Review and Recommendations for Modernising Day Services for People with Learning Disabilities in Merthyr Tydfil

For

Merthyr Tydfil Borough County Council

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<u>Acknowledgements</u>

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Section 1. Introduction

Introduction and Aims

Merthyr Tydfil Borough County Council contracted the reviewers to identify the current situation for individuals with learning disabilities and to suggest a strategy for modernisation. Historically, people with learning disabilities have been among the most disempowered members of our society, experiencing segregation and marginalisation from mainstream community activities[1], high levels of unemployment,[2] and often lead unfulfilled and empty lives void of 'meaningful' and engaging activities[3]. Recently, concern has arisen within the Borough about the extent that this group of adults are having their needs met through different services within the Borough.

This review is a continuation and follow-on from the Life Long Learning Review that was conducted between June and September 2005. This aimed to identify learning opportunities for this group within the Borough.[4] It therefore, provides the context for this review, containing details of local demographics, epidemiology and basic service descriptions. This report does not, therefore, intend to go into the minutiae of the policy frameworks and terminology used. The primary aim of this review was to develop a set of recommendations to assist the local authority to develop and implement a modernisation plan around the client group. Suffice to say that the framework and principles that were applied to this review are borrowed from the guidance provided from a number of local and national sources. These include those contained in the 'Valuing People' and the 'Fulfilling the Promises' documents[5];[6] and those associated with John O'Brien's Five Service Accomplishments.[7]

Common themes throughout these documents are the rights of everyone to lead as valued and meaningful a life as possible. The guidance stresses a number of themes including the need for services to focus on the following:

- Transition Planning to enable progression of service users from school into learning, work or leisure;
- Integrated/Inclusive activities in community locations;

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[1] Wolfensberger.W. (1972). The Principle of Normalization in Human Services, Syracuse University Press. Syracuse, New York.
[2] Pathways to Work (2002). Department of Work and Pensions.http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/consult/2002/pathways/pathways.pdf
[3] Beyer, S., Kilsby, M. & Lowe, K. (1994). What do ATCs offer? A survey of Welsh Day Services. Mental Handicap Research, 7, 16-40.
[4] Kilsby (2005), Lifelong Learning Review for People with Learning Disabilities Living in Merthyr Tydfil. MTBC
[5] Department of Health (2001) Valuing People, A new Strategy for the Twenty First Century. HMSO-CM5086
[6] Learning Disability Advisory Group Report to the National Assembly for Wales (2001); Fulfilling the Promises, Proposals for a framework for services for people with learning disabilities.
[7] O'Brien, J. & Lyle, C. (1987). *Framework for Accomplishment*. Lithonia, Ga.: Responsive Systems Associates.

- Representation, Consultation and Empowerment of service users and parents/carers;
- Accessibility, in terms of buildings, materials and instructional methods
- The extent of Engagement in Meaningful Activities including Employment, Education, Recreation and Leisure Activities;
- That learning leads to Accreditation Recognition and Reward;
- Partnership Working to develop stakeholder group networks.

Specific policy frameworks have emerged with this in mind, including Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) initiatives, such as those recommended through the advisory committee for the "Fulfilling the Promises" strategy.[8] These stress the need to develop provision for people with learning disabilities that is client-focused, accessible, and flexible, and the need to develop procedures that make opportunities for learning and progression a greater possibility. The WAG states:

> *"People with Learning Disabilities should have equal access to government or other training schemes and other educational or life-long learning opportunities where this would help their personal development, career opportunities or to secure employment."*

The Need for Modernisation

To its credit the local authority has engaged in a process of self reflection and finds itself needing to provide a higher level of service for some of the key needs of the service users. The recent SSI report[9], for example, identified a need for day services to modernise, recommending that the local authority should proceed with its objectives to develop a 5 year social care plan involving relevant stakeholders in policy development; complete the implementation of a review for day service provision so as to extend and improve the access of people with learning disabilities into education, employment and leisure activities; to produce information in a number of formats so as to improve accessibility of information regarding policy for service users, family and other stakeholders; and to implement a transition policy to improve the life chances of the client group at an earlier age.

These findings are echoed in the Life Long Learning Review which also concluded that the current pattern of day service provision in Merthyr is currently outdated and in need of modernisation. The majority of the activities offered take place in segregated and congregated environments within the Sandbrook day service buildings and, represent an outdated mode of day service provision, typified by large amounts of client disengagement and high amounts of craft and therapy activities taking place inside the day centre buildings. In line with SSI report, the learning review report concluded that there was a need to modernise the service and increase involvement of the wider stakeholder group. There are also a number of links into an array of local community projects, and there exists the potential to expand local accredited learning opportunities to

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[9] Inspection of Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities in Merthyr Tydfil. SSIW (2005).

include learning taking place in work based and community locations. There was also the potential to increase investment in local supported employment provision. This may enable greater numbers of those currently using the day service to access paid integrated employment in the future.

Low level expectations about what people with learning disabilities can achieve with appropriate support are also highlighted. One recommendation is that the current review should enable the implementation of awareness-raising to promote good practice and knowledge of supported employment and effective community support within the stakeholder groups.

Despite the review being focussed on all services for people with learning disabilities, stakeholders felt strongly that it was the local authority's day service which should be the prime focus because this is where the majority of people received their service.

The learning review also identified the problem of low morale among day service staff, who often felt under pressure from the criticisms of some parents, carers and users. Many staff felt disempowered to do anything about changing the service and felt unmotivated. The review recommended the up-skilling of current day service so that they developed the skills to help improve the services and feel empowered.

The review also suggested that consultation between the day services, on the one hand, and the clients and carers/parents on the other had been poor.[10] Clearly, it is unlikely that any future plans for reorganizing service provision will succeed without the co-operation, support and contribution of these groups, especially one that is intended to be Person Centred. Potential solutions included working with younger parents and carers from age 14; the development of links with local parent and user forums; an exploration of the potential for supporting parents/carers to learn about models of good practice; and greater use of person centred planning approaches so that users may more readily inform care planners and service providers of their current and future support needs.

During the learning review, some stakeholders expressed frustration at the pace of change in the day services, others felt that further consultations and reviews would only stall the change process or lead to recommendations that were not acted upon. This increases the urgency for change to be acted upon and implemented. For reasons just presented the reviewers felt that the service review should incorporate elements of a 'Participatory Action Research' approach by establishing main stakeholder groups and enabling them to feed directly into the final recommendations and to reach solutions to the problems of modernising, based on joint working.[11] This approach also has the advantage of immediate implementation of short-term solutions; of partnership building and awareness-raising among the stakeholders; and in providing a sense of joint ownership and engagement in the implementation phases.

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[10] West, W (2005). Merthyr People first Report on User, Parent/Carer Views on Sandbrook House
[11] Hughes, I. & Seymour-Rolls, K. (2000). Participatory Action Research : Getting the Job Done. *Action Research E-Reports, 4.* Available at: http://www.fhs.usyd.edu.au/arow/arer/004.htm

<u>Main Aims</u>
Therefore, this review has the following main aims:
1. To establish stakeholder groups to contribute and sign up to visions and solutions to the challenges encountered.
2. To begin the process of awareness raising among stakeholder groups.
3. To develop a set of recommendations for implementation following the review, described as short, medium and long-term strategies.

<u>Review Questions</u>
1) *What is the best way to develop and deploy current staff resource to enable more client participation in mainstream community based activities, and how can we ensure that activities taking place in these settings utilise the full range of natural supports including local community projects, employment provision, mainstream learning opportunities and leisure and recreational facilities?*

2) *How can we develop and maintain partnerships with other stakeholders to ensure joint collaboration towards our aims, and what are the training needs of the different stakeholders to make this progress a reality?*

3) *What current models of good practice exist on which to base a modernisation plan?*

4) *Does the current Sandbrook building meet the clients' needs?*

5) *Do stakeholders believe the service can change for the better and if so how?*

6) *What impact do the stakeholders believe modernization will have on their particular stakeholder role and what are their hopes and fears?*

7) *How can we develop and maintain partnerships with other stakeholders to ensure joint collaboration towards our aims, and what are the training needs of the different stakeholders to make this progress a reality?*

8) *How can day services work with the local college to offer diverse learning opportunities including work-based learning, and learning in community locations?*

9) *Are there alternative methods for accrediting/validating and recording learned skills, and how can day services and the college work together to explore ways of enabling clients to access mainstream integrated college courses?*

10) *What potential funding sources are there to support people in integrated learning environments. What is the potential for using peer supports, volunteers and students attending the college to provide support as highlighted above?*

11) *How can we develop stronger links between the college, work based learning initiatives, and day services so that learning can progress into employment opportunities. What is the best way to utilize expertise from within supported employment to establish these links?*

12) *What role will the day service play in enabling people to move into employment?*

13) *How do we go about raising parental expectations and aspirations, and how can we work with younger parents and carers from age 14, to develop a range of services that are responsive and reflective of individual choices, linked to the 14-19 Pathways initiative?*

14) *What is the potential for supporting parents/carers to learn about models of good practice?*

15) *What are the best ways to develop training, supervision and appraisal procedures to provide guidance to staff and to create a route to acknowledge their efforts in a two way dialogue between service deliverers and managers; and will this address staff turnover and sickness levels?*

16) *How do we utilize community based transit systems; how do we give responsibility for transport back to the community?*

17) *How do we monitor whether the changes that are made match the aspirations and expectations of the service users; how do we monitor and ensure that people do not become isolated, lonely and lose relationships in the community?*

18) *How do we ensure that the modernization process continues after this review and how do we set new goals and measure distance travelled?*

Description of Sandbrook Day Centre Service

Eligibility Criteria

The current eligibility criterion, as defined by MTCBC (2005) is dependent on the extent of individual needs in relation to the degree of risk to their independence. The Local Authorities current threshold for providing a direct service will be dependent on the need of the individual. If an individual is assessed as having a need above 'moderate', the local authority will provide a direct service. Service users with less severe needs are referred to other appropriate providers. According to epidemiological research, this may exclude many people who fall under the general definition as having a learning disability, as well those with specifically defined needs such as those associated with autism. However, developing eligibility criteria for learning disabilities is problematic. National indicators of prevalence predict different outcomes.

Many of those about to take up, or, already in receipt of services, who may fall outside the current criterion, have become dependent, along with many of their parents/carers on the provision currently being offered; not only in terms of respite, but also in terms of a

dependency by the clients on the instructional methods used to support them in activities, and the social culture surrounding the day service. Likewise, while there is a need to develop specialist support to encourage integration and independence, there will also be a need to provide support that improves community awareness and promotes equal access for all, and to find ways of developing working partnerships with local employment and educational agencies, as well as local community, recreational and leisure programmes.

Under the current eligibility criterion, the local authority needs to be careful that some individuals do not fall through the net and fail to receive the support required to make the desired transition into community activities and lead more independent lives. For example, those people with Aspergers Syndrome who may score highly on intellectual assessments, making them ineligible for funded day services, but who in actuality, require high levels of support to fit in socially and function as independently as possible. Therefore, the criterion needs to be fully understood by all providers so that any person requiring support has access to it. The degree and extent of that support being targeted at enabling independence, and not creating an inward looking culture that creates dependency, segregation and negative stigma.

Figure 3 provides an indication of the levels of support required for those attending Sandbrook Day Centre as provided by the service staff. It suggests that 31% of the clients (29 adults) require only infrequent or minimal amounts of support, these individuals representing those most able to adapt independently without ongoing one-on-one support in activities. The largest proportion of clients are classified as needing moderate levels of support, requiring staffing/client ratios between 1:3 to 1:5. Figure 3 also shows that over a third of those attending Sandbrook are classified as having severe or complex needs (31%). This is higher than the national average for day centres, which stands at about 24% which may reflect a growing trend for those perceived to be more able to move directly from school into activities provided through the colleges, or, may reflect low level expectations for the service users.

Staffing Ratios
Staff to client ratios within the centre currently as of September 2005 stood at 1 member of staff to 5.7 clients based on the numbers of trainees registered as attending the service and number of support staff employed. This is close to the national Welsh average for day centers reported at 5.1 in 1996[12]. This ratio fluctuates and is prone to increases due to staff illness and staff vacation. For example, on the 3rd August 2005, the ratio stood at 6.4 clients to each member of staff, due mainly to staff illness. On the other hand, on the 3rd of April 2006, there were 54 clients attended by 22 support staff, providing a 2.45 ratio of clients to each staff member. Whilst we were informed that this is a rare case this latter figure represents more than double the national average staff to client ratio. For example, on April 3rd, one service user was deemed to require two to one support and four service users were supported one to one. This means that the remaining 17 staff were reported as providing a service to 50 clients, leading to a 2.94 staff client ratio for this group, which is still significantly higher than national averages. Similarly, the gardening project
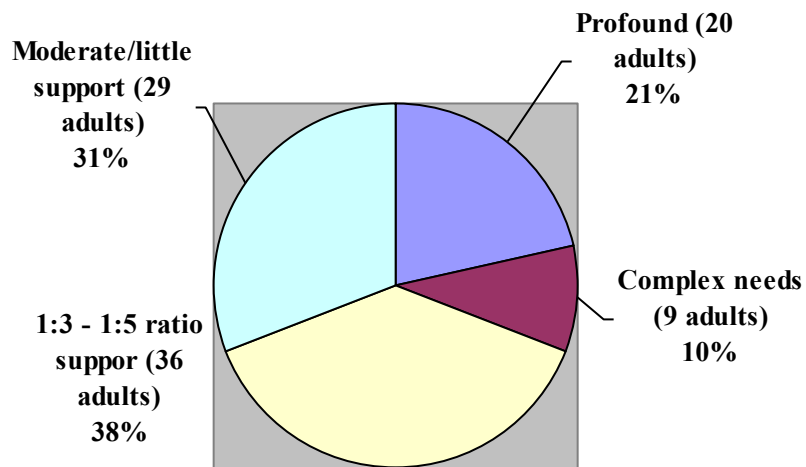
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[12] Beyer, S., Kilsby, M. and Lowe, K. (1994). What do ATCs Offer? A Survey of Welsh Day Services. Mental Handicap Research , 7 ,16-40.

consisted of a 5:2 staff client ratio in the morning (2.5) and 6:2 ratio in the afternoon group (3.0). Despite these findings there is a perception by staff that they are severely under resourced. This view will need to be discussed and the way forward agreed with the staff.

It is unclear the extent to which these staffing ratios reflect a higher proportion of attendees with severe and complex needs. National findings on prevalence would predict that between 8 and 11 of the 54 service users (a high estimate) would require intensive ongoing one on one support. Even if we double this ratio to allow for an unusually high incidence of people with severe and complex needs within the centre, then this would allow for intensive support for around 20 individuals and leave a sufficient staff resource available to the rest of the group. Other indicators point to staff allocation issues, a theme developed upon in this review in Section 5. For example, 4 of the 17 remaining staff in April were dedicated to providing the single provision around personal hygiene. Similarly, as the review revealed, many of the staff team at the time of the review reported having to cover all grounds. This suggests that the degree of support perceived to be required by this service group may be over exaggerated.

Figure 3. Level of Disability Served in Sandbrook Day Centre

Moderate/little support (29 adults) 31%

Profound (20 adults) 21%

Complex needs (9 adults) 10%

1:3 - 1:5 ratio suppor (36 adults) 38%

Activity Balance

An analysis of the Sandbrook Day Centre Activity Timetable reveals that the centre is operating what Beyer and Kilsby termed as a 'Recreational and Leisure Model' of day service provision.[13] Although some focus is placed upon therapy (Physiotherapy and Rebound therapy), the majority of activities contained in the timetables include Ceramics, Dance, Drama classes, Flower arranging, Crafts, Relaxation and Music. Although some of these activities take place in community settings, most of them take place inside the centre buildings. Although most of the externally located activities currently consist of segregated groups of individuals, (e.g. Coed Dderwen Joinery, Merthyr College,

Cyfarthfa Enterprises and the Neighbourhood Learning Centre), some, such as four clients attending Community Education Courses, are integrated and utilise external tutor support. This underlines the potential for linking the activities provided through the Day Centres, with mainstream community based educational activities.

Section 2. Models of Good Practice

Although day service modernisation has been on the national agenda for some years,[14] the pace of change has been painfully slow. There may be many reasons for this including; low expectations surrounding the possibility and potential of day service change; a lack of relevant training and expertise to deliver change; key managers on long term sickness, difficulties in developing and maintaining a wide stakeholder group involvement and issues surrounding sustainability. One consequence of this is that, apart from a few notable exceptions, good practice is often limited to services at the start of, or part way through implementation. Although this means that there are few exemplars in the UK of a totally realised modernisation plan for day centres, there is a growing body of research and best practice, that can be applied to most areas of activity identified as targets for progressive service change (e.g., person centeredness, the development of inclusive employment and learning opportunities, and of lifelong transition planning). There are also a growing number of whole change exemplars from within the USA,[15] and in Australia.[16]

It is also unlikely that any models of good practice that exist could be wholly applied to Merthyr, which has its own unique cultural and economic context. However, it is possible to construct a list of good practice indicators, tailored not only to meet these local variations, but also to develop a realisable model of change, based upon the lessons learned from these national and international modernisation initiatives. There are a wide range of service standards which need to be critically analysed for their appropriateness for the service and it is understood that this work has commenced. It is argued, therefore, that the development of such a plan can only be constructed within a local context of Merthyr Borough. For example, while Merthyr has one of the highest poverty rates in Wales,[17] it also boasts a variety of local community projects, which could potentially provide significant opportunities for inclusive activities beyond the scope of many other Boroughs.

There are numerous approaches that have been developed in an attempt to modernise parts or all of the way that day services are delivered. However, there are common themes that that can be extracted from the literature that describe best practice and highlight the potential problems that have been encountered. What follows is an attempt

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[14] Seed, P. (1988) Day care at the crossroads. Tunbridge Wells
& White Paper Better Services for Mentally Handicapped (1971)
& http://www.rmhldni.gov.uk/pubs/learning/AuditLearningDisabilityChpt4.pdf
[15] Closing the Shop (1995). Stephen T. Murphy and Patricia M. Rogan. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., PO Box 1624, Baltimore,
[16] Lewis, G. M., Robertson, S. K., & Drenen, L. E. (2001). Finding a job, keeping a job. Perth: ProEm Publications
[17] National Assembly for Wales, 2005, http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubstatisticsforwales/

to provide a non-exhaustive list of the key ingredients for effective and progressive service change based on the research literature and anecdotal reports from those working in the field.

Social Role Valorisation (SRV) Theory
The central concern of SRV is the effects of social devaluation on the well-being of individuals and groups that society regards negatively. This concern has been translated into various action propositions as to what might be done to alleviate or even reverse the underlying social devaluation as well as its existential effects. These include the following:

- *raising consciousness,*

- *the challenging of stigmatising beliefs and perceptions,*

- *the assurance to affected persons of valued social roles,*

- *the shifting of role expectations,*

- *the adoption of a developmental model,*

- *the pursuit of social inclusion and valued social participation*

- *the exercise of caution in subjecting socially devalued persons to strategies that might worsen the rejection and neglect of society.*

In its earlier incarnation as 'normalisation theory' it, more prominently than any contemporary theory, provided justification for the worldwide rejection of segregation of socially devalued people in both physical and social terms. Most notably, it was deeply implicated in freeing people from institutions and mini-institutions, the advancement of inclusive education, the early formation of supported employment, the advancement of advocacy and rights for voiceless and oppressed persons, the challenging of governments, professionals and other authorities to respect the dignity and integrity of devalued people as persons equal to all other persons[18], and the formulation of person centred planning in all of its many formats.

The Meaningful Day Approach
The Meaningful Day model is based on concepts associated with Social Role Valorisation (SRV).[19] The method employs the use of a 'Culturally Valued Analogue' (CVA). This is a representation of something that *most* ordinary valued citizens would *value.* Human services usually address the same human needs that all people have, such as physical care, a place to live and opportunities for growth and development, healthcare and education. However, the manner in which many services address these needs is very

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[18] Kendrick, MJ (2001) SRV Theory: The Challenge Of Making The Case Proceedings: Sharing The Road Conference, Brisbane, Australia,
[19] Wolfensberger.W. (1972). The Principle of Normalization in Human Services, Syracuse University Press. Syracuse, New York.

different from the ways in which ordinary people have these needs met. In line with most current government policies and research guidelines, the CVA approach states that services should be modelled as much as possible on culturally valued ways of addressing the particular needs concerned. This explicitly states that a coherent service model supports and enables people to participate more fully in community based integrated activities.

SRV has formed one of the basic training components for those working to improve services for people with learning disabilities for over three decades. The approach uses a strong values base upon which to develop a common vision among the stakeholders of where the service currently stands, and how it should be modernised towards establishing more meaningful days for the people it serves. The approach is often overlooked. Many have already received some values based training however, the values underlying SRV also specify the direction and end point of change which is missing in most basic values training.

This approach also has a number of practical applications, providing the service not only with strong guidelines around what constitutes a coherent day service, but also through an evaluative tool, a series of ratings that enable the agency to evaluate their progress against each stated objective.[20] The meaningful day CVA consists of 5 domains or spheres into which a typical and valued life can be divided.[21] These are as follows.

1) Work/career/volunteer: meaning that the service in structure and physical layout promotes and encourages participation in these roles.

2) Personal growth and development: meaning that the service in structure and physical layout promotes and encourages participation in activities that are typical of valued and adult activities.

3) Relationships: meaning that the service in structure and physical layout promotes and encourages relationships to form with a wide cross section of the community especially non disabled community members.

4) Civic: meaning that the service in structure and physical layout promotes and encourages participation in civic minded activities such as voting, self advocacy, paying taxes, neighbourhood watch and other such community contributions.

5) Spiritual: meaning that the service in structure and physical layout promotes and encourages participation in and attention to those spiritual pursuits with due respect to the

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[20] Wolfensberger, W., & Glenn, L. (1973). *Program Analysis of Service Systems (PASS): A method for the quantitative evaluation of human services. Handbook. Field Manual.* (2nd ed.) Toronto: National Institute on Mental Retardation.
Wolfensberger, W., & Thomas, S (1983). *PASSING (Program Analysis of Service Systems' Implementation of Normalization Goals): Normalization criteria and ratings manual* (2nd ed.). Toronto: National Institute on Mental Retardation
[21] Elks, D (1998)

ethnic and religious interests of the individual. This includes the domains of psychological empowerment and self-realisation. [22]

Person Centred Approaches

> *"The most powerful idea underlying PCP is that the way a person who needs services is seen and understood by those who deliver that service generates a powerful internal consistency in the ways that person is served."*[23]

There are five key features of person centred planning that help to distinguish it from other forms of planning and assessment.[24] Person Centred planning is rooted in the principles of rights, independence and choice. It takes its lead from sustained careful listening to the person, in whatever ways the person communicates. For some people this listening will require those who join in person centred planning to get to know the person enough so that the person can trust them and communicate effectively with them. The process, as much as possible reflects the person's choice of who joins in the planning and where and when the meetings are held. This results in informed choices about how the person wants to live and what service and supports will best suit them.

- Family members and friends are full partners:
- Person centred planning reflects the person's capacities, what is important to the person (now and for the future) and specifies the support they require to make a valued contribution to their community:
- Person centred planning builds a shared commitment to action that will uphold the person's rights:
- Person centred planning leads to continual listening, learning and action, and helps the person to get what they want out of life:

Person Centred planning is not just about services as they are currently provided – it reflects what is possible, not just what is locally available at the moment. This means that person centred planning includes negotiation so that resources and supports fit each individual as well as possible. Even small success frequently leads people to bolder choices and higher expectations of themselves, their communities, and of services.

Research and practice suggests that person centered planning ideals must begin with 'individual person centeredness' that cannot exist in a vacuum; person centeredness should engulf the entire service. The development of a person centred organisation will, ideally, benefit not only service users and their parent/carers but also staff and mangers of the services. Creating an organisation where everyone's voice is important and heard,

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[22] Wehmeyer, M.L., Kelchner, K. & Richards, S. (1995). Essential characteristics of self-determined behaviour of individuals with mental retardation. American Journal on Mental Retardation, 100, 632-642.

[23] O'Brien, C: O'Brien, J and Mount, B (1997) Person-centred has arrived…or has it? Mental Retardation, 35, 6, December.
[24] USA Department for Health

where individual creativity is encouraged, and where the notion of personal responsibility is expected and supported will result in a more dynamic and vital organisation.

Person centred planning puts people in the context of their family and community. It assumes that families have important knowledge and can make contributions that cannot be replaced (though some people may have lost touch with their families and some families may sometimes be unable to contribute). Person centred planning also recognises the support that friends and community members can offer. A large number of service users receive support from other people with learning disabilities and/or other advocates. Sometimes there are conflicts among people who have an important contribution about what is possible, or safe, or desirable. Person centred planning offers a way that people can work to creatively negotiate these conflicts so that the person has better support to improve their life.

Person centered planning has a battery of methods including the use of Circles of Support[25], MAP and Path[26] and generally methods to enable individuals to make self determined choices.[27] If the person centered plans that are generated can be translated into day service practice, then this leads not only to a more diverse experience for the users it also increases the potential for a seamless transition approach where individual choices have real and tangible outcomes. This will mean that staff need to dedicate more time to planning activities.

See also: Direct Payments[28]

‘Community Tasters’ and Person Centred Planning
One of the biggest problems facing people with learning disabilities is having adequate experience on which to base their choices. For example, in order to exercise control in selecting a career, people need to be aware of what is available to them in the job market and what these jobs entail, and be aware of their own abilities and limitations in fulfilling the demands of these jobs. It also implies that people will have a set of career aspirations and will apply a strategy for achieving these aims. However, the segregation of people with disabilities has hindered this goal, undermining their potential to make decisions about their careers based on their experiences and expectations and seriously undermining their potential to select jobs in a psychologically empowered and self-realising manner. The lack of exposure to experiential learning opportunities through congregate and segregated service provision has left people with learning disabilities at a distinct disadvantage. In short, a person is not able to make a choice to go to work in a factory if they do not realise that such a job exists, or, if they had never seen the inside of

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[25] O'Brien, C; O'Brien, J and Mount, B (1997) Person-centred planning has arrived ... or has it? Mental Retardation, 35, 6, December.
[26] O'Brien,J & Pearpoint J. (2006) Person-Centered Planning with MAPS and PATH, Inclusion Press http://www.inclusion.com/inclusionpress.html
[27] Wehmeyer, M.L., Kelchner, K. & Richards, S. (1995). Essential characteristics of self-determined behaviour of individuals with mental retardation. American Journal on Mental Retardation, 100, 632-642.
[28] Department of Health website 2006
http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/FinanceAndPlanning/DirectPayments/fs/en

a factory. The same principles apply to choices around educational courses, as well as leisure and recreational activities.

Therefore, one important aspect of the PCP approach is that the activities available for the person to choose from, are typical of those that occur for the general population and reflect those activities represented through the CVA. This involves the PCP facilitator and or service providers enabling the individuals with disabilities to have opportunities to experience first hand a range of opportunities available. One development, therefore, that fits well with the PCP approach is the use of 'community tasters'.

The Employment Model

A further hindrance to the smooth transition for this group into work, are the low expectations among the general community about the potential of people with learning disabilities to participate in mainstream community options. This often extends to those involved in direct service provision, such as teachers, parents, care planners and day service staff. One reason for this is that it is often assumed that in order for this group to join in mainstream community activities they will require ongoing one-on-one supervision from day service staff and the resource is not available.

However, research has shown that paid employment in integrated work settings is a realistic aspiration for many of this client group. The development of supported employment initiatives have significantly increased the numbers of people with learning disabilities progressing into paid work in the UK (about 7%), the USA (over 35%), Canada (about 37%) and Australia (over 65%).[29] This approach involves matching each job seekers abilities and work preferences to available jobs, providing initial one-on-one support until the person is able to work independently, and follow-up services to maintain contact with both the employer and employee.

A range of strategies have been developed to draw on the 'natural supports' within workplaces, in particular facilitating the involvement of, and support from, co-workers. There is research evidence that the careful use of natural supports can also have a significant positive impact on outcomes.[30] In some day centres, the supported employment approach has been applied to good effect. In one day centre in the North East of England, for example, the approach managed to find paid integrated work for over 40% of those in the day centre and over 65% of all person hours were spent in work.

See also Supported Entrepreneurship[31], Self Employment[32] and Social Firms[33].

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[29] Lewis, G. (2003) Comparison of Supported Employment in US and Australia. Keynote presentation 5th European Conference of Supported Employment, Helsinki.

[30] (Mank et al., 1997).

[31] Neufeldt, A., Enns, H., Watters, C., & Sannuto, V. (1999). *Urban business development and disability: models and strategies.* Winnipeg, MB: Canadian Centre on Disability Studies

[32] Neufeldt, A.H., & Albright, A.L. (1995). An international study of strategies leading to self-directed employment. *International Journal of Practical Approaches to Disability, 19*(2), 3-8.

[33] Social Firms UK (2006) http://www.socialfirms.co.uk/

Role of Day Service in Supported Employment

In the UK, there is considerable variation between supported employment agencies in the way they are organised and the way they work. In some cases supported employment agencies are stand-alone entities, in others they can be organised on an outreach basis from day centres. The latter model is possibly the least well documented in the literature. Some providers rely much more heavily than others on unpaid work experience as a route into employment. Not surprisingly, there is also evidence that some providers are more effective than others. A survey of 200 supported employment agencies in the UK[34] found that outcomes (in terms of jobs found, wages paid and hours worked) were higher for agencies which were independent and particularly not part of a larger social care oriented organisation, and mature, as it appeared to take agencies some years to develop the range of skills and contacts needed.

The Peer Support Approach

The supported employment approach has also been directly applied to those attending school. For example, the Youth Supported Employment Project[35] enabled students with a learning disability, attending special schools in the 16 to 19 age group, to obtain paid part-time jobs in the community typical of those obtained by non-disabled teenagers within their age group. However, support on the jobs was provided by non-disabled peer students attending ordinary schools, rather than an adult job coach. YSEP projects have been operating in Canada and the UK with proven success[36]

The peer support model has also been usefully extended to include peer support in other community locations (e.g., youth club, local library, sporting event and so on). In the USA and Canada, for example, Inclusive Post Secondary Education initiatives have used peer support to enable students with learning disabilities to integrate into and join in with mainstream college and university activities. In these initiatives, students are included in the same academic, social, and recreational college experiences as others. There are no separate classes, classrooms, or, academic lessons for these students. Research has shown that this approach can be applied to people with severe and complex needs, as well as adults labeled as severely, profoundly handicapped who may not have formal means of communication and who require personal care for their health and transportation needs. The process of selecting applicants deliberately avoids using disability labels, communication skills, or intellectual ability as criterions for participation. Research has also shown that provision of this sort increases the 'credibility of the students and helps them attain the status and value held by other post-secondary students.[37] The use of voluntary organisations and supplementary funding sources from local LEAs has led in some parts of the UK to the development of inclusive education of this kind, but as yet, provision of this sort in the UK for those with severe and complex needs is rare.

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[34] Beyer, Goodere and Kilsby (1996)
[35] Kilsby, Allan & Beyer (2001) Report on the Youth Supported Employment Project in the UK. Welsh Centre for Learning Disabilities Applied Research Unit, Cardiff University, UK
[36] Allan, J (1996) Youth Supported Employment Project in Canada, IASSID abstracts
[37] Bowman, Weinkauf, (2004)

Two obvious advantages of the peer support model are the potential it provides for people with learning disabilities to extend their existing social networks to include that of their same age non disabled peers, and that 'same age' peers are more conducive for enabling the clients to fit in socially and become less stigmatised.

Transition, Life Long Learning and Progression
Typically, these include the transition from school into further education and alternative learning opportunities into work. Those working within the human service field have tended to concentrate on the 'school into adulthood' transition procedures. Research has shown that an investment of resource at these major transition points during school years can greatly assist an individual to achieve a smoother transition from childhood into adult life. Other current transition areas within the learning disabilities field are the transition from day centre to education and/or employment and from employment into retirement.

Research has shown that an investment of resource at these main transition points can return positive outcomes in terms of enabling a smooth progression. Research indicates that the key target areas are increasing teachers, parents and carers and the child's expectations about what they can potentially achieve when they leave school; develop person centred approaches which enable the child to become the driving force behind making important life changing decisions; and developing transition plans which include input from service staff teachers, potential employers and care managers and the parents and carers.[38]

For the purposes of this review, progression can be viewed as the positive movement through the transition points towards attainment of personal goals and aspirations. This can relate to a number of areas including: the attainment of NVQ's on successful completion of a course and/or gaining access to work-based learning in order to develop choice around employment. Clearly attainment on its own is insufficient. If services are succeeding in enabling progression one would expect to see the movement of people gaining qualifications into paid jobs that suit their qualifications; movement from one college course onto another course to attain a higher qualification; movement from a day centre into a college to learn basic skills; and the movement of people from college to use their newly acquired skills in integrated community activities including work, art, leisure and recreation.

Progression has tended to be measured in so called 'hard' (e.g. numbers progressing into work, or, onto new courses) and 'soft' outcomes (e.g. increased independence in daily living, or/and, increases in self-esteem, due to the completion of a basic skills course).[39] However, progression can also be measured in terms of the extent that a person's life moves from one of segregation, towards inclusion in mainstream typical activities. Good practice would suggest that any modernisation strategy needs to include a strong

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[38] Martin, J.E., Huber-Marshall, L & Maxon. P. (1993). Transition policy: infusing self-determination and self-advocacy into transition Programs. Career Progression for Exceptional Children, 16, 53-61.

[39] Dewson, S; Eccles, J; Tackey, N and Jackson, A. (2005) Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled: Review of Current Practice. Department for Education and Employment, Research report RR219.

monitoring component that delivers SMART[40] objectives to all stakeholders and tracks the extent of progression being made in each area.

Progression and College
The lack of progression through the formal college for people with learning disabilities is rapidly becoming an emerging issue throughout the UK. Nationally, few students attending the college are obtaining qualifications as a result of their learning, and few have progressed to use their learning to develop their careers. Two issues arise from this. First, that the clients become trapped in a 'revolving door', taking endless number of courses without making progress in their careers. Second, that where students do not progress, there is a tendency for them to fall back on the day service provision, increasing still further the client staff ratios and taking a step backwards in terms of being able to access learning routes as a means of progression.

Current indicators of good practice in this area include the college and day service working collaboratively to develop new ways of accreditation in a wide variety of learning environments. This includes work-based learning and learning in generic community environments e.g. Neighbourhood learning centres. Current good practice includes developing more inclusive post secondary education opportunities for the clients, and developing linkages between day services, supported employment, college staff and local employers to broaden the college curriculum to include work experience. This can strengthen the link between what is learned formally through college based learning, and what is learned informally as a direct result of, for example, work experience. Merthyr Tydfil Council financially contributes to college provision and this provision needs to be revised for the new academic year.

Sustainability and Stakeholder Inclusion
Sustainability is an issue because change projects often fail to maintain momentum; the development period needs to be sufficient to allow the establishment of tiered goals. Often organisations or services are so far behind the baseline of the central guidelines,[41] that it is virtually impossible to achieve change in a limited short term strategy. Changing part of the way a service is delivered is often not enough, there needs also to be time to change awareness among the major stakeholders and to establish from that greater stakeholder involvement. Projects also fail because follow up to keep momentum and progress towards goals, does not occur.

Section 3. Method
Stakeholder Group Meetings (SGMs)
Four SGMs were conducted within Sandbrook between February 17th and March 16th 2006. The purpose of these meetings was to establish input into the review from a diversity of stakeholder perspectives and to establish joint working around visions, barriers and solutions. Each SGM had a different focus. Meeting 1, focused on the groups hopes and fears for modernisation and change, meeting 2, focussed on barriers and

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[40] That objectives should be 'Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound'

solutions to problems, meeting 3, focussed on the values and shape of a good service, and meeting 4, on establishing a model that better meets the service user's needs and aspirations. A summary of each SGM is provided later in this section, and a summary of the key points made by stakeholders follows in Section 4. A list of stakeholder attendees is provided in Appendix 2.

Buildings Analysis

As a part of the review, the building at Sandbrook Day Centre for adults with learning was assessed for its suitability. This assessment employs elements from the Program Analysis of Service Systems Implementation of Normalization Goals (P.A.S.S.I.N.G) evaluator's tool, provided in Appendix 3. The tool in its entirety has 42 elements or ratings. For the purpose of the building evaluation 8 ratings were employed to act as a yardstick to gauge the extent that the building, its structure, and features relating to client competency and image, provide a fitting context within which valued and meaningful day time activity can occur.

Participation in combinations of these spheres result in a variety of positively valued roles. The lifelong learning review[42] and Employment and Volunteering opportunities for people with Mild and Moderate Learning Disabilities[43] identified that the balance of activities provided through the day centre, their locations and congregate nature do not promote or reflect these typical roles. In this assessment we focus upon whether the actual physical resources (excluding service staff) and the demeanour of the building, its physical layout and environment enable these aims to be realized. This includes the extent that the materials used in the activities enrich and promote the mission of the service; the extent that available materials and resources promote learning, meet the health and safety needs of the clients, and fulfil their recreation and leisure aspirations.

The service operates five days per week from 9am to 4pm and serves a group whose ages range from 18 to 78. We would expect that valued citizens of the same age group as the service users at Sandbrook would be engaged in a variety of environments specific to their age groupings, interests and needs. These environments could include (but are not restricted to) valued educational environments such as College, University or Business schools, work environments, volunteer and leisure environments, and inclusive community environments.

- Work/career/volunteering
- Personal growth and development.
- Relationships: encourages relationships to form with a wide cross section of the community especially non-disabled community members.
- Community activity: the service in structure and physical layout promotes and encourages participation in community activity.

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[42] Kilsby (2005) Review of Lifelong Learning Opportunities for people with Learning Disabilities and/or Mental Health Problems in Merthyr Tydfil MTBC
[43] Garfitt. J. et al (2005) Employment and Volunteering Opportunities for People with Mild and Moderate Learning Disabilities

Stakeholder Group Meetings

Context of SGMs

SGM 1 took place on the 2nd February 2006 in Sandbrook Day Centre. In total 21 stakeholders attended representing 11 different stakeholder perspectives (Appendix 2). These included: Regeneration, AFLL, Parent/Carers, Service users, Community Projects, Day Services, Merthyr College, Health Services, VAMT, 3G's Development Trust, and Elite Supported Employment Service.

The reviewers provided the group with information about the context of the review. The main aim of the day was to allow the different stakeholders to introduce themselves and their organisations and to ask themselves 3 main questions designed to enable each stakeholder to explore and express their perspectives and views on the proposed modernisation plan. These were as follows:

a) Can the service be changed for the better if so how?
b) What impact do you think modernization will have on your (particular stakeholder) role?
c) What are your hopes and fears about the modernisation process?

The stakeholders groups were then divided into 3 groups and facilitators were appointed to scribe up responses on flip charts. The groups then fed back to each other. Although the stakeholders expressed a range of opinions a number of key themes emerged for each question.

SGM 2 was held at Sandbrook on February 17th. 20 Stakeholders represented 10 Stakeholder perspectives (Appendix 2). These included: Regeneration, AFL, Parent/Carers, Service User, Communities First, Day Services, VAMT, Elite Supported Employment Service, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Lifelong Learning and Drive.

In this meeting the stakeholders were divided into 3 groups and asked to comment on 3 specific problems. Group 1 addressed the following question:

> *What is the best way to develop and deploy current staff resource to enable more client participation in mainstream community based activities, and how can we ensure that activities taking place in these settings utilise the full range of natural supports such as:*
> - o *Local community projects*
> - o *Employment provision*
> - o *Leisure and recreational facilities*
> - o *Mainstream learning opportunities*

Group 2 tackled the following question:

> *How can we develop and maintain partnerships with other stakeholders to ensure joint collaboration towards our aims, and what are the training needs of the different stakeholders to make this progress a reality?*

Group 3 were asked to address the following questions:

> *How can day services work with the local college to offer diverse learning opportunities including work-based learning, and learning in community locations? Are there alternative methods for accrediting/validating and recording learned skills, and how can day services and the college work together to explore ways of enabling clients to access mainstream integrated college courses?*

> *What potential funding sources are there to support people in integrated learning environments? What is the potential for using peer supports, volunteers and students attending the college to provide support as highlighted above?*

> *How can we develop stronger links between the college, work based learning initiatives, and day services so that learning can progress into employment opportunities. What is the best way to utilize expertise from within supported employment to establish these links?*

SGM 3 was held on March 2nd at Sandbrook. 20 stakeholders attended representing 7 stakeholder perspectives. This included: Regeneration, AFL, Parent/Carers, Day Services, Health Services, Social Firms Wales and Elite Supported Employment Service. (see Appendix 2). The main aim of this meeting was to develop a collective vision for the future of the service.

The Stakeholder group were asked to break into three smaller groups and consider what their vision or dream for a meaningful day for the Sandbrook service users might look like. This visioning exercise was to be rooted in the Culturally Valued Analogue (CVA) of meaningful daytime activities, which was broken down into five spheres as follows:

1) Work/Career/Volunteer
2) Personal growth and development:
3) Relationships:
4) Civic
5) Spiritual

It was explained that the CVA represents those activities that are typical and valued by most in society (see section 2). Thus in the UK, as in most Western societies a valued and typically expected daytime activity for people between the ages 26 to 65 would be working or learning with their peers in a variety of locations including work, colleges and local civic amenities. The groups were asked to create a vision for three discrete age

groups: 18 – 25 year olds, 26-65 year olds and 65 – 78 year olds, thus representing the entire age spread of current Sandbrook service users. Typically people in this vast age range would expect to be active in a multitude of valued daytime activities some of these activities would be expected to be age specific and relevant.

SGM 4 was held on March 16th at Sandbrook. 19 stakeholders attended representing 11 stakeholder perspectives (Appendix 2). These included: Regeneration, AFLL, Parent/Carers, ICS, Day Services, Care Management, VAMT, Elite Supported Employment Service, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Lifelong Learning and Drive. The group heard about the work done in SGM 3, in which the participants were asked to develop a vision for the future of Sandbrook service users. The vision included but was not restricted to:

- Doing typical things
- At typical times
- In typical places
- With typical people
- At chronologically appropriate ages
- With proper support
- Choice
- Variety
- Progression
- Health care needs met

Once again the larger group divided into 3 working groups to develop an overall vision statement. The groups were asked to consider the following:

> *In your groups figure out ways this vision can become a reality; think about the following:*
> *What valued activities should be taking place; Who should the activities take place with, in what locations and when should these activities typically occur and how should these activities be supported?*

Focus Groups and Questionnaires
A series of small group meetings also formed a part of the review process. These meetings were held in order to accommodate those stakeholders unable to attend the larger stakeholder group meetings. Questions from stakeholder group meeting 1 were presented to each group:

Question 1. Can the service be changed for the better?
$\qquad$ *If not, why not?*
$\qquad$ *If so, then how?*
Question 2. What impact do you think modernization will have on you and your role?

Question 3. What are your hopes and fears about modernization?

Section 4. Review Findings
Stakeholder Group Meetings
<u>1. The Need to Change</u>
From the offset of SGM 1 there was an overwhelming agreement among the stakeholders that the service was not currently delivering a quality service and that no change was not an option. The service simply <u>has</u> to change. Many expressed the hope that the change would enable the service to develop towards the aspirations of the "fulfilling the Promises" document. This means clients having greater access to more meaningful and valued daytime activities. By SGM 4, the stakeholders had created a vision that involved the service providing valued daytime activities that are typical of those undertaken by non-disabled peers and in locations that are typical for those activities. This was extended to activities involving education, recreation, leisure and work. This may lead clients to value themselves more highly, build up their confidence and help them to lead more meaningful and stimulating lives and provide opportunities to learn from valued role models. The feeling in the group is perhaps best summed up in the following statement made by one of the stakeholders.

> *"By 2010 Merthyr will have created a flexible range of services which are robust and respond to individual need to maximise independence".*

<u>2, Planning to Reflect Individual Diversity for <u>*All*</u> Clients.</u>
The continued development of Person Centred Planning was seen as an important component of reflective service. Personal plans need to be followed through into planning services. Furthermore, many should be provided with the opportunity to access different activities, so that they can develop more informed choices about their service. Many in the group felt that Direct Payments could provide a solution through individualized planning packages, but that the role of direct payments had never really been understood. (SGM1). The group vision was that links should be established with other community based agencies and organisations to ensure choice, individualism and variety of opportunity. New services should be created which afford people more choice of activity and service provision. (SMG3)

User and carer involvement were seen as key requirements of individualized plans. User representation should be increased to include a user on the Sandbrook staff interview panel and parent forums need to be re-established to more fully engage parents and carers (SGM 2). Also, staff should be empowered to communicate with service users by being trained in alternative communication methods and systems The group envisioned the development of Social Firms, Micro Enterprises and Entrepreneurship as a way of providing a greater diversity of choice. These should be linked to provide staff training and the opportunities for them to learn from each other. (SGM3)

One of the biggest fears of the group was that in enabling those considered to be most able to access more meaningful activities, those service users with the most severe and complex needs may be overlooked. The group felt that the process of change needed to continue to address the needs of this group and develop ways of improving their daytime

activities. One of the biggest hopes was that the changes would lead to more equal opportunities for the entire user group. (SGM 1)

3. The Process of Change

Many stakeholders held the view that more effective planning was a key requisite for effective change to occur. This would require short and long terms goals, with a mechanism to monitor progression, and come up with long term plans and goals for ongoing service development. The group were unanimous that the change process should be progressive and evolutionary and not a "quick fix" approach. Planning also needed to more fully reflect the diversity and interests of those accessing the service. This would mean the service developing a range of options for the clients based on an increased expectation that they can more fully participate in valued community activities including those involving work, learning, leisure and recreation. (SGM 1)

To these ends many stressed the need to access more community-based activities. These would have the potential to enable the clients to make more informed decisions about what activities they would prefer. This implies diversifying current learning opportunities to include work-based learning, broadening the activity spectrum to include community project locations, and developing realistic but realisable progression routes into paid employment. This also includes greater use of more generic services, such as local transport systems and voluntary services, as well as local amenities such as libraries and local shops. (SGM2)

One of the key debates that arose was around the process of change itself. Many felt that supporting the more able people in supported mainstream environments would free up resource to reinvest back into the service. Some felt that this could lead to the service overlooking the needs of people with more complex needs; others felt that this resource could be directed towards providing more meaningful days for precisely this group. The group agreed that the needs of this group must be continually included in the equation, by establishing strong representation on behalf of and by these individuals. (SGM2)

Many in the group felt the service would, ideally, extend beyond the duration of the 9 -5 timetable to include support for evening and weekend activities. Support networks could be developed that include activities such as weekend jobs, evening leisure activities, vocations and support at home. On this latter point some in the group felt that clients should have more say about where they live and more choice in the type of support they received. (SGM4) These visions would require the development of natural supports and close working with voluntary agencies. The service also needs to reconnect clients back into municipal services, such as the use of community buses, libraries and local bus timetables. (SGM2&3)

4. Focus on Lifelong Transition

Many saw the development of effective transition policies as a key to developing a more diverse service structure. The transition points from a lifelong perspective were not limited to 'school into work ' or, from 'childhood into adulthood', they also include progress from day service activities into learning or work, and from life long learning

opportunities into work, or from work into retirement age. 'Whole life' literally means from birth to death. This also implies services that enable personal growth through age appropriate activities taking place in typical locations with their non-disabled peers. (SGM 1 & 2) SGM 3 enabled the group to expand on this theme by providing a vision of how they would like services to operate for specific age groups. These are summarised as follows:

The groups clearly identified a natural progression for a typical lifespan of 18 through 78 years. Overall it was felt that involvement should begin prior to age 18. Transition plans should be in place to identify services and future needs and progression into adulthood. Transition planning with local schools needed to begin at an early age and the diversity of personal aspirations and abilities should be reflected in the shape of day service provision. One of the hopes of the groups was that young school leavers could have a greater variety of options available to them outside of the day centre building and in a wider variety of community locations with their non-disabled peers. (SGM3).

For educational activities the group had a vision of training for the clients, including life and independence skills, integrated college opportunities, work based learning and access to a wider base of life long learning opportunities. All ages should have the opportunity to work, learn and recreate with their typical peers, with opportunities to make and meet friends. However, the service needs to look beyond the 19 to 60 age group to develop transition plans that reflect the needs of those more elderly clients. This includes helping them to maintain or develop new hobbies, support continued access to learning and leisure activities, a chance to volunteer, and perhaps undertake some light work. Many in the group felt that more use should be made of generic elderly services, as the needs of the client group often overlap those of elderly people in need of care. Certainly, those over the age of 65 still attending the service should be given access to these services as soon as possible. (SGM3&4)

5. A Sustainable Modernisation Plan with Ongoing Monitoring
The group were unanimous that for change to occur, there needs to be a dedicated team, with a dedicated change coordinator. One of the biggest fears was that without this, the project would lose momentum. There is a need to capitalize on the opportunity for change and develop and maintain momentum. The group agreed that ongoing monitoring/evaluation was a crucial component in developing the service. This should involve the use of SMART objectives for stakeholders, ongoing goal planning and review, and an objective measure as to the extent that any changes made reflect the group vision and best practice in the area. (SGM2)

One of the biggest fears expressed by the group was there would not be sufficient funds available to properly implement the change programme. This means that current funding needs to be efficiently co-ordinated and distributed and that additional funding should be sought to develop focused initiatives, possibly through a dedicated funding manager. (SGM 1) Furthermore, careful consideration should be given to the redeployment of staff

and the use of natural supports[44] as a means of using current resource more effectively. (SGM2)

6. Ongoing Joint Working and Multiple Dialogue

The theme of ongoing joint working was consistent throughout the SGMs and seen as important in sustaining the momentum. Many expressed the hope that joint working with a wide stakeholder base would result in more 'joined up planning' and a more 'holistic' approach to service provision. This may increase the potential for the service to diversify into a variety of community based activities and locations, and develop access to a wider support network. Previously, many of the community initiatives were cancelled, often because collaboration across stakeholder groups had failed. Consultation on the planning and delivery of change will ideally reflect the views and experiences of all stakeholders and the scope and creativity of those perspectives reflected at strategic planning level. Clearly, this requires the continued dialogue and joint working between each stakeholder perspective and is crucial in maintaining momentum. (SGM1&2)

Dedication and commitment to the change process must occur on all levels. Many expressed the view that any change planning would need to include the full participation of senior managers and service staff. This is the only way that the views and planning strategies developed by key stakeholders at all levels can be ratified and placed into an official framework. (SGM1).

7. Changing Roles and Responsibilities

The majority of the group endorsed the notion that day service change would lead to some significant changes in the way that services are delivered. One of the biggest fears of the group was that there could be confusion about the roles and responsibilities of those implementing the change. It was felt that there needs to be more focus on developing links with local community facilities and that this would include local community projects, employees, municipal facilities and opportunities to learn new skills as a means to access further learning, employment or recreational pursuits.

Increased links with community resources has different implications across stakeholder perspectives. For example, from a Community Projects perspective, it means finding ways of raising awareness and developing potential strategies of support within the projects; from the learning perspective, it means finding more ways of enabling individualized and accredited learning in integrated learning environments including work based locations; for the clients, it represents the hope of more meaningful lives, for themselves and other service users; and from a day service perspective it represents an opportunity to improve staff morale, and derive greater satisfaction from developing a service that more readily meets client needs. (SGM 1)

Many felt that the day center staff were being asked to perform too many jobs, some of which were inappropriate and not in the interests of the clients. For example, the transport issue had led to some staff driving buses. The deployment issue also arose in the use of

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[44] Natural supports are freely given and naturally occurring within the context of inclusive community settings e.g. co-workers

casual staff, many of who were deployed away from the center. Some in the group felt that 'areas of specialization' could be developed for day service staff focussing on developing links with community learning, leisure and employment opportunities. Some felt strongly that one area of specialization should be on health and that a specific service be developed geared at meeting the health needs of those with the severest levels of disability to include speech and language, physio and occupational therapy, clinicians and medical support. Some suggested a purpose built service to these ends. (SGM 1 to 4).

Day services and accommodation services should be seamless in order to support leisure and social development, as well as supporting employment and volunteer opportunities to extend beyond the 9am to 4pm scope of opportunity. This includes budget allocations. People should be able to access services/support directly from home which would be more normative as opposed to having to go to the day centre building first. (SGM2&3) Another issue that arose was the degree that local communities deemed it their responsibility to provide accessible buildings and transport for people with disabilities.

8. Awareness Raising and Empowerment

The group felt that there was a need to engage as many local service sectors as possible. For this there would be a need for awareness raising and training for all stakeholder groups. Recommendations for training are provided in Appendix 4. It was felt that the day service had a big role to play in this, including training provision. More training was needed around developing natural support networks, especially within the day service. Day service staff made the point that the skills they currently have should not be overlooked but be developed upon and that they should be given the opportunity to demonstrate and use them. (SGM1&2)

Many in the group identified the important roles that parents have to play in the change process. However, one of the biggest fears was that many of the parents would be negative and resistant to change. Awareness raising among this group, therefore, should be a priority. One interesting idea to come from the group was the establishment of a parent leadership group. The group looked beyond presentations and training as a means to raise awareness, identifying leaflets, DVDs, and the development of case studies and life stories to disseminate and information share. (SGM4) One of the biggest hopes of the group would was that new job roles for service staff would decrease staff burnout and increase motivation and confidence. All staff should receive basic values training and a list of potential training opportunities should be developed. (SGM1)

Stakeholder Focus Groups
Staff
The reviewers met with 27 staff during six small group meetings held at Sandbrook. Four members of staff also regularly attended the large stakeholder group meetings.

Overwhelmingly the groups all felt the service could be changed for the better. Most staff believed that the service users needed more stimulation and variety throughout the day. Staff felt that there were many service users who did not need to be attending a service like Sandbrook because of their level of independence.

Many expressed frustration regarding the lack of clear leadership and management of the centre. While on the other hand many stated that they believe the current review is an extremely positive move to set the direction of the service. Staff also discussed the lack of pertinent training

As with the stakeholder group meetings the deployment of staff was discussed with people feeling that they were multi-tasking e.g. driving vehicles and transporting service users to and from the centre as opposed to providing support in activities for service users. Staff sick time was also highlighted at these meetings by the staff themselves; many attributed general low staff morale to high levels of sick time.

Suggestions were made by each group to look at salaries structure and offer incentives to people who never use sick time in an effort to address the issue of sick time levels throughout Sandbrook. Since, these meetings, steps to address many of the concerns staff expressed have been instigated including; hiring a new manager for the centre and a review of the transportation system. Also a system to obtain regular feedback from staff is being implemented, and suggestions for augmentative staff training have been included in this review.

Parents/Carers
The reviewers solicited feedback from parents and carers in a variety of ways including; invitations to attend the large stakeholder group meetings, hosting a Saturday event with an overview of the Meaningful Day model and mailed questionnaires (see Appendix 4) with the option to speak directly with the reviewers either by phone or face to face. Two to five parents attended the large stakeholder group meeting regularly; the Saturday event was attended by eight parent/carers; one hundred questionnaires were sent out with twelve completed and returned.

The questions posed to this group by the reviewers were as follows:
1. What do you like/dislike about Sandbrook day centre?
2. What are your hopes and fears for the future for your son/daughter?
3. What would you like to see your son/daughter doing during the day?
4. What would you say your son/daughters most pressing needs were?
5. Do you see a place in the community for your son/daughter?

When asked what they liked about Sandbrook the respondents overwhelmingly cited day centre staff as the element most parent/carers liked as well as having a place for the service user to be around other people during the day. Lack of stimulating activities and opportunities to do things outside of the centre were the greatest concerns raised by this group. Regarding hopes for their sons/daughters each respondent mentioned having increased opportunity to participate in a variety of meaningful activities both in the centre (e.g. life skill) and outside of the centre (e.g. swimming and other leisure activities, attending college and working). Most parent/carer fears revolved around their loved one becoming bored as a result of the lack of meaningful activity thus losing skills, independence and possibly becoming institutionalized. This group also had fears around

opportunities being curtailed due to funding cuts to this population. Being as independent as possible, having a variety and choice of meaningful things to do, and having health care needs addressed were universally deemed to be the most pressing needs. The majority of parent/carers could envisage a place in the community for their sons/daughters working, volunteering or participating in community based leisure activities with varying degrees of support.

Service Users

The reviewers met with 12 service users for input into the review. We also invited People First to support service user participation in the stakeholder group meetings, however the invitation was declined. Three individuals from Sandbrook were asked to represent the service users at the stakeholder group meetings however only one person was able to attend the meetings. Two separate meetings with service users were held for input into the review. The reviewers have also utilized informal opportunities to solicit service user input throughout the review process.

The questions posed to this group by the reviewers were as follows:
1. What do you like about Sandbrook day centre?
2. What do you dislike about Sandbrook day centre?
3. What do you think should happen with Sandbrook?
4. Can you imagine having a job or volunteering in the community?

This group were by far the most candid in their responses. Whilst the majority had difficulty coming up with things they liked about Sandbrook beyond "helping the staff and cleaning up around the place", they were vocal and clear about the things they disliked about the centre. These included; lack of activities, choice and variety, continually having activities cancelled, feeling bored, frustrated and not feeling listened to. There was also a feeling that people were not able to learn new things at Sandbrook which might help them become more independent. The general consensus was that if people didn't have to attend Sandbrook they wouldn't. Some of the older service users recalled when Sandbrook was a sheltered workshop with contracts that kept people busy and helped them learn skills. It was felt that reinstating the contracts scheme would help some of the younger people learn skills so they could get real jobs. Although it was also mentioned that people might lose their benefits if they were to find jobs.

This group also discussed the need to consider young people who were not as yet, Sandbrook service users ("we have to think about the children at Greenfields they should not be coming up here; they should have jobs and be learning things") and what the future should be like for them. It was felt that people should have more things to do, for instance attend college and learn things, get jobs, do fun things like visits to the seaside, learn how to cook and how to use buses. When asked if they could imagine themselves having jobs in the community the majority believed that they would be able to mentioning working at Asda, in a hairdressing salon, a restaurant, answering phones in a doctor's office, being the tea person at Ty Kier Hardie and making things to sell as viable employment options. It was also discussed that there may be service users who may not want to work or who were unable to work and that these individuals should still have a

variety of activity options and be given opportunities to learn because "they are people too". People felt that there should be opportunities to go to college full time or take some classes and learn new things such as arranging flowers and making things to sell.

The Buildings Analysis
The building was developed approximately 30 years ago, as a sheltered workshop at which time only two people using wheelchairs used the service. Since that time however, the nature of the service has changed dramatically, with over 40% of its current client population using wheelchairs. The lack of accommodations for wheelchair users would severely affect the ability of service users to be as independent as possible, having to rely upon the able bodied around them to open doors etc. The building requires much work and renovation in order to fully adapt it for accessible wheelchair use.

The size of the building makes it easy to bolt-on and offer services that can be found in the local community. Thus we see, for instance physical-therapy being offered in the building as opposed to clients from the service attending community based physical-therapy resources, which would also have a positive impact upon the development of other skills and competencies.

A detailed Building Assessment based on the PASSING model has been completed and the results have indicated that as a learning environment the Day Centre scores poorly in most people's opinions and against what constitutes a coherent model of learning. A substantial investment is required or alternative provision made,

Section 5. Discussion, Recommendations

The following recommendations are based upon stakeholder views and models of good practice. A timeline for these recommendations is presented in Appendix 1. Collectively the recommendations form a unique approach to day service modernization in the Merthyr context including the amount of generic resource available locally. The many new and creative ideas generated through the review provide the potential for service provision within Merthyr Tydfil to become a model of best practice that other regions may wish to learn from and replicate in the future.

Recommendation 1: Base Day Service activities on the 'Meaningful Day' model.

The stakeholder groups embraced the principles of the Meaningful Day approach when considering changes to day service delivery to this client group. The Meaningful Day approach takes into account the full range of activities engaged in by typical people throughout the course of a typical day, including employment, volunteering and leisure activities. This will allow for far greater scope when designing individually tailored alternatives to the current day service, and reinforces the concept and possibility of 24/7 support for people to pursue meaningful lives.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this is the implementation of a common vision among the stakeholders about the direction and end point of the change process. This

would, as indicated by stakeholders at the discussion sessions be the delivery of a 'Meaningful Day' workshop.

Action Point(s)

1) Create general awareness throughout the organization of the Meaningful Day concept (use posters, newsletters and discussion groups)

2) Encourage staff, parents/carers, care management and other stakeholders to consider the Meaningful Day spheres when helping develop and implement service users plan

3) Organise Meaningful Day Workshop(s) to demonstrate how this can be used in planning services (frontline and management), care management staff and invited parents/stakeholders, providers of services

Recommendation 2: Establish a small strategic planning group of senior managers for learning disabilities to meet once per month to review, update and respond to developments in the process – (service user specific and service specific)

The reviewers see the current senior managers group forming this strategic planning group along with the dedicated modernisation co-ordinator; strategizing around any financial and possible policy changes that may be required. This group would oversee and continue to develop and support the strategy of modernisation, implementing and delegating where appropriate.

Action Point(s)

1) Establish senior managers' strategic planning group

2) Develop hiring plan for co-ordinator

3) Establish monthly meetings

Recommendation 3: Identify and hire a dedicated modernisation co-ordinator to ensure continuity and keep the process moving.

One of the biggest fears of the stakeholder group was that the momentum for change would not be sustained beyond the current review without a dedicated change co-ordinator and a strong planning group to maintain momentum. Models of good practice clearly illustrate that in order to modernise day services it is imperative to have a co-ordinator and a strategic planning group with the power and authority to shift resources between departments and/or services, and either adapt or change policy in order to accommodate and support that change.

The appointment of a dedicated co-ordinator will ensure that that process of modernization continues on track not only giving the process a focal person but also

serving as a gesture of goodwill and determination to continue what has been started in the minds and hearts of the stakeholders.

Recommendation 4: Deliver immediate values' training for all layers of staff (and targeted stakeholders) to ensure this foundation is present when planning and implementing service provision.

The Valuing People and Fulfilling the Promises papers on which many care standards have been based borrow heavily from values based in SRV theory. Therefore in order to begin to understand and meet those standards it is imperative that staff and functionaries at all levels of the organisation have at least a basic understanding of these core values.

Many consumers, families and their supporters will, like most people behave in unnecessarily conservative ways when they face conditions of uncertainty, insecurity and prospects beyond their familiarity. This fear related inhibition will not be overcome without the provisions that make embracing new and innovative challenges more comfortable. This means providing to people ample sources of education, values exploration, technical assistance, inspiration and encouragement. Therefore we encourage the inclusion of parents/carers in values based training events. It is essential that values training be offered as quickly as possible to as many as possible.

The application of a PASSING type evaluation approach will also provide an opportunity to benchmark and monitor the distance traveled by the service, provide valuable feedback about the pace of service change, and provide an ongoing opportunity for the stakeholders to revisit the Meaningful Day vision.

The TSI approach offers frontline staff a toolbox for providing direct support in integrated settings. It also raises expectations about what people with learning disabilities can achieve given the appropriate type of support. It also empowers the course attendees to deliver one-on-one support effectively and provides a basis for the supported employment model and methods for travel training for the staff.

Action Point(s)
1) All frontline staff will have had at least one day basic values training.

2) TSI workshop(s) delivered to core staff identified for secondment to Supported Employment and invited stakeholders.

Recommendation 5: Continue the development of a person-centered organisation
Person Centred Planning has become a focus of local and national policy initiatives in the UK. The development and use of person centered plans was a main theme of stakeholders throughout this review. Their use enables services to create a structure based upon individual needs and aspirations. This in turn is more likely to lead to a more diverse service that develops opportunities beyond those currently offered.

The review recommends monthly information meetings for day service staff to be established to keep people abreast of changes within the organisation and also the provision of on-going and meaningful staff development and training opportunities (e.g. alternative communication methods, disability specific training and information sessions). Encourage constructive criticism and feedback, from service users and staff with follow-up.

A service user action group (organized by the day service manager) should be developed to represent the feelings and perspectives of the clients. This group should meet at least once a month and a representative from this group should attend the modernization action group/committee. The review also recommends that staff identify the personal skills and competencies that they feel are not currently being utilized but which they believe would benefit the service and service users (e.g. computer skill training).

In order to make any good match between services and service users it must first be determined what the goals hopes and aspirations of the service user and their families/supporters are. This information can then be used to shop for and/or develop services around the individual that can help him or her be successful. Long and short term goals and objectives should be developed with the individual to create a recipe for success. These form the basis of a service contract (accountability) between the service and the individual, and should be reviewed and evaluated regularly to track and measure progression, determine their continued relevance and build upon goals achieved.

Action Point(s)
1) Develop an action plan to identify and implement the key elements for the local authority day service to be a person centered organization

2) Revisit and redefine the roles and responsibilities of an advocacy service and discuss with stakeholders on the way forward.

3) Encourage and establish methods for ongoing feedback and input from all main stakeholders, especially service users, their parent/carers and front-line staff, such as monthly meetings and suggestion boxes

4) Identify current skills, interests and competencies amongst staff and relate this to staff deployment

5) Develop a service wide news letter to advertise meetings and showcase good practice and the progression being made

6) People are kept abreast of service system developments and opportunities and are encouraged to comment and contribute

7) Develop a method of review that measures how people actually benefit from the service(s) as opposed to simply how people use the service

8) As soon as possible implement individualized long, medium and short-term goals and objectives for each service user. These should be SMART (specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time based) and produce individual personal plans as part of the person centered planning process.

Recommendation 6: That MTCBC reconfigure its services over a set time frame

The stakeholders consistently cited the need to develop services that were individualized, flexible, afforded choice and variety of activities, and were person driven. Best practice would indicate that in order to meet these specifications the deliverer needs to develop specialized areas of expertise that should be small enough to be flexible in order to meet the different and varied needs of the target group.

Good practice would change the role of the Borough from service provider to one of 'enabler' and not necessarily the direct deliverer of services. This enabling role would mean that the local authority could free up more resources to encourage host agencies (the commissioned organisation), parents, service users and the wider stakeholder group, to develop and monitor the service towards meaningful day activity. Often those managing budgets and deploying resource have to consider the needs of the wider service as well as the perceived needs of the target groups and its parents/carers that frequently conflict. In some instances services are already commissioned out and these tend to be services that require flexible support which is delivered in community locations (e.g., supported employment).

The reviewers, therefore, recommend that MTCBC develops a strategy towards commissioning services out over a set timeframe with the potential to create:
o *Greater variety/choice*
o *Flexibility*
o *Instilling the ethos of services for people not people for services*
o *Individualized/person centered services*
o *Micro-projects*
o *Person, parent/carer driven services*
o *Built-in accountability with option to replace if they fail to deliver*
o *More monies available to people with learning disabilities through matched funding resources*

- Specifications for tender agencies/individuals would include the requirement that the commissioned agent fulfils certain pre-specified criteria based on person centered planning, and in activities designed around meaningful day.

- These commissioned services should be in direct response to individual person centered planning identified goals and aspirations. For this small 'micro-projects'

could be developed around individuals or small groups of individuals with similar goals and aspirations.

- Consumers, families and others close to the service user should be treated as core designers and directors of their own supports through full participation in PCP, and service development and design.

- Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council should position itself as an 'enabling' partner with consumers and their families. Over time they would act to enable, develop and gradually increase the use of free standing semi-autonomous and consumer/family governed mini projects. By this it is meant supports that are largely designed, guided and even managed in some cases as close to the consumer as possible.

- With the creation of funded micro-projects and small individualized services the need for ongoing monitoring and accountability mechanisms is imperative. Therefore the review recommends identifying a specific person whose sole responsibility will be the ongoing development, maintenance, review and evaluation (in terms of continued funding) of the diverse service contracts.

- Micro projects could be hosted by existing agencies under the auspices of 'negotiated hosting' arrangements, thus keeping the agencies in an enabling role 'absorbing' as much as possible the bureaucracy associated with funding and funding mechanisms as possible.

- Calls for tender service proposals should be highly targeted and include specific guidelines/attributes required. In order to safeguard the values driven ideology around decommissioning of services it would be imperative to include caveats around successful tender proposals, for example limiting the growth and size of agencies/organisations in order to preclude expansion and growth.

- Another safeguard recommended by the reviewers, would be to restrict the scope of these new agencies/services. This will ensure they remain focused on what they were commissioned to provide and will not be tempted to pervert their service delivery by expanding their purview and thus diluting their efficacy e.g. attempting to be all things to all people.

- The reviewers also recommend that direct payments be explored and utilized as a method for funding and delivering diverse packages of provision around individuals with direct contracting between the host agency and the service user.

- The commissioning of services implies the necessity for on-going monitoring and evaluation of newly commissioned services. In its role as enabler and commissioner the Borough also has a responsibility to ensure that accountability mechanisms are in place and that new and funded services are delivering what was promised, when promised. The review highlighted the need to develop monitoring procedures that

regularly engages stakeholders in a process of critical self-reflection, such as 360 degree evaluation methods. These reviews should take into account not only individual service user progression and goal attainment (as defined in individual programme/education and person centered plans) but also other stakeholder impressions including parent/carers, other service partners and community representatives

- The PASSING tool could be applied to construct an objective evaluation about how the service is progressing overall. The application of the PASSING type evaluation approach will also provide an opportunity to benchmark and monitor the distance traveled by the service, provide valuable feedback about the pace of service change, and provide an ongoing opportunity for the stakeholders to revisit the Meaningful Day vision.

Action Point(s)

1) Develop person centred plans for all focussing initially on service users who are retirees and those capable of moving into supported employment opportunities immediately

2) Commence negotiations to reconfigure services currently provided at Coed Dderwen to be provided by a voluntary sector / social enterprise partner

3) Identify areas for new service development from these PCP's and issue call for proposals for commissioning out services

4) Identify a lead person as the Contract Manager whose sole responsibility will be ongoing monitoring and evaluation of services. This will safeguard against abuse of funds, and will maintain the integrity of service provision and enable ongoing accountability

5) Establish micro project focused around specific individuals, especially those with high support needs

6) Encourage the gradual reassignment of staff to new services and micro-projects

7) Establish method for monitoring commissioned services and accountability criteria

8) Commission an experienced evaluator to provided periodic objective feedback to the service and stakeholders

Recommendation 7: Education, Employment and Community Project inclusion should be added to the existing spheres or parameters of the unified assessment plans as discrete and separate additional spheres.

The Unified Assessment Plan (UAP) has been identified as the method care managers will use to determine and recommend care plans and packages. The UAP consists of a number of spheres or parameters for assessment and potential care management focus.

However education, employment and participation in local community projects are not represented in these spheres; rather it is felt that they are implicit in the overall assessment. The review suggested that education, employment and inclusion in local community projects should be a key consideration in the context of enabling service users to progress from one service area to another.

Action Point(s)
1) Ensure that education, employment and community engagement are monitored as key outcomes of the UAP process

Recommendation 8: Maximise the use of external funding to extend the personal development opportunities to service users
Throughout the Stakeholder Group Meetings the stakeholders made the point that available external grants and other monies were not being applied for because there was not the man-power to do so. Identifying other funding partners and mechanisms will potentially add to the pot of available money for this group, and perhaps also assist in the identification and development of hitherto unexplored partnership possibilities, the development of micro projects and assist to develop specific projects around those with more severe disabilities.
Similarly, funding could be used to invest and 'pump prime' services that will eventually lead to greater independence on the part of the service users

Action Point(s)
1) Identify dedicated funding person as part of the co-ordinators role.

2) Explore funding pathways and mechanisms and develop relationships and data base of funding bodies

3) Access available funds ASAP for seed development

4) Identify matched funding possibilities and potential matched funding partners for commissioned services and micro-projects

5) Explore funding pathways towards social inclusion (reverse inclusion) e.g. community development funding mechanisms)

Recommendation 9: The Stakeholder group and Learning disabilities group combine to form a Modernization action group to oversee the overall process and maintain Stakeholder involvement and impetus
A major theme throughout the SGM's was that of meeting burn out; meaning that stakeholders although clearly committed to engaging with the process in the long term wanted to see a more streamlined system of information exchange and debate. This review suggests that combining these groups will serve the multiple purposes of maintaining stakeholder input, lessen the meeting burden for those currently involved in

both groups, give a forum for discussion and debate and keep people abreast of changes to the service. The group should be of manageable size to deal with matters arising therefore we suggest limiting the numbers of representatives from each stakeholder perspective.

Action Point(s)

1) Combine these two groups

2) Identify major stakeholders and select representatives to attend the combined group meeting

3) Schedule regular monthly meetings

4) Develop ad hoc groups to respond to and deal with specific issues

Recommendation 10: Undertake a critical review and develop the key roles, responsibilities and targets of care managers, service planners and key-workers.

Throughout the review process it became apparent that worker key roles and responsibilities had become 'muddied' and unclear over time. The review also highlighted the need for a deeper understanding between care management and direct service staff of key roles, functions and responsibilities, and for these departments to work together more closely. These should be dovetailed to benefit service user and based around a common vision for the development of meaningful days.

Action Point(s)
1) Identify key roles, responsibilities and targets for care managers, service planners and key-workers and communicate these to stakeholders

2) Review job descriptions, working practice and training needs.

3) Identify areas of cross-over and joint work

4) Develop protocols for joint work areas

5) Develop mechanisms and strategies to ensure smooth communication flow between joint work areas/functionaries

6) Review joint work and co-operation strategies regularly with stakeholders

7) Use job descriptions for staff evaluation purposes

Recommendation 11: Gradually move people with severe and complex needs out of Sandbrook to more appropriate and competency enhancing environments.

A number of concerns expressed by stakeholders focused on service users with severe and complex needs. While community inclusion initiatives for this group were supported, it was also felt that other health and care concerns needed to be addressed in an ongoing fashion, and that some 'base' would still be required. It was generally accepted that this base should not be Sandbrook Day Centre and the 3 main options are as follows:

Option 1: A purpose built facility specifically designed to meet the needs of this user group

This could be created along the lines of the Bert Denning Centre in Bryn Mawr with purposeful safeguards in place to avoid creating a segregated centre. If this option is adopted then the reviewers recommend that the Borough works with Bert Denning to understand funding and provision issues and work closely with Health and Care Managers to agree what should go in the facility.

Option 2: Adapt existing facilities in the community which have been previously utilized solely by people with disabilities.

While this approach would be useful and perhaps more cost effective, research has shown that it also has some drawbacks. It is generally recognized that facilities which have been used solely for the delivery of services to people with disabilities are less appealing to members of the general public, reducing the potential and opportunities for reverse inclusion.

While these first 2 options seem to provide more obvious solutions for this client group, they also have a number of implicit dangers. On the one hand the small purpose built developments would appear to provide a 'safety net' for people with complex needs, on the other, these could very easily become institutions that prevent people from engaging in the community. A second danger is that those attending the service could be overlooked in the development of services to create a meaningful life in community settings. With these options, safeguards would need to be developed to ensure a continued focus on community participation and inclusion.

A further safeguard around these 2 options is that the service would be reviewed regularly, especially in the case of individuals attending for specific health care concerns; the focus should be on continually 'chipping away' at and working with generic health related services (e.g. physiotherapy) to eventually have these needs attended to in those community services enjoyed by the community at large. Finally, another safeguard to a purpose built or any segregated and congregated service development would be to ensure that attendance was limited to one or two days per week, with the proviso that individuals would also be involved in other community based activities.

Option 3: The development of a facility that includes purpose built design elements to accommodate the needs of this user group which is situated within a broader community facility. For example, this may be developed within a larger community centre, health facility or sports and leisure centre.

This option creates the possibility of adapting generic community facilities to meet the health and care needs of this user group, whilst also addressing issues of inclusion and integration. Investigate the possibilities to maximize the use of existing community facilities.

Recommendation 12: Implement a system of client service co-ordination with specific dedicated co-coordinators/service brokers to create a seamless transition (child/ adult/retirement) service.

Historically service delivery mechanisms for people with learning disabilities have been characterised as lacking continuity, especially during transitional periods such as the transition from child to adult services, employment to retirement and the movement from child to adult services.

The stakeholders highlighted the need for services to feed into one another more fluidly and coherently. The review concludes that lifelong service co-ordination should be developed with a long term view to creating early intervention strategies in Merthyr Tydfil at least from age 14 and to create continuity between the developing aspirations of the school children and the type of services being offered for first time school leavers. Lifelong service co-ordination would also focus on the development of transition plans for those approaching retirement age and moving into elder services.

In relation to school to adult transition, the stakeholders also identified the necessity to attend to the career development needs of 14-19 year olds developing in them and their parent/carers an expectation that work would be one of their options as adults. This could ideally include a Youth Supported Employment Initiative as part of the transition strategy, to provide young people an opportunity to have real (paid) employment experiences, typical of those of their non disabled peers with support from same age peer supporters whilst still in school. This will encourage young people with disabilities and their parents to consider employment as a viable adult option and provides vital opportunities for career and life development.

Action Point(s)

1) Further develop even closer links and partnerships with child and elder services to provide seamless transition services across the service sectors (child to adult, adult to retirement)

2) Improve communication between the Transition Group and the Learning Disabilities Review Group.

3) Invite shared participation and cost between child, adult and elder services in values based training.

4) Develop and implement a Youth Supported Employment Project within local special and mainstream schools in the Borough

5) Host an annual service fair and invite parents of young people with disabilities to preview current services available

6) Communicate the remit and priorities of the Transition Manager and transition action plan to ensure that it covers all aspects of transition e.g. schools to employment, employment to retirement.

7) Develop a mechanism to identify opportunities for new services concerned with the needs of young people prior to their entry into adult services.

8) Similarly, develop a mechanism to identify opportunities for new services concerned with the needs of people who are planning for their retirement.

Recommendation 13: Develop a plan to enable elder service users to move on to generic elder programmes with support for specific service user needs

In typical society people over the age of 65 retire from full time employment to engage in more leisure and family based activities with possibly some light work/employment and continuing education/hobbies based learning. The reviewers believe that the elder citizens attending Sandbrook should enjoy these same opportunities. It is also apparent that generic elderly services often have to cater for people with similar needs as people with learning disabilities (e.g. memory and health problems). Therefore, there may well be a significant overlap in the services offered through generic elderly services and the needs of elderly people who have a learning disability.

The review showed that that this group of service users have over the past thirty years developed strong relationships and connections with one another, therefore the review strongly urges that these relationships be respected, protected and encouraged whilst actively encouraging the development of relationships and activities with typical elders.

Action Point(s)
1) Identify the range and array of possible generic elder services

2) Increase understanding of the requirements of this user group, and offer support if necessary to these generic services for a time-limited period

3) Develop a strategy to enable senior service users access to these generic elder services on a regular basis

4) Include employment, education as well as community participation on the care planning process for elders with learning disabilities

5) Maintain continuity of relationships whilst encouraging the development of new ones.

6) Maintain connections with elder services in order to provide seamless retirement plans.

7) Investigate the plausibility of developing elder services that can be accessed by and is appealing to both the non disabled and disabled alike (reverse inclusion).

8) Support elders with disabilities to engage in planning new services with typical seniors (peer support).

9) Support the development of values based training and methodologies within elder services.

10) Utilise direct payments for elder services.

Recommendation 14: Direct more able service users into Supported Employment programmes(s)

The review suggests that many of the current Sandbrook service users would, with the right type of support, be able to undertake paid employment should they wish. This would include working full or part time, or, attending time limited work taster programmes, with the aim of developing skills, building user confidence and enabling them to make more informed decisions about the type of career they would most like to pursue. As with the life long learning review, this review found that this type of provision is being under-utilized within the Borough.

Action Point(s)

1) Raise awareness of the potential of supported employment among stakeholders and the service users through the delivery of supported employment training workshops and presentations

2) Include employment as an integral part of the care management and planning process (UAP)

3) Expand upon current service user employment situations

4) Offer support for people to try out employment

5) Work with local employment service to create more opportunities in employment for at least ten of the current service users

6) Second staff to local SE (supported employment) service for training

7) Offer Training in Systematic Instruction Workshops (TSI)

8) Develop a youth supported employment project (YSEP) project which puts employment focus in the transition process for young people

9) Encourage people who are currently in the service to consider employment on time limited and small scale basis e.g. four hours or less per week

10) Day services should work with the college to expand and build upon work based learning opportunities, working toward career and skill enhancement

11) Actively encourage the development of SE services through commissioning and assistance with matched funding

12) Encourage service users with complex disabilities to participate in supported work directed volunteer pursuits and work towards building on skills and interests with an employment focus

13) All service users should have at least two opportunities to participate in employment focussed opportunities including volunteer and job taster experiences with one to one support.

14) Develop positive experiences into meaningful day micro-projects, gradually increase the amount of time spent away from the original service system

15) Work closely with community SE service to develop and expand work ethos amongst service users and their parent/carers

16) Work with the SE service to engage Government bodies in discussion around benefit exemptions over time limited period to remove this disincentive to employment

17) All staff will have participated in a Development of Natural supports workshops

Recommendation 15: Expand the learning pathways available to service users

The review found that there was a need to explore alternative forms of accreditation, based upon the learned skills of the clients. This may be best achieved while they participate in community-based activities, including work based learning, work-experience, and community, leisure and recreational activities. This idea implies developing a record of each person's skills and preferences, to enable further learning or selective job matching for employment to take place. The strategy should also include the development of stronger links between the college, and work based learning initiatives, the day services and supported employment, so that community based and formal accreditation routes for developing employment opportunities are linked directly to the job matching and job targeting activities of the supported employment agency.

This review also suggests that ways should be explored to enable more clients to access mainstream college courses and find ways for enabling the clients to more fully

participate with the social aspects of college life. Review of best practice suggests that further links between the stakeholder group and the college should be established to create 'Inclusive Post Secondary Education' (IPSE) opportunities for people with learning disabilities and to extend the experience of people with learning disabilities to include work and leisure based learning opportunities. (e.g., a person could be employed in a restaurant for three hours a day two or three days a week and be attending inclusive college courses to learn new skills and be receiving NVQ credits or foundation level credits centered on work based learning).

This should also include the potential of direct payments and Supplementary Funding from ELWa to contribute to structured time support costs, and of the use of Exceptional Funding from the same source to provide support for some clients during unstructured time and the potential use of peer supports, volunteers and students attending the college to provide support as highlighted above.

Action Point(s)
1) Education included in the UAP for all

2) Work closely with the college and university to explore the possibility of creating an IPSE approach

3) Call for proposals to further develop this approach (this could be commissioned to either the college and/or university, specifically developed community based service, or be developed as individualized micro-projects)

4) Work closely with the college and supported employment services to identify areas for learning and accreditation

5) Explore the use of direct payments and supplementary payments from DELLS to support individual initiatives

6) Do not use local authority funding to establish segregated classes for Sandbrook clients

Recommendation 16: Encourage and support the development of a parent leadership programme
In many service systems parents and carers are perceived by professionals to be not only an inconvenience but also in some cases a hindrance to the perceived function of the service. The review revealed that parents and carers had felt excluded and disempowered regarding the services that are available to their sons and daughters Best practice models, such as person centered planning, regard parents/carers not only as partners and allies but also as legitimate, creative and strong co-designers in the development of supports around their sons and daughters. They are also the ultimate defenders and protectors of their children. Research in the USA in particular has shown that parental involvement is one of the main determinants in progressive day service change.

This initiative will work in concert with person centered planning initiatives and demonstrate a commitment to being an enabling partner in the delivery of services to people with disabilities and their families.

The initiative should actively encourage parents and carers to acquire knowledge and awareness of best practice models. Nurturing the development of skills and expertise amongst this group of parent/carers will raise their expectations about what is possible, increasing their contribution to the change process, and empower them to become active advocates and lobbyists for better services on behalf of their sons and daughters.

Action Point(s)
1) Engage the current core group of parents who have actively participated in the review to develop this idea

2) Provide seed funding to develop this initiative

3) Assist with fund development and co-ordination of the parent leadership series

4) Offer administrative and development assistance
Invite these stakeholders to workshops and values based training

Recommendation 17: Create partnerships with a variety of other departments/ groups/agencies/individuals as well as other local authorities to offer inter-community services

Research has shown that in order to maximize opportunities for meaningful social inclusion and integration for people with learning disabilities in any community it is highly desirable to create relationships and partnerships with a variety of generic individuals, groups, departments and agencies as evidenced in the models of good practice.[45] The more partnerships that are developed the more likely it is that the change process will develop opportunities to share resources, and that those resources will be inclusive. Throughout the SGM's the stakeholders highlighted many opportunities to develop partnerships and exchanges of information and resources amongst themselves and with community based organisations which would benefit service users. The development of partnerships should be based on agreed set outcomes avoiding the potential of these partnerships simply becoming 'talking shops'

In the SGM's stakeholders frequently lamented the lack of knowledge and information regarding community agencies, services and opportunities locally available. A basic list of current services and providers to people with learning disabilities is provided in Appendix 6. It was suggested that a data base of community agencies, services and opportunities be developed and maintained. The data base should include social services, health services, and leisure and education services available in the region for both adults

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[45] Community Building in Logan Square and the Gift of Hospitality (Bartholomew- Lorimer, O'Connell, McKnight 1991).

and children, and cover disability specific as well as generic resources. The data base should be available on-line and should also be published once a year to be distributed as a community resource catalogue to the community as a whole. Responsibility for updating and maintaining this data base/publication should be assigned to a key person.

Action Point(s)

1) The modernisation co-ordinator should work with the stakeholders to generate a list of partnership possibilities and begin to facilitate partnership development for agreed set outcomes

2) In partnership with other departments/groups/agencies and individuals create a Community Resource Catalogue

3) Identify a specific person to develop and update the community database

4) Opportunities for networking should be created and developed e.g. an annual Merthyr Service fair hosted by MTCBC

5) Utilize as much as possible generic community resources

6) Encourage a partnership and networking ethos

Recommendation 18: Develop and encourage new integrated services and facilities to meet the needs of people with disabilities

Building upon recommendation 16, it follows that opportunities for reverse inclusion practices i.e. working to develop something which benefits the generic community with the inclusion of people with disabilities implicit in our presence at the development stage will present themselves more frequently. Making sure key people are involved in any new developments in the area will keep inclusion on the public agenda and ensure that new additions to the community are built with the assumption that they will be accessible to all. This should also include any new purpose built facility for people with severe and complex needs i.e. developing something which enhances the community as a whole.

Action Point(s)

1) Ensure key people are involved in new developments in the community

2) Ensure that disabled accessibility building codes are upheld by MTCBC as well as community building agents

3) Ensure community leaders are involved in community and business regeneration initiatives

Recommendation 19: Review the current advocacy system The Stakeholders
also highlighted the need for people with disabilities to be involved in all decisions which

affect them and also to help them have their voices heard. People were very disappointed that the People First group had chosen not to send representatives to the SGM's. It was clearly felt that a system of advocacy and/or self advocacy needed to be nurtured and supported in order that people with disabilities and their supporters be empowered, engaged and contributing. There are many types of advocacy which are geared toward a variety of different needs and outcomes, the reviewers recommend the support and development of a variety of advocacy models. An interesting model to research further would be 'Advocacy Matters in Cardiff, which offers a variety of different types of advocacy including values based citizen advocacy.
http://www.advocacymatterswales.co.uk/

Action Point(s)

1) Self advocates (service users) and their parents/carers should be consulted to determine the type of advocacy required as well as the intensity and frequency of advocacy related matters

2) Explore options for advocacy with major stakeholders in this area. Explore models including self advocacy (e.g. the People First model), ombudsman type advocacy, citizen advocacy as well as support for parent/carer led advocacy development