



Bulletin for Carers of People with a Learning Disability

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The **Family Centred Approaches to Planning with Older Carers**, was hosted by the Federation of Local Supported Living Groups on 18 July 2008 in Preston. This was an information event to present the findings of the Federation's 3 year Older People's Project.

Some important points have been summed up for this bulletin:

1 The earlier you start preparing for the future, the more choices you are likely to have.

In an emergency situation the Local Authority will do all it can to make sure the person you care for is safe, but choices may be limited.

2 Find someone you can trust and speak to them openly about your hopes and worries for the future.

They may be able to support you and help you to speak up about your concerns.

3 Have some plans in place for emergencies.

This may just mean that you carry around with you a list of details for emergency contacts. Ensure Social Services are aware of who your emergency contacts are.

4 Seek good financial advice.

Speak to a solicitor about making a Will and setting up a Discretionary Trust. If you are setting up a Trust, it may be an idea to leave a letter outlining how you would hope for the money to be used. Leaving a lot of money to the person you care for may affect their benefits and how their care is managed.

5 Think about everyday things that are important to the person you care for.

While some people with learning disabilities are able to communicate their needs and wishes, other people may struggle so it is important to record as much information about the person: their likes and dislikes, routines, and little details like how they like to do certain things or how they like others to do certain things for them. This information will help the person you care for cope with change.

6 Be clear about what is wanted for the future by you, the person you care for and other people that may be involved with the family.

The Federation's Top 10 tips for Family Carers:

7 Be clear about the things that you and the person that you care for would never want to happen in the future and record this information.

8 Find out what housing and support options are available for the future and how systems work.

This can range from having support in the family home, having their own tenancies or shared accommodation with other people. Planning early gives you the opportunity to find out about the people and organisations that are able to help and who can explain the processes and procedures in more detail.

9 It is important to make sure that the person you care for is known by the Local Authority and other organisations that may be of support in the future.

10 Find strong advocates that will support the person you care for speak up for themselves and be listened to and who will be able to challenge things that may not be working out.

These can be family members, friends, support workers or organisations that know the person that you care for and who he or she likes. Try and build a 'Circle of Support' around the person you care for of people that care about them and that will be able to support and advise the person in the future. By building the Circle of Support early they may be involved with planning and decision-making for the future.

Family Centred Approaches to Planning with Older Carers continued

Planning for the future early means **knowing what the Carer wants for the person they care for** rather than thinking later about what the Carer *would have* wanted for the individual.

Think about how much you have thought about the future and what you have already done to prepare for it. Think about what more needs to be done and possible ways of how you may be able to go about doing it.

To help you think about the future and any arrangements you may need to make, ask yourself: **'What would happen if...?'**

Set yourself Action Points and a realistic time-scale of what needs to be done and by when or how soon. Some things may be necessary in the long-term but some smaller things may need to be dealt with sooner.

Talk to someone about your fears and what you would not want to happen.

Try and meet with other older Carers or families as chances are that they may be in a similar situation as yourself.

Think about your own health needs and any additional support that may be required.

The Report is available online at:
www.supported-living.org

To prepare for the future it will also help to have a
Person Centred Plan
and a
Health Action Plan
for the person you care for

How can we help you?

Making your plans for the future is difficult as it involves considering so many different issues but we can support you through this.

Over the coming months Safiyyah will be working on various aspects of planning for the future including looking into working with Central Lancashire PCT to enable Carers to produce Emergency Plans and Health Action Plans.

Safiyyah intends to compile a 'help package' with checklists of contacts, organisations, and information that she can work through to assist older Carers in considering how much planning they have already done and how much still needs doing, and how and where to go - essentially helping Carers through the process.

Safiyyah will also continue to discuss ideas with organisations who work with people with learning disabilities to prepare them for the future as well. For example, helping them to create a life book recording the person with learning disabilities routines and information to make it easier for them when the Carer may not be around to support them. Also, considering whether some assertiveness/independence skills training is appropriate for the individual.

If you are planning for the future and wish to speak to someone regarding any of the points mentioned above, or would like to talk about anything else related to your caring role, please feel free to get in touch with:

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