



## An Introduction to Person Centred Planning

### Background

- Valuing People is the first White Paper (official government report) on learning disabilities in England for 30 years. In Wales, a report called 'Fulfilling the Promises' has been produced and from this a Practice Guide has been drafted on Person Centred Planning. This will be available in 2004.
- Valuing People sees people with learning disabilities - including people with complex multiple needs - as citizens with the same rights as everyone else. All its recommendations are based on the key principles of rights, choice, inclusion and independence.
- One of the key ideas of Valuing People is that services should use a 'person centred approach' - that is, they should be based on what the person wants. This should give people more choice and control over where they live and what they do, and support to plan ahead for changes in their life.
  - So exactly what **is** Person Centred Planning?
  - How does it help?
  - How could I be involved?
  - How can I find out more?



Person Centred planning is a process of continual listening and learning, focusing on what is important for someone now and in the future and acting on it together with family and friends.

Person centred planning tries to understand the way that someone communicates and keeps listening and learning about their likes and dislikes.

It is not a new fad - families have often been doing it quite naturally and it's not the same as assessment, reviews or care planning. It is for everybody who wants one, not just those people who are 'easy to work with'.

A number of 'tools' have been developed that can be used separately or together to help individuals or families to think about, and plan, their lives.

They have been developed partly because the assessment and individual planning systems used by professionals are not very good at involving the person themselves and they tend to focus on fitting people into services rather than looking at individually tailored options.

Person centred planning turns this around by asking the person 'how can we involve you in looking at the future? And what do you want out of life?'

The most commonly used styles of planning include:

- ❖ Essential Lifestyle Planning
- ❖ Maps
- ❖ Paths
- ❖ Personal Futures Planning
- ❖ Individual Service Design
- ❖ Personal Portfolios

Each tool has its own set of questions and guidelines but they all share key features:

- Who is this person?
- Who cares about this person?
- What are their hopes and dreams?
- The Action Plan for the Future

## **Who is this person and what do they have to offer**

One of the biggest things often missing from people's individual plans is a real description or picture of who the person actually is. In person centred planning a lot of effort is made to make sure that we know who the person is (their character), what their life has been like (their story), what they have to offer (their abilities and qualities) and how they like to be treated (their needs and wishes).



## **Who cares about this person?**



The most important person to help make the plan is the person them self, but families and other people the person knows and likes can also help. Over time this network of people will usually form a natural support network (called a circle of support) - the circle of friends that we all need.

## What are the dreams, goals and ambitions?

We need to ask people what they want out of life - even if we know that some dreams may not be fully realised. These big ambitions give us a real guide about what is important to individuals and as with most of us, they often reveal a need to make a contribution, to have choice, control and independence, but also to have meaningful relationships.



## The Action Plan - Who, What and When....?



Having found out about the person's ideal lifestyle we then need to break things down, making goals which are positive and possible. We need to work out what support people need, who are the people we need to involve and what we want them to do by when. We need to produce a plan which is clear and easy to read and need to give the person ownership of their plan.

## How Can It Help?

- ★ By recognising an individual for who they are - their gifts, aspirations, what they can bring to their local community.  
*'Through person centred planning we see Martin for the wonderful character he is, not the labels they give him. It has given our family an understanding of what is important to him so he can be himself, and what support he needs to achieve his aspirations'*  
Margaret, Martin's mum
- ★ *'There are so many reviews, reports and everything else that they put together about your child. They do not talk about the person, their character, their gifts or anything like that. I had never been asked what I liked about my child until I did person centred planning'*  
Joan, Layla's mum
- ★ *Help services change for the better*  
*'Now that there is a plan I know what Sophie wants out of her life. I am different in her reviews now because I insist that they listen to what is important to Sophie.'*  
Julia, Sophie's mum



When thinking about the future

*'Person centred planning has given us hope and a vision for a better future for Mohammed. We feel now we can have a say in what service support he receives. We no longer believe that only professionals know best for our son. Mohammed's faith and cultural needs are recognised and responded to.'*

Joynab, Mohammed's mother



Avoiding the 'nightmares'

*I never realised the gifts that my son had until we spent a day with people who had supported him over the years in the service. When he was born we were told he would never be able to do anything or learn anything because of his profound disabilities. What we have realised by spending time with Steven and others who really know him and have known him over his 19 years, is that he is learning every day. Just because he can't use words he tells us many things by the way he uses his eyes, nods his head, points, pouts, smiles, yells, laughs or cries.*

*I have learned that Steven had not really been listened to until we started to plan a future for him. We have learned that we can never ever let the nightmares of being in a long stay hospital happen again. We have learned that we need others to help us, his family, and Steven to live his life to the fullest in the community. That may mean work, play, university or hobbies. But it will never again mean that Steven cannot learn or cannot give something to others.*



Helps build more friendships and relationships

*I thought I knew my son so well until we started planning with John. We were helped by a person who was very skilled in getting John's family and supporters to share their experiences and stories about John. Planning changed our whole way of thinking about what John was capable of doing now and in the future. He is no longer going to a day centre, which we found out was making him very anxious and upset. He now gets support from home to do the things he enjoys and with the people he enjoys doing things with. We are still learning about John but through regular planning meetings with the people who care and work for John we see a different future. We recognised that John needs to establish relationships with people he shares interests with rather than it being just based on family relationships and support workers. We are starting to look into expanding John's social networks and giving him more opportunities to experience different things. We learn something every time John experiences something new and then we build on this.*

Tom, John's Dad

## **How Can I Get Involved?**

The Government's guidance on person centred planning says that self-advocates and families should have an opportunity to learn about person centred planning and decide what involvement they want. Some families simply want to know what person centred planning is, what they can expect from services and how they can contribute to their son or daughter's plan. Other families will want to play a more direct role and lead the development of their son or daughters plan themselves.

## **More Details About The 'Tools'**

### **Essential Lifestyle Planning**

This is very detailed planning which focuses on life now and how that can be improved. It is a way to learn about who and what is important to the person in their everyday life and how to support them to have the lifestyle they want whilst still remaining healthy and safe. The plan is developed by spending time with and listening to the person and by talking to the people who know and care about the person. It is an ever-changing living document which is updated whenever new choices are made - it should never sit on a shelf and gather dust.

### **Maps**

Using a series of questions and recording the ideas graphically, it finishes with an action plan. The questions asked are: What is the person's story? What are their dreams or ambitions? What are the nightmares to be avoided? Who is the person and what are their gifts and talents. What do they need to move forward with their dream future?

### **Paths**

Path works well when an individual has a group of people around them who want to help them make life changes. It has clear structure and commits people to tasks and timescales. The questions asked are: What are your dreams? What are the (positive and possible) goals toward the dream? What does life look like now? Who to ask for help? How to stay strong (for the journey ahead)? Action (for the next few months) and first steps (today/tomorrow).

### **Personal Futures Planning**

This form of plan focuses on revealing a person's capacities and then searching for and discovering opportunities in the community or finding new services which match or develop these capacities. The process is recorded in words and pictures and looks at relationships, places, background,

preferences, dreams, hopes and fears as well as other aspects such as health if needed.

### Individual Service Design

Individual Service Design involves spending a day answering the following questions: Who is the person? What do they need? What would have to happen to meet these needs? It is very much about trying to see what life is like through the focus person's eyes.

### Personal Portfolios

A Personal portfolio is a collection of work that shows a person's abilities, experience and ambitions. It needs to be in a style or format that works for them. Some examples include a personalised newspaper, a read-along story book with tape, a collage, scrapbook or photo album, a video or a filofax. Each example is unique to that person.

## One Last, But Important Point

Person centred plans are living documents and planning is a continual process. **Having a plan** should not be the desired end result especially if it sits on a shelf gathering dust! **Having a good life** is the outcome we should be aiming for.

Every plan should include regular review dates to check out whether the plan is happening. Have things changed? Are the wishes of the person still be reflected in the plan and if not why not?

## How Can I Find Out More?



### Partnership Boards



In each local area there will be a Partnership Board. Each Partnership Board has developed a framework that describes how they are going to put person centred planning into practice. This should include training and support for self-advocates and families.

There are self-advocate and family/carer representatives on each Partnership Board. Contact them to find out what is available.

A list of Partnership Boards and their contacts is available from the Valuing People Support Team ([www.doh.gov.uk/vpst](http://www.doh.gov.uk/vpst))



## Videos, Books and Websites

Video: Getting a Life. A short introductory video on person centred planning. Available from: Scottish Human Services (tel 0131 538 7717)

Book: A little book about Person Centred Planning. Edited by John O'Brien & Connie Lyle O'Brien. Available from: Inclusion Distribution (01625 269243)

Book: People, Plans and Possibilities - exploring Person Centred Planning by Helen Sanderson, Jo Kennedy, Pete Ritchie and Gill Goodwin. Available from: Scottish Human Services (0131 538 7717)

Other useful websites:

Paradigm: [www.paradigm-uk.org](http://www.paradigm-uk.org),

North West Training and Development Team: [www.nwtdt.com](http://www.nwtdt.com)

Circles Network: [www.circlesnetwork.org.uk](http://www.circlesnetwork.org.uk)

Life Options Project: [www.scovo.org.uk](http://www.scovo.org.uk)

Department of Health: [www.doh.gov.uk/learning disabilities](http://www.doh.gov.uk/learning%20disabilities)

Mencap: [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

Values into Action (VIA): [www.viauk.org](http://www.viauk.org)

Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities:  
[www.learningdisabilities.org.uk](http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk)

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