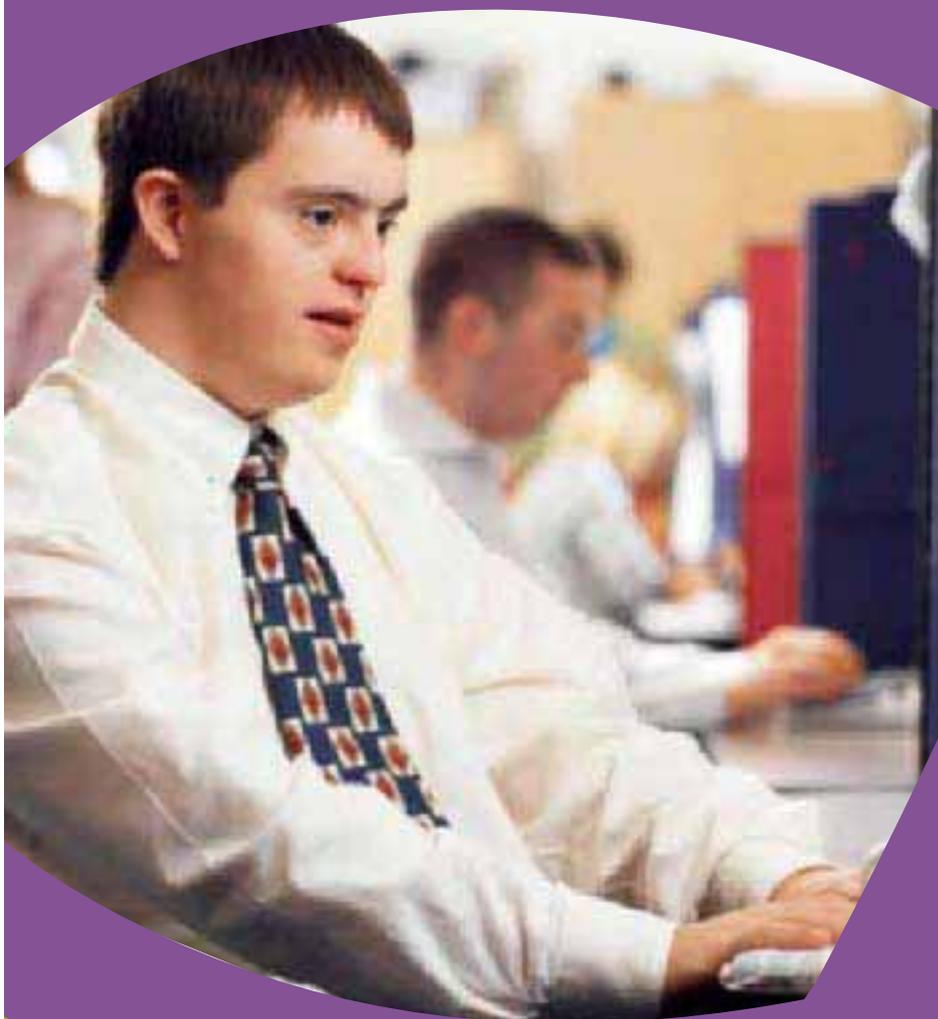


The Government's Annual Report on Learning Disability 2005



Valuing People:
Making things better



The Government's Annual Report on Learning Disability 2005

Valuing People: Making things better

Presented to Parliament by the
Secretary of State for Health by
Command of Her Majesty

November 2005

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This report is written by the Government. When the report says 'we' or 'us', that means 'the Government'.

About this report

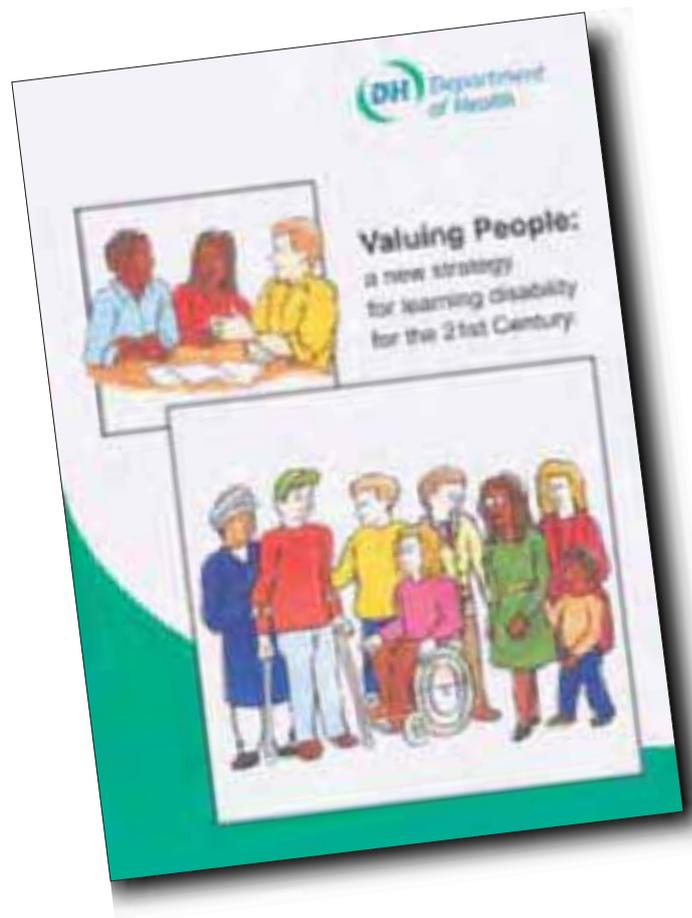
Introduction

The Government wrote an important report about our plans for people with a learning disability in 2001. This was called *Valuing People*.

Since then, the Government has written a report every year saying what we have done and what we will do next to make the things in *Valuing People* happen. The Government has to give Parliament a report on learning disability each year.

This is our third report since *Valuing People*. In this report you can read what the Government has done for people with a learning disability in 2004. It also tells you what we plan to do next.

The Government has written some other important reports about our plans for people with a learning disability in the last year. There is a list of them on page 52.



One of the most important reports is *The story so far...* This was written by Rob Greig, National Director of Learning Disabilities. It gives a good picture of how much things have changed for people with a learning disability. It also says where things are not working well. The report has made the Government think hard about how to improve things for people with a learning disability. The Minister in charge of learning disabilities, Mr Liam Byrne MP, will formally respond to the issues made in the report in more detail later this year.

We have used *The story so far...* to help us write this report because:

- 3,000 people told the Government what they thought about services for people with a learning disability, their families and carers. *The story so far...* tells us what they said
- it gives facts and figures about how people's lives are beginning to change
- it says what government departments and big organisations are doing about learning disability
- it says what the Valuing People Support Team has done in the last few years.



Last year

In this report you can read about what has happened in the last year.

The work of the Learning Disability Task Force

- At the start of this report we look at the work of the Learning Disability Task Force.
- The Task Force is a group of people who work with the Government. They help to check that the things in *Valuing People* are happening and that people's lives are getting better.
- Their work is very important in helping the Government write our plans and reports.



Children and young people

- Getting things right for disabled children when they are young is very important. There have been lots of changes in children's services over the last year.
- Lots of different people work with children – schools, the health service and other people like social workers.
- The Government wants everybody to work together and to work better.

Leaving school and becoming an adult

- Leaving school and becoming an adult can be a difficult time for young people with a learning disability.
- The Government wants young people to play a part in planning their own futures.



Choice and control

- Giving people with a learning disability more choice and control in their lives is important. This can be done through advocacy and giving them a chance to speak out.
- We want to give people more power to choose and control their own services.

Better lives

- People with a learning disability want many of the same things as anyone else in society. But there are still problems with jobs, health and support for families.
- Too many people are still being sent to live away from home.

What we need to do now

Making *Valuing People* happen

- To make things happen, the Government needs to give the right support nationally and locally. Things like Learning Disabilities Partnership Boards are helping.
- We also need to get better at checking on how things are going.

Help from the Government

- The Government believes *Valuing People* is making a difference to people with a learning disability. Things are getting better but there is a lot more work to do to make good things happen for everyone.

Our challenges

- The Government and people with a learning disability and their families want to see things happen more quickly. We know there is still a lot of work to do.





Useful words

Here are some useful words you will find in this report.

Advocacy

- **Self-advocacy** is speaking up for yourself.
- **Citizen advocacy** is when someone helps a person with a learning disability get their wishes heard and understood.

Audit

When you want to check on how things are going you can do an audit. You can do this for services or money. It is like a review. Sometimes outside people come in to do the audit.

Discrimination

Discrimination means treating people differently, usually in a bad way, because of their disability, or because of their race, colour, sex, religion, age or ethnicity.

Ethnic minority

Your ethnicity is your race and your culture. If someone is in an ethnic minority it means that there are less people from their ethnic group living in a country than there are people from other ethnic groups. For example, there are less Chinese people living in England than there are white people. So Chinese people living in England are in an ethnic minority.

Learning Disability Awards

Framework

This is a set of qualifications for people who work with people with a learning disability.

Learning Disability

Development Fund

The Fund gives money to support advocacy and person-centred planning. It also gives money to each Learning Disability Partnership Board. The money comes from the Government. It is paid by the NHS to each Partnership Board.

Person-centred planning

Person-centred planning means supporting a person to work out what they want in their life and how services should help them do this. Services should then be planned to give them the things they want and need.

Transition

When children leave school they need new things to do. They might start a job, go to college or go to a day service. This time is often called 'transition'. This can be a difficult time for young people with a learning disability. Transition is about how they move on from being a young person and become an adult. Planning for this time should start before disabled young people leave school.

Groups and organisations

The report talks about several groups and organisations that support people with a learning disability. You can find out more about them on the Valuing People website at www.valuingpeople.gov.uk

Groups that give support to the Government

Valuing People Support Team

The Government set up a group of people to make the changes in the *Valuing People* plan happen. They listen to what people are saying and talk to the Government. They give help and advice to change services.

Learning Disability Task Force

The Learning Disability Task Force is a group of people who work with the Government. They help make sure that the things in *Valuing People* are happening and that people's lives are getting better.

Members of the Task Force include people with a learning disability, family carers and other people who understand what is important to people with a learning disability.



National Forum for People with Learning Disabilities

The National Forum is a group of 25 people with learning disabilities. Their job is to tell the Government how well *Valuing People* is going. They work with the Learning Disability Task Force. Members of the National Forum are elected from regional forums.

Regional forums

Regional forums are groups of people with learning disabilities who work with groups and councils in their area. There are 9 regional forums. There are 1,000 self-advocates on the regional forums. They work with the National Forum for People with Learning Disabilities.

Groups that give local support

Learning Disability Partnership Boards

Partnership is about people and organisations working together. Each local council has set up a Partnership Board. Partnership Boards meet to talk about opportunities and support for people with a learning disability in their local area, and make sure things get better in their area.

Groups that help with your rights

Disability Rights Commission

The Government set up the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) to stop discrimination against disabled people. In 2007 the DRC will join together with the Commission for Equality and Human Rights or CEHR.



Commission for Equality and Human Rights

The Government plans to set up a new Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) in 2007. The CEHR will work hard to stop people being treated unfairly because of their disability, race, colour, sex, religion or ethnicity.

Groups that support young people

connexions

The best start in life for every young person

Connexions is an advice service for young people aged 13–19 and disabled young people aged 13–25. There are local Connexions partnerships in each area. Personal advisers help with family life, school, college and going to work.

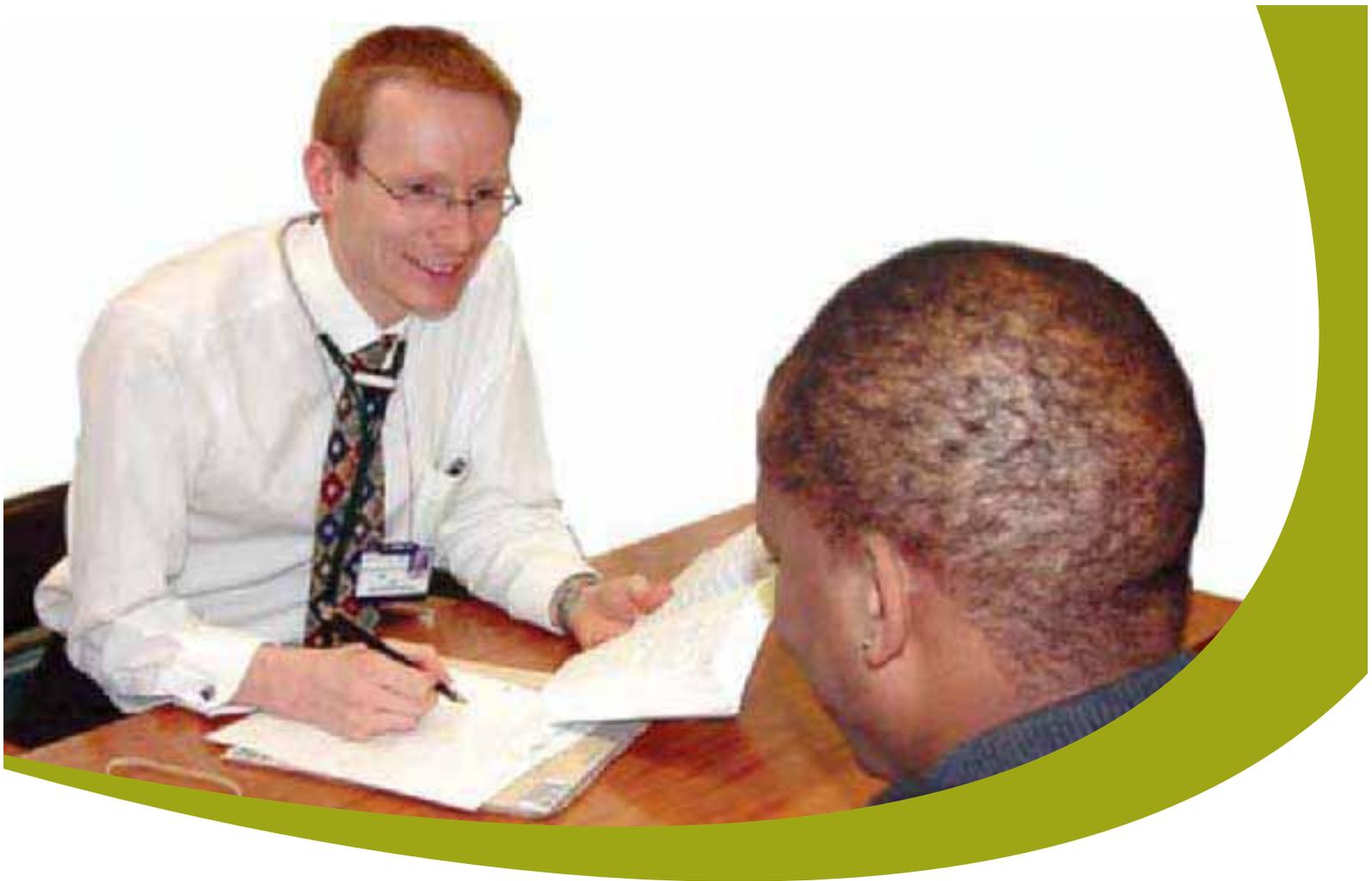
Council for Disabled Children

The Council for Disabled Children talks to disabled children, their parents and other agencies to share good practice in children's services.

Transition Information Network

The Transition Information Network helps disabled young people who are leaving school and becoming adults. They give help, advice and information to disabled young people and their families and carers. They send out a magazine called *My Future Choices* three times a year.





Health advice

NHS Direct

You can phone NHS Direct and ask about any health problems. Telephone 0845 46 47. There is also an NHS Direct interactive service on digital satellite television and an NHS Direct website at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

NHS walk-in centres

There are now NHS walk-in centres throughout England. They are usually open seven days a week, from early in the morning until late in the evening. They offer:

- treatment for minor illnesses and injuries
- experienced NHS nurses
- advice on how to stay healthy
- information on out-of-hours GP and dental services
- information on local pharmacy services
- information on other local health services.

What has happened this year

The work of the Learning Disability Task Force

Key points

- The Task Force helps the Government think about the needs of people with a learning disability when we write our plans.
- The Task Force worked on some important things last year, including people with high support needs, community safety, family carers and stopping people being sent to live away from their communities.
- It also changed the way it works.

The Learning Disability Task Force is a group of people who work with the Government. They help check that the things in *Valuing People* are happening and that people's lives are getting better.

Members of the Task Force include people with a learning disability, family carers and other people who understand what is important to people with a learning disability.

The Learning Disability Task Force's annual report for 2004, *Challenging, listening, helping to improve lives*, was published on 8 June 2005.



What the Task Force did in 2004

The Task Force changed the way it works. This will make it easier for the Task Force to look at the things that are really important for people with a learning disability. It will also make sure that the people who can make changes happen hear what the Task Force has to say.



The Task Force helped the Government think about the needs of people with a learning disability when we were writing our plans and programmes. The Government has written about our plans in these reports:

- *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*
- *Independence, Well-being and Choice*
- the Mental Capacity Bill (now the Mental Capacity Act 2005)
- *Choosing Health.*

The Task Force also helped the Government with our Supporting People programme.



You can find out more about these reports on page 52.

A portrait of Michelle Chinery, a woman with long brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a light-colored zip-up top. The background is a whiteboard filled with handwritten notes and diagrams in various colors. Some visible text includes "Update", "Interviews", "What about people 'under' more than", "Physical & sensory disabilities", "Mental health", and "What's happening in the white papers".

Michelle
Chinery

To make sure that the Task Force told us what people with a learning disability really want and need, the Task Force worked with the National Forum for People with Learning Disabilities and the Valuing People Support Team.

The Task Force talked about four main things during the year:

- **people with high support needs**
- **community safety**
- **family carers**
- **stopping people being sent to live away from their communities.**

The Task Force also worked on:

- improving communications
- making sure that people from ethnic minority communities are included

A portrait of Mary Ney, a woman with short dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark jacket over a red top and a necklace. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Mary Ney

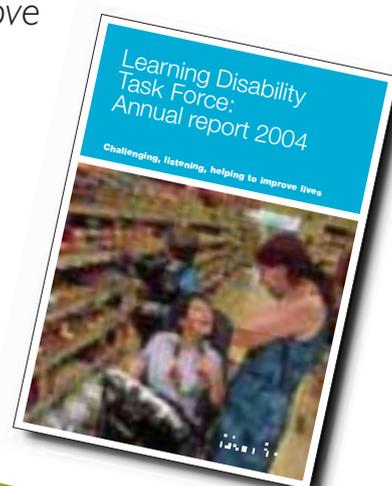
- checking how much money is spent on services for people with a learning disability
- making it easier for people with a learning disability to open a bank account.

The Task Force wants to make sure that changes keep happening. The Government will work with them to keep making the things in *Valuing People* happen.

The Government wants to say thank you to the Task Force for their work. We welcome the changes they are making to the way they work.

Michelle Chinery and Mary Ney, the co-chairs of the Learning Disability Task Force, say at the end of their report: "The new ways the Task Force will work will make sure **everyone's voice is heard.**"

You can find out more about the Task Force in their annual report for 2004, *Challenging, listening, helping to improve lives.*





Children and young people

Key points

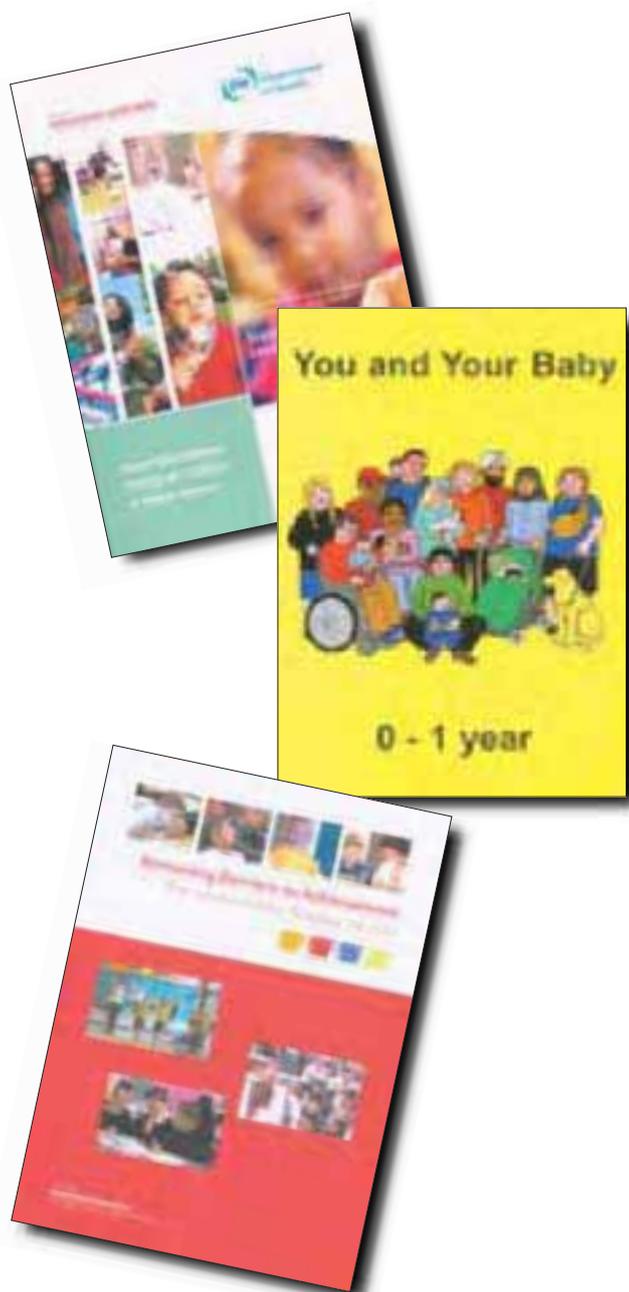
- The Government wants children and their families to have services that meet their needs. This means that we need to think about their needs when we plan and set up services.
- The Government wants everyone in England who works with children to work better together.

The Government wants all children and young people to have a good life.

Disabled children can have a lot of needs. They often need to use lots of different services. The Government wants children and their families to have services that meet their needs. This means that we need to think about their needs when we plan and set up services.

This year, the Government has made many changes to the way we plan services for children. Changes to children's services are shown in these reports and programmes:

- *Every Child Matters*
- *National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services*
- Early Support programme
- 10-year plan for childcare
- *Removing Barriers to Achievement.*



Every Child Matters

Every Child Matters: Change for Children is a big project across England for everyone who works with children. This includes teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers, youth workers and many other people.

The project aims to make everyone aware of the things children and young people need to help them be happy, successful, healthy and safe. The Government wants people to work better together to look after the needs of children.

In *Every Child Matters* we said we would have a new law about children's services. This new law, called the Children Act 2004, started to work in November last year. The law made lots of changes. These are three of them:

- It made a new job called the Children's Commissioner for England. Professor Al Aynsley Green got this job and started work in July. His job is to speak up for the views and interests of children and young people.

- The law says that local councils and other agencies like health authorities must work together so that children and young people get better services and have better lives. They will do this through children's trusts. Children's trusts can provide services to disabled young people up to the age of 25.
- There are 8 children's trusts looking at services for disabled children. We call these children's trusts 'pathfinders'. We are asking them to help show other local authority areas how they can improve support for disabled children.

National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services

The Government published the *National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services* in September 2004. These are our ideas and plans about how to make services better for all children and young people in:

- the health service
- social care
- schools.

It will take a long time to do this.



The report has a section about disabled children and their families. It says that they should get good services. To do this, everyone needs to work well together. The Government needs to think about the needs of children and their families when we plan and set up services. These services should help disabled children and their families do the things that all families do and help them be included in their communities.

Early Support programme

Getting support right for disabled children when they are young is very important. It helps give them the best start in life.

In last year's report the Government said something about the new Early Support programme, run by the Department for Education and Skills. It is for disabled babies and children under 3 years old and their families.

We want the programme to help make services for very young children and their families work better at national, regional and local levels.

We have used the ideas in the Early Support programme in lots of other government reports, including *Every Child Matters* and *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*.

The programme has produced information and advice about services for disabled children and their families, including an Early Support family pack. The Government wants all local councils to use the ideas and ways of working in the Early Support programme for young children's services. We have sent them advice about this.

10-year plan for childcare

In December 2004, the Government published a 10-year plan for childcare services. It says that disabled children and their families should be able to use all the different types of childcare that other families can use.

As part of our 10-year plan, we also want to set up 3,500 **children's centres** by the year 2010. We will make sure they are run well. Ofsted will do checks of children's centres to make sure they are giving a good service. Ofsted are the people who check up on schools.



The Early Support programme has helped Sharon Kelly and her daughter Alysha

Sharon is from Salford and has a 2-year-old daughter called Alysha. Alysha is disabled and was born with very serious health problems. Alysha had to see many different doctors, so her family has spent a lot of time in hospital.

Sharon's family was asked if they would like to join the Early Support programme to see if it could make things easier for them. They agreed and were given a family service plan.

The plan told the family all about Alysha's needs. It meant her medical history was all in one place. Having the plan meant that hospital staff did not have to ask so many questions every time Alysha went to hospital. The plan was like a guide for the staff to see how Alysha was doing as she got older.

People with a family service plan can make suggestions about how things can be different. Sharon asked to have copies of letters the doctor wrote after each visit to hospital. This helped the family keep all the information about Alysha together.

Sharon has become a member of the Early Support Steering Group for Salford. She helps people understand what it is like to be a parent of a child with a disability.

Removing Barriers to Achievement

The Government is working on our ideas and plans for children with special educational needs. We wrote about this in the report *Removing Barriers to Achievement* in February 2004.

We are doing a national audit of services. This means that we are looking at what services there are for children with special educational needs in England. This will help us understand how things are done in different parts of the country. It will also show us where services are missing.

The Government wants places used by young children, schools and local authorities to include disabled children. The law says they should do this. We are working with the Disability Rights Commission, the Council for Disabled Children and others to help these places do this.





Leaving school and becoming an adult

Key points

- Good plans saying what a young person is going to do when they leave school need to be in place long before the person leaves school.
- Things work better when young people take part in making their own plans.
- Things work better when the different organisations that support young people work well together.

When children leave school they need new things to do. They might start a job, go to college or go to a day service. This time is often called 'transition'. This can be a difficult time for young people with a learning disability.

Good plans saying what a young person is going to do when they leave school need to be in place long before the person leaves school. All the services that help and support disabled young people need to work together and not stop when they leave school.

We want young people to be able to make better choices about their lives. *The story so far...* shows that things are getting better in some places for disabled young people who are ready to leave school. This is when:

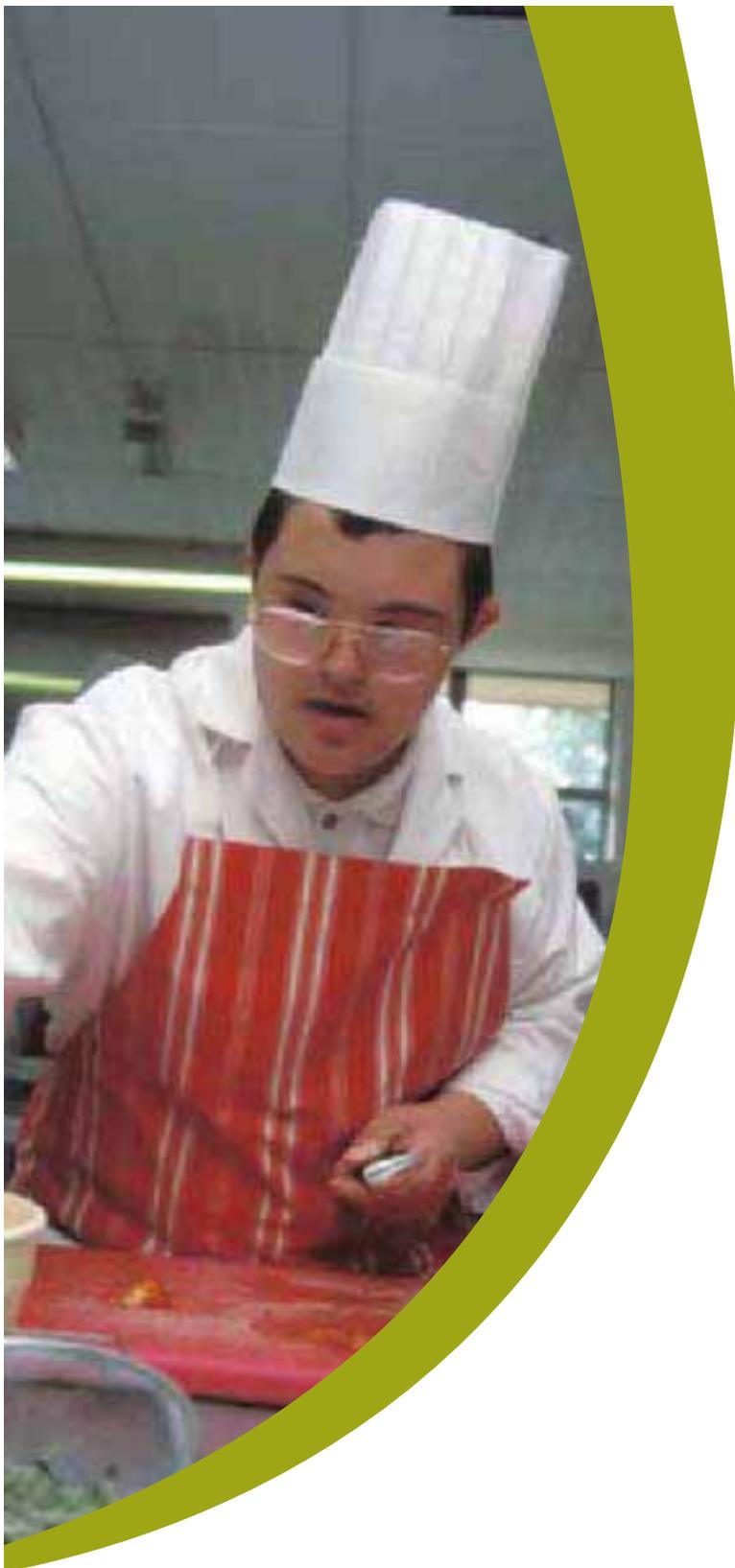
- the different organisations work well together
- young people take part in making their plans.

Children's trusts are now bringing together services for all children and disabled young people up to the age of 25.

We want to see all the services that help and support disabled young people working together. We call this 'joint commissioning'. The money for services needs to be shared out better among services.

The Government also wants organisations like Connexions to give even more help to young people on the things that matter most to them, like family life, school, college and going to work.





Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People

Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People said the Government should make things better for disabled young people leaving school. We are now doing the things suggested in the report.

The report said the Government should make sure disabled young people play a real part in planning their transition when they leave school.

The Department for Education and Skills and the Valuing People Support Team have worked with 4 councils in London to help young people with a learning disability make better choices about their lives. They are now working with 70 councils to do this.

There is a lot of advice and guidance about making sure young people with a learning disability get good services when they leave school. The Department for Education and Skills is going to put all the advice and guidance into one book so everyone can have good information. The Transition Information Network will make this information easy to get hold of.

These changes to improve services for young people are shown in the government reports *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People* and *Youth Matters*.

Youth Matters

The Government published a report called *Youth Matters* in July 2005. It said what we want for young people. We asked people to tell us what they thought about our ideas.

Youth Matters says:

- there should be more things to do and places to go for young people
- young people should have more control over what activities and services there are for young people
- there should be better information, advice and help for young people
- there should be better support for young people who have other or more serious problems.

Youth Matters is about *all* young people, including young people with a learning disability. There was a list of questions especially for young people to tell us what they think. An easy read version of the questionnaire, called *Somewhere to go? Something to do?*, is available at www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/youth/es.shtml



Connexions

Connexions is an advice service for young people aged 13–19 and disabled young people aged 13–25. There are local Connexions partnerships in each area. Personal advisers help young people with family life, school, college and going to work.

Connexions partnerships have to set up good ways of working with groups like Learning Disability Partnership Boards. Connexions partnerships provide support for young people with a learning disability until they are 25 – if they need it.

This is to make sure that things work well for each young person as they change to using adult services.

The logo for Connexions features the word 'connexions' in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The 'o' is a solid orange circle, and the 'n' is a solid orange shape. The remaining letters are in a dark purple color. A thin orange line starts under the 'o', goes under the 'n', and then forms a jagged, mountain-like shape above the 'i', 'o', 'n', and 's'.

The best start in life for every young person

Just Say, Dorset People First

Connexions pays for the Just Say project to help young people with a learning disability have a voice. It has set up and supported Speak Up forums for young people with a learning disability in 6 schools and colleges in Dorset.

Three young adults have been trained and supported to help run the project and go to meetings, work in the office and give their views on the future of the project.

The groups meet at a school, college, youth club or local day centre. Just Say has also set up a youth forum for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole.

An 'Independence Day' brought young people together. They talked about issues with decision-makers from the local authorities, health authorities and Connexions. They also got to talk about things that are important in their lives.

For more information about Just Say, go to www.dorsetpeoplefirst.co.uk

Choice and control

Everyone with a learning disability can play a part in making decisions about their lives. To do this, the Government must listen to people with a learning disability and give them a chance to have their say.

The story so far... looked at the important things that will give people with a learning disability more choice and control.

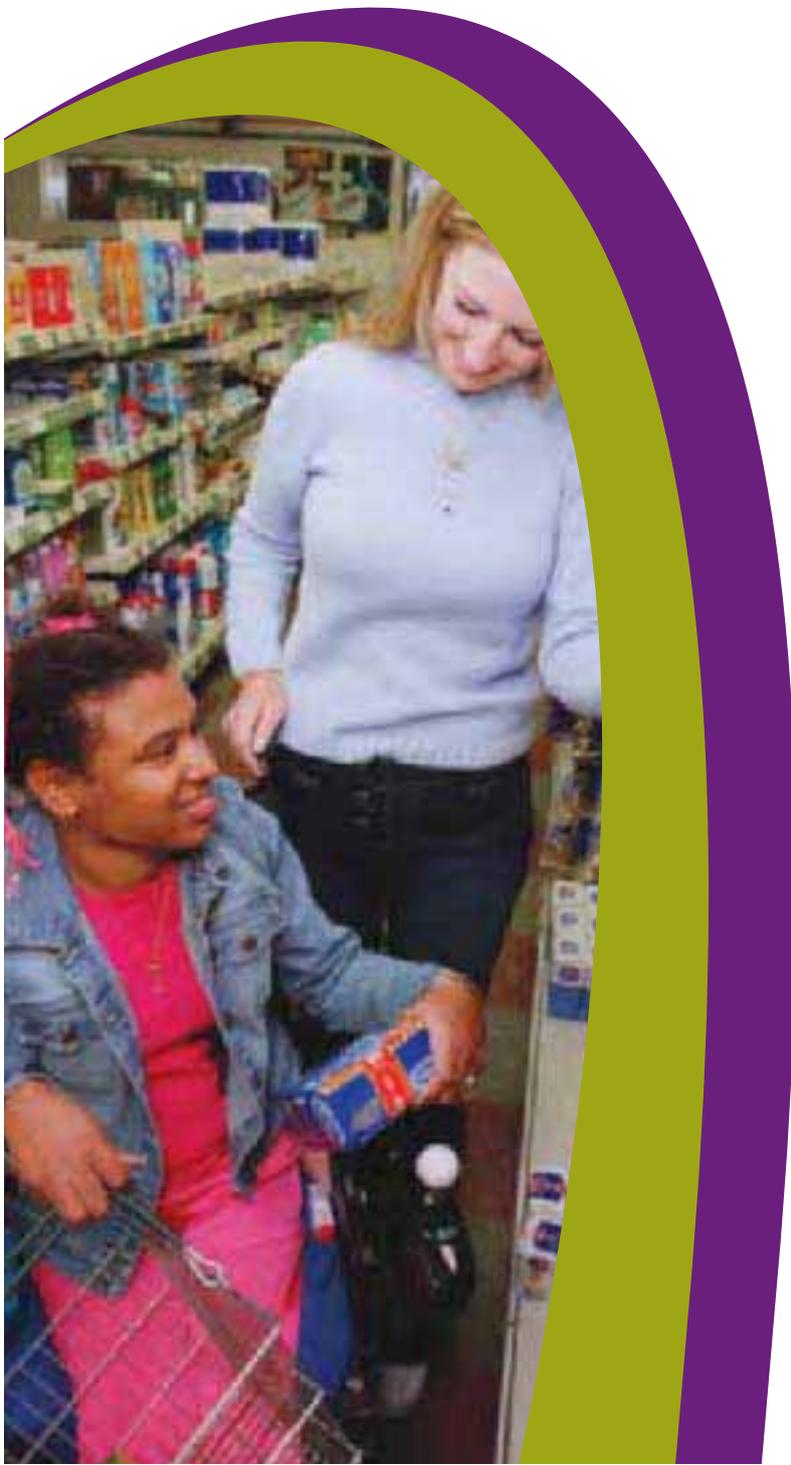
Key points

The Government thinks:

- everyone with a learning disability should play a full part in making decisions about their lives
- all the people arranging and providing services for people with a learning disability must listen to what people with a learning disability say.

Things that can help people choose what is right for them include:

- advocacy
- direct payments and individual budgets
- person-centred planning
- communication
- family carer networks.



Advocacy

Citizen advocacy is when someone helps a person with a learning disability get their wishes heard and understood. Advocacy is very important for making the things in *Valuing People* happen. This is because things work better if people have choice and control in their lives.

There is now more advocacy to help people with a learning disability speak out. More councils are spending money on advocacy. The amount of money councils spent on advocacy more than doubled between 2001 and 2004. But some councils still spend very little. However, government money for advocacy (£900,000 from a Valuing People fund) has been a great help.

Self-advocacy is speaking up for yourself. The **National Forum for People with Learning Disabilities** has regional forums in England. There are 1,000 self-advocates on the regional forums. The regional forums give local government, the health service, businesses and the media a way of working with people with a learning disability. Self-advocates on the National Forum are helping change the Government's ideas on things.





Social care services – direct payments and individual budgets

People with a learning disability are taking more control of their own services. Many more people are getting **direct payments** than a few years ago. This is really important to help people live independently. **Individual budgets** are also helping.

Direct payments are when people are given money to pay for the services they need themselves.

They can choose what services to spend the money on. They can pay people to give them the support they want, in the way they choose. If there is not a service that suits them, they can make their own.

If people cannot manage a direct payment on their own, then someone else can help them.

Individual budgets are when people are told how much money there is for services and support for them. People say what services they really want and need. They do not have to pay service providers themselves if they do not want to. People do not have to handle money themselves if they do not want to.

The Valuing People Support Team's In Control project is already testing out how to make individual budgets happen in different parts of England. This will help us learn if the idea of individual budgets could work in future for other groups of people and with more types of funding.

Sometimes people need to find other ways to get more control over their services. For example, some families and councils have set up trust funds for people with high support needs.

The Government wants to give more control to people by giving them the power to manage the money for the services they get. We said this in our report *Independence, Well-being and Choice*.

We said that both **direct payments** and **individual budgets** would make services better. People would use the money for services they wanted – so good services would get more money. Services would have to listen more to what people want, otherwise they would not get any money.

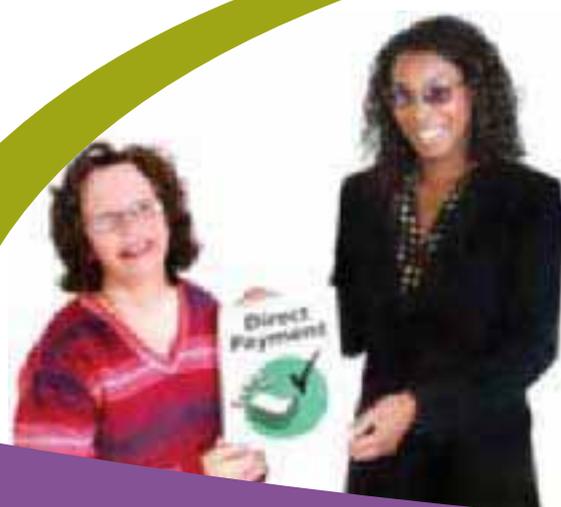
Person-centred planning

Person-centred planning means supporting a person to work out what they want in their life and how services should help them do this. Services should then be planned to give them the things they want and need.

Person-centred planning can help disabled young people think about what they want to do when they leave school and what services they need.

Person-centred planning can make a real difference to people's lives. It can help them make choices, make friends and get involved in the area where they live.

Some work has been done about person-centred planning. It shows that when it is done well it makes people's lives better. Over 200 people have been trained as local person-centred trainers. And at least 6,500 people have now trained as person-centred facilitators.



Communication

To make choices about their lives and what is important to them, people need better information about the services and equipment they can get. More organisations now think about making information easier for people with a learning disability to understand. The Government wrote more information in easy read format in 2004 and will carry on doing more.

Family carer networks

More is being done to involve families. Learning Disability Partnership Boards now have at least two family carers as members. Partnership Boards come together as regional networks, which means that family carers can learn from each other and share ideas.

Some people are missing out

People from ethnic minority communities and people who need lots of help are still not benefiting from the changes to services for people with a learning disability. The Government is working to make sure that these people's needs are met.

For example, the Learning Disability Task Force wrote a guide called *Learning Difficulties and Ethnicity: A framework for action*. Partnership Boards now have good information on how to check that services for people with a learning disability meet the needs of people from ethnic minority communities.



There has also been progress with respecting people's rights. The **Disability Rights Commission**, **Values Into Action** and many **advocacy groups** are helping support people who have been treated unfairly and discriminated against. When people's rights have been denied, they have been successful in getting support from the Disability Rights Commission.





Better lives

Key points

Some important things that can help people have better lives are:

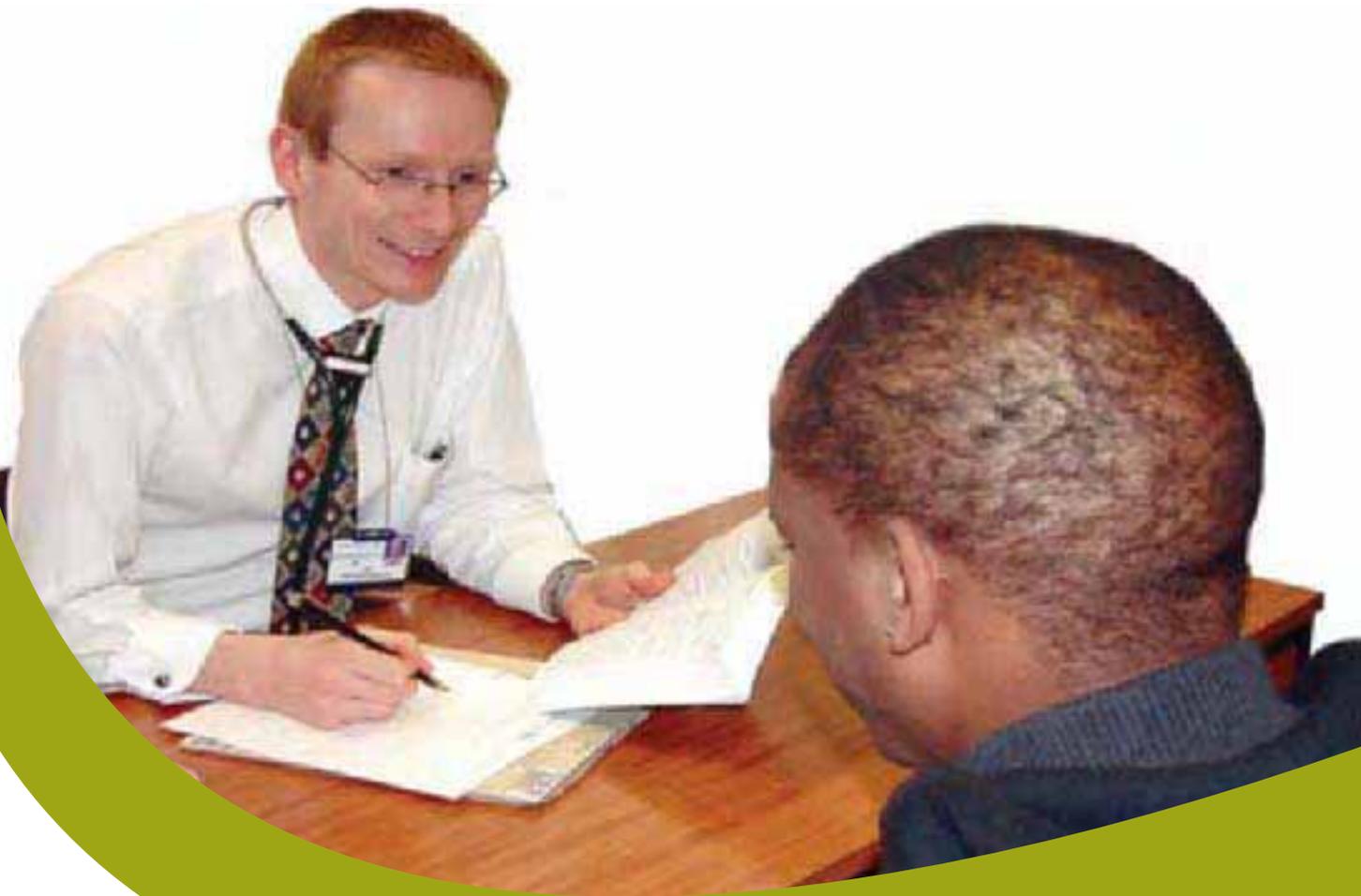
- helping people have better health
- helping people find jobs
- giving people more choice in housing and stopping people being sent away from their communities
- giving families good support
- making sure that people are safe on the streets
- making it easier to use transport.

The Valuing People Support Team's report *The story so far...* said:

- What is most important is that people's lives begin to change. People now have more going on in their lives; they do ordinary things like going clubbing and shopping.
- The public is starting to change their attitudes towards people with a learning disability.

The things that make a difference to people's quality of life are:

- better health
- employment
- housing
- family support
- getting out and about
- transport.



Better health

Many people with a learning disability have worse health than other people. The Department of Health and the Disability Rights Commission are trying to find out why this is.

Some good things are happening to help people have better health:

- GP practices are now making sure that people with a learning disability are not left out of screening programmes that test for things like cancer. A national network of learning disability nurses and other people works to make this happen.
- Some general hospitals are making things better for people with a learning disability when they go to hospital.

Employment

The Government is working to help more people with a learning disability get jobs. Some people with a learning disability have got paid work. A recent survey of people with a learning disability was issued in September. It was called *Adults with Learning Difficulties in England 2003/4*. Of the 3,000 people with a learning disability who were surveyed, the authors found that about one in six of them (17%) had a paid job and that about one in twenty people with a learning disability (6%) had an unpaid job.

But we know there is still more to be done. The Department of Health and the Department for Work and Pensions supported a working group of experts on learning disability and employment. The group included self-advocates with a learning disability. The group wrote a report called *Valuing People: Occupation Supports Participation*. The report has ideas about how to help more people with a learning disability get a job. The Government will think about the group's ideas.

Work for people with a disability is also talked about in the report *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*.





Housing

Many people now have places to live with support that suits them. The Supporting People programme gives people more choice and helps them live in their own homes.

Some councils are closing large residential care homes. People with a learning disability are moving into supported living. In supported living, people can choose where they live, who they live with and how they are supported.

- A few more people own their homes.
- Some have help with shared ownership schemes.
- Some have mortgages to buy their own homes.

Many people with a learning disability used to live in long-stay hospitals. Most of the long-stay hospitals have now closed. But we have not closed as many as we hoped.

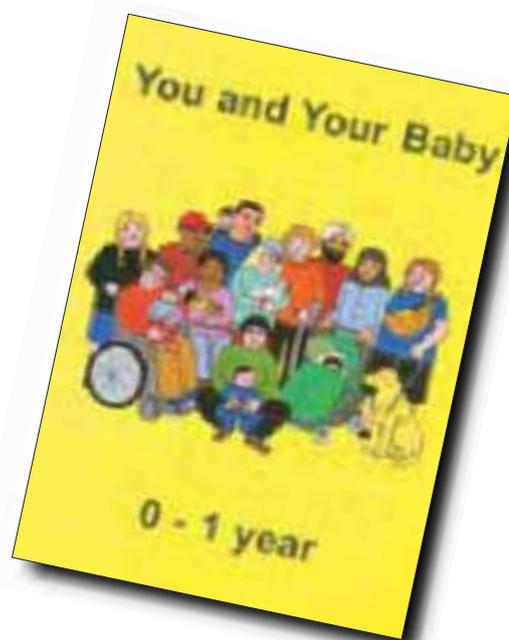
We expect all the hospitals to be closed by 1 April 2006, except for 2 long-stay hospitals where legal problems are stopping them from closing. The Valuing People Support Team will be working closely with them to check that they are closed in 2006.

Too many people are still being sent to live a long way from home and their communities. This often happens to people with lots of needs who cannot easily speak up for themselves. The Healthcare Commission is getting the NHS to collect information about this. They want to find out which health authorities are sending people to live a long way from home.

Family support

- Some family support services are getting better.
- Some councils have made plans for services for people living with older carers.
- More families of people with a learning disability are getting short breaks. These are important to help families who spend a lot of time caring for a person with a learning disability.
- Lots of people have used the Learning Disability Helpline run by Mencap. The Department of Health pays for the helpline. It is an important way for people to get information.

- Some people with a learning disability are parents themselves. CHANGE has written a book about being a good parent for parents with a learning disability.





Getting out and about

Getting out and about is an important part of being a member of society.

Some good things are happening. For example:

- There have been some good local transport projects. Transport for London has designed new bus maps called spider maps. These maps are easy to understand. You can now get these maps for every part of London. This is a good example of how working with people with a learning disability can make public services better for everyone.
- The Metropolitan Police has worked with self-advocates with a learning disability to start making sure that being safe on the streets is taken seriously in London. They have also written a booklet about being safe.

Transport

The Government is doing lots of things to make it easier for people with a learning disability to use transport:

- All new buses and trains must have spaces for people who use wheelchairs. There are bright colours to help people with low vision and rails for people who find it difficult to walk.
- New rules say bus drivers have to help disabled people. The Department for Transport is training bus drivers to help them understand what disabled people need. We have made a training video with a person with a learning disability.
- On new trains, all the information must be spoken and written. This helps everybody understand what is being said about the next stop or if there are any delays. There is spoken and written information now on some buses and at bus stops. There will be more of this in future.
- The Government gives advice to local councils about making signs and information easy to understand.
- In London and some other big cities, taxis have to be accessible to people using wheelchairs.
- Local councils can use some of their money to reduce or pay fares for people who do not have much money.
- New laws under the Disability Discrimination Act will help with better information about transport. These new laws mean that people who work in transport – on buses, trains or taxis or in stations – are not allowed to behave unfairly towards a disabled person.
- A person with a learning disability is a member of the Disabled Person's Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC).



Making things happen

Making *Valuing People* happen

To make the plans in *Valuing People* happen, the Government has to:

- provide the right support at national and local levels
- get better at checking how things are going.

The Government must carry on working hard to keep on making our plans in *Valuing People* happen. We need change to take place more quickly over the next few years.



National and local support

There are new structures and ways of working to make change happen. The Valuing People Support Team is helping to make these things happen.

- The **Learning Disability Partnership Boards** are working well around the country. They show how to involve people with a learning disability and their families in planning services and making *Valuing People* happen.

- The **Learning Disability Development Fund** has made a real difference. It gives money to Partnership Boards and for things like advocacy and person-centred planning. There is more money in the fund this year. This will help do things like stopping people being sent to live a long way from home and making it easier for people to find a job.



The Valuing People Support Team also gets money from the Learning Disability Development Fund. Last year it spent money on things like leadership programmes, regional learning networks and practical 'toolkits'.

- The **Learning Disability Awards**

Framework has made staff training better for people who work with people with a learning disability. More people who work with people with a learning disability now have a National Vocational Qualification.

- The Valuing People Support Team is helping make new ways of working happen. People with an interest in learning disabilities say good things about the Valuing People Support Team's work. The Government has also looked at the way *Valuing People* has been put in place because it is a good example of how to make change happen.

- There are new ideas about how to get information from local councils about social care services. This year the NHS has sent new information to the Healthcare Commission. The Healthcare Commission checks how well the NHS is working. The Healthcare Commission can use the new information when they give hospitals NHS 'star ratings' to show how good they are.
- The Healthcare Commission has also asked someone to look at the health needs of people with a learning disability and to be a special 'champion' of learning disabilities.
- Lancaster University is working with the Department of Health to work out how to check how well government departments are doing on learning disability services.

Checking how things are doing

New things are being done to help organisations really check how well they are doing.



Survey of people with learning difficulties

In last year's annual report, *Valuing People: Moving Forward Together*, we said we would ask people with a learning disability to think about their lives. In September 2005, there was a report of this survey in *Adults with Learning Difficulties in England 2003/4*. The Government is looking at the survey to see how it can help change things for people with a learning disability.

People with a learning disability were on the project's advisory group to help plan how to do the survey and write the questions. They helped test the questions with other people with a learning disability. They also helped write the report.

The survey talked to nearly 3,000 people who were 16 years old or older. They talked to people who were:

- living in their own homes
- living with their parents or other relatives
- living in different types of supported accommodation and residential care homes.

These are some of the things people with a learning disability said:

Work: Not many people with a learning disability have paid work. Only 1 out of 6 of the people in the survey work.

Where people live: Half the people with a learning disability in the survey live with their parents (50%); others (12%) live with someone else in their family.

Seeing friends: People with a learning disability were less likely to have contact with friends than people without a learning disability. Just over 2 out of 3 people (69%) had contact with friends at least once a year. Nearly 1 out of 3 (31%) said they did not have contact with friends.

Crime: Nearly 1 in 10 people (9%) said they had been the victim of crime in the last year.

Happiness: Nearly half the people interviewed (47%) said they were very happy. But a small number (4%) said they were mostly unhappy.

Money: Just over half the people interviewed (54%) said someone else decided how much money they could spend each week.

Health: Nearly everyone (99%) said they were registered with a doctor and nearly half the people (45%) said that their health was very good, with another 41% of people saying their health was good. Only 15% thought their health was not good.

You can get a copy of the survey from the Department of Health website at www.dh.gov.uk/publications

Help from the Government

Valuing People was different to other government plans because it made people with a learning disability the centre of everything. Now, many other plans from other parts of the Government do this too.

Some other plans in recent government reports will help make the things in *Valuing People* happen. These include:

Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People

This report sets out the Government's plans on how people with a disability can live independently, how young children and their families can get better support, and what services should be available to help young people leave school and become adults. The report also sets out the Government's plans about employment for people with a disability.



Independence, Well-being and Choice

Independence, Well-being and Choice sets out the Government's ideas about how to make social care better. We think it is better to have services to fit around a person and help them get the life they want. It always used to be the other way round and the person had to fit around the services.

The ideas in *Independence, Well-being and Choice* talked about how to:

- give people more control over their lives
- give people better choices about the services they get and the lives they lead
- find ways of knowing that social care is really making people's lives better.

We asked people to tell us about what they thought about our ideas:

- nearly 1,400 people wrote to us
- we had 9 large meetings
- there were many local meetings.

We found out:

- **People want to have an ordinary life, do ordinary things and be able to take more risks for themselves.**
- **Many people want to have direct payments instead of services so they can buy what they need to stay independent.**
- **People want staff who work with them to be respectful and treat them with dignity.**

In time, there will be a report about what people said. It will also say what the Government thought about the things people said.

A White Paper on improving community health and social care

We want to improve how people can get health and social care services in their community. We are planning a White Paper. This will be about how we plan to change the NHS and social care.

We want people to be able to see someone about their health or social care needs in their local area rather than go to hospital. This will mean big changes for everyone.

Recently, people have found that they do not have to go to see a family doctor for all their health needs. Now, people can phone the NHS Direct helpline if they want some information about health, or they can visit NHS walk-in centres. People can also get money from social services to pay for the help they need.

Between September and November 2005, we will talk to many people about what they want from the health service and social care.

We will ask them how the services should work. We are calling this stage 'Your health, your care, your say'.

We are making a special effort to include people who often don't get listened to. This includes people with a disability as well as young people, people from black and ethnic minorities and homeless people.



The White Paper on improving community health and social care will shape the way that the NHS and social care provide health services in the future. This is an important report to look out for at the start of next year.

Removing Barriers to Achievement

This report sets out the Government's plans to make sure that *everyone* is included at school. It talks about how to make the change from school to adult life easier, and what help there is for young people.

National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services

This plan is about making things better in the health service, social care and schools for all children and young people. There is more information about the plan on page 54.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005

This new law will start working in 2007. It will:

- help make it easier for some people to decide about things to do with money, health and services
- help make it easier for some people to make their own decisions
- protect people who cannot make their own decisions about some things.

The new law will make things better for vulnerable people, including those with a learning disability, who cannot make decisions about some things. It will give them a right to:

- have as much control as possible over decisions that affect their lives
- be involved in making decisions.

The new law has important new ideas. It says that:

- people need to start by thinking that everyone can make their own decisions
- people need to be given support to help them make decisions, including help with communications.

The new law brings in a new Court of Protection that will help when vulnerable people cannot make their own decisions about some things. There will also be a new advocacy service to help people who have no family or friends to make important decisions.

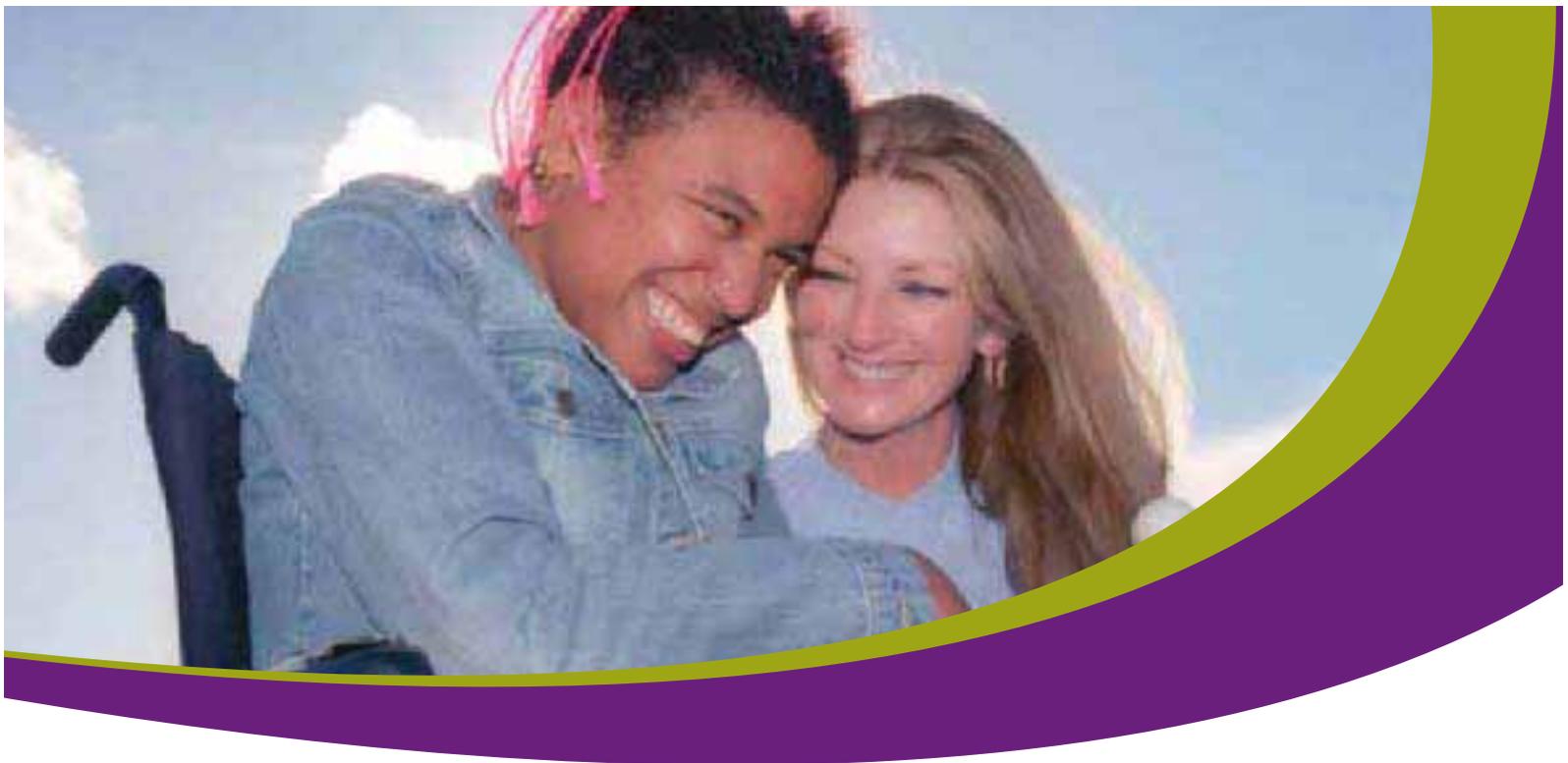
Commission for Equality and Human Rights

The Government plans to set up a new Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) in 2007. The CEHR will work hard to stop people being treated unfairly because of their disability, race, colour, sex, religion or ethnicity.

Office for Disability Issues

The Government plans to set up a small group of people who will make sure that the different parts of the Government work together in a better way. It will help make sure that the Government's plans on different issues take account of what disabled people want. This group will be called the Office for Disability Issues. It will be set up later this year.





Our challenges

It has been a really busy year for the Government. We have written lots of reports, such as *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People and Independence, Well-being and Choice*, and set up new things. We have also seen many things working well – like Partnership Boards and the Learning Disability Task Force.

But we and people with a learning disability and their families want to see things happen more quickly. We know there is still a lot of work to do.

The story so far... says the Government should build on the plans in *Valuing People* to create a framework for learning disability services in the future. *The story so far...* said that there are several challenges to do with choice and control, better lives, and making things in *Valuing People* happen.

Choice and control

We want to give people with a learning disability more choice and control over their lives. Our challenges are to make sure that:

- more money and support is provided for advocacy, to give people a chance to speak out
- people get better support to challenge when they are being treated unfairly
- even more people receive direct payments
- most people receive individualised budgets
- families are listened to more and get better support
- parents with a learning disability get a fair deal
- people from minority ethnic communities do not miss out
- people with complex needs are involved in planning services and in the delivery of *Valuing People*.



Better lives

People with a learning disability want many of the same things as anyone else in society. They want to shop, go out, be healthy and live an independent life. But this doesn't always happen. Our challenges are to make sure that:

- the NHS treats people with a learning disability like they would any other patient, so that people with a learning disability have just as good health as other people
- the Government's employment programmes for people with a learning disability work better so that more people get paid jobs
- people have more choices about where they live and have more rights in the houses they live in
- all but 2 of the long-stay hospitals are closed by 1 April 2006
- people stop being sent to live away from their local community
- children with a disability who leave school go on to college or a day service and are involved in planning their transition from child to young person.

Making things happen

To make *Valuing People* happen, the Government needs to give the right support nationally and locally, for example through Learning Disability Partnership Boards. We also need to get better at checking on how things are going to keep on improving services. Our challenges are to make sure that:

- the Learning Disability Development Fund continues and is used well for the benefit of people with a learning disability
- the money spent on learning disability services keeps up with changing demand
- we listen more to what people need and find out whether services meet people's needs
- all parts of the Government and local public services include people with a learning disability more in their plans.

The Government believes that these challenges have to be addressed so that things are different in a few years' time.

Reports from the Government

Valuing People: a new strategy for the 21st Century (2001)

The Government's plan to make the lives of people with a learning disability and their families better. It said there had to be big changes so that people with a learning disability can be equal citizens. It said there needs to be changes to services and to the public's attitudes to people with a learning disability. It said that people with a learning disability had to be put at the centre of all decisions.

Valuing People: The story so far... (2005)

The Valuing People Support Team's report on how well they are doing with making the things in *Valuing People* happen. It also says what needs to happen in the next 5 years.

Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People (2005)

The report sets out the Government's ideas for:

- helping disabled people live independently
- giving better support to families with young disabled children
- giving more help for young people moving into adulthood
- helping people with a learning disability get and keep jobs.

Choosing Health White Paper (2004)

A report about plans for improving people's health.





Independence, Well-being and Choice Green Paper (2005)

The Government's ideas for better social care services for adult social care.

The White Paper on improving community health and social care (not yet published)

A website with more information on having your say about:

- what you think of health and social services now
- what you think should be done to make them better.

You can see the website at www.nhs.uk/yoursay/

Challenging, listening, helping to improve lives (2004)

The Learning Disability Task Force's report about their work in the last year.

The key topics are:

- people with high support needs
- community safety
- family carers
- people being sent to live away from home.

Removing Barriers to Achievement (2004)

A report about the Government's ideas for children with special educational needs. The key topics in the report are:

- helping children when they are young
- making all schools inclusive – more children with a disability should go to mainstream schools
- bringing out the best in every child
- everyone working better together.



Adults with Learning Difficulties in England 2003/4 (2005)

The Government said in *Valuing People* that we would find out about the lives of people with a learning disability and their families. This is the report of that survey. The report tells how much more needs to be done if people with learning difficulties are to be more included and have a better life.

Youth Matters Green Paper (2005)

This is the Government's ideas for how we support and challenge young people. The key topics are that:

- there should be more things to do and places to go for young people
- young people should have more control and influence over what services are available to them
- there should be better information, advice and guidance for young people
- there should be better support for young people who have problems.

National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (2004)

This is the Government's plan about how to make services better in the health service, social care and schools for all children and young people.

The report has a section about disabled children and their families. Children and their families should get good services. To do this, everyone needs to work well together.

The Government needs to think about the needs of children and their families when we plan and set up services. These services should help disabled children and their families do the things that all families do, and help them be included in their communities.



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