



**January 2010**

## **Valuing People Now – one year on!**

*Valuing People Now* was launched on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2009. In the past year we have seen good progress in a number of areas.

Anne Williams, National Director for Learning Disabilities at DH says: “We are seeing real success as more people are using advocacy services and personal budgets, and having more choice and control in their lives.”

Regionally and locally there have been some good improvements, including:

- people with learning disabilities and family carers being more involved in local partnership boards
- people with learning disabilities having a stronger voice
- annual health checks have started in most areas
- more people having a choice about where they live
- more people living in their own homes with support
- Programme Boards have been set up in each of the nine regions, with support from the regional Valuing People Programme Leads.
- many Partnership Boards have taken up the challenge to become stronger and more effective locally.
- leadership in the NHS has been very good in many places
- some regions have developed programmes to give people more choice about where they live, and campus closure is progressing well

- some creative approaches to supporting more people into paid work have been identified and developed

Nationally, key achievements include:

- publication of the ***Valuing People Now Resource Pack*** (March 2009)
- the appointment of a new Co-National Director for Learning Disabilities, Scott Watkin (May 2009)
- publication of the cross-government Employment Strategy (***Valuing Employment Now***, June 2009)
- publication of the Guidance Pack for Partnership Boards (***Getting the Best from your Partnership Board***, November 2009)
- the appointment of team of national programme leads to lead the work strands
- the establishment of a cross-government team to take forward Valuing Employment Now
- the recruitment of people with learning disabilities in some Government departments

Mencap have dedicated a page on their website to our first anniversary saying: "We have seen real commitment at the national level to make 'Valuing People Now' deliver, and there have been some encouraging signs" ...."we now hope that the strategy can really deliver at the local level."

Making it happen locally is the focus of the delivery plan for 2010 - 2011, currently being drafted by DH. This will concentrate on the key areas of Health, Housing and Employment, and other priorities, with the aim of spreading best practice and embedding the work in all national, regional and local services and structures.

Making ***Valuing People Now*** happen this past year has relied on spreading the message and on engaging with key stakeholders;

**Anne Williams** says “We have been so pleased to see the great enthusiasm for Valuing People Now and the all the work to make it happen led by self advocates, family carers, local Councils, the NHS and providers. Much has been achieved and there is much more to do.”

**Scott Watkin**, Co-National Director for Learning Disabilities says: “People with a learning disability and family carers have been telling me that Valuing People Now is making a difference. They have been particularly encouraged to see more people with learning disabilities employed in Government departments and greater engagement with people from black and minority ethnic communities and people with complex needs.”

This great work must continue if we are to see continued improvements in the lives of people with learning disabilities and their family carers.

Finally, we would like to say a big thank you to all our stakeholders and supporters out in the field. By continuing to work together we can ‘make it happen’ for everyone, everywhere.