

Learning Difficulties and Ethnicity

A Framework for Action

Main text



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Foreword



I am delighted to introduce this Framework for Action, requested by the Department of Health and Valuing People Support Team and written by the Association for Real Change.

In March 2001 we published *Valuing People*, a White Paper that set out our ideas for improving the lives of people with learning disabilities. At the same time we also published *Learning Difficulties and Ethnicity*. This was a report that showed that people with learning disabilities and their families from minority ethnic

communities are amongst the most disadvantaged groups in our society. Despite often having very high support needs, services are less likely to be offered or taken up. And service providers often don't take into account people's ethnicity, culture or religion so the services that are offered are not appropriate. This is wrong, and the Government wants to help local agencies to change things.

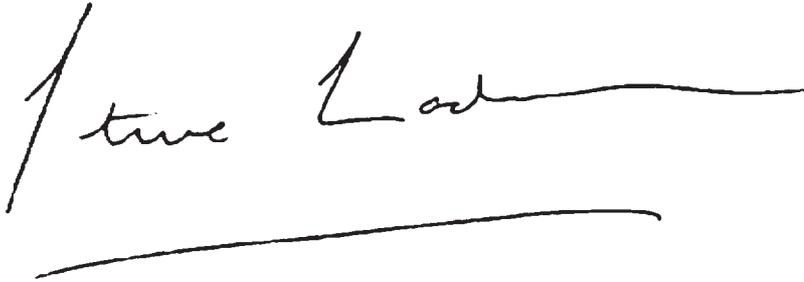
All public agencies who are on Partnership Boards have a duty to promote race equality in their work. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires this. In *Valuing People*, we said that local agencies should work out how to do this really well and to make sure that all services meet the needs of all the communities in their area.

Since *Valuing People* was launched, Partnership Boards have done an enormous amount of work to implement the proposals and to come up with the plans and improvements we asked for. I am very grateful for all this hard work but I know that everyone will agree there is an urgent need to do much more on minority ethnic communities. We must begin to take real action now. The Valuing People Support Team tell me that few Partnership Board frameworks and strategies really take ethnicity into account well. In addition, not all Boards are fully representing local communities in their membership

The Learning Disability Task Force, in its first annual report to the government, said it is worried that not enough is being done to make *Valuing People* work for people from minority ethnic communities. We know that the National Forum feels the same. The Government agree that this is a real problem and we want to do everything we can nationally to help people with learning disabilities who come from minority ethnic communities to benefit from *Valuing people*. The Task Force has sent me recommendations on what more could be done. I am supporting a programme of action to help with this. For example, I have agreed their proposal to ask Partnership Boards to make sure they address the needs of people from minority ethnic communities in using the Learning Disability Development Fund.

The most important place to try to make change happen though is at local level, through the agencies who work with learning disabled people in their own communities. Local action for local improvement is the real key to change.

This Framework sets out a thorough process to help people examine what they are doing locally, spot the gaps, and find information and support to improve things. We hope over the next year to put a lot of support behind making the Framework successful. I urge everyone on Partnership Boards to use the Framework and to talk to people from local minority ethnic communities about it as well. Working together with your communities, I am sure it will provide a real springboard to start to tackle the longstanding problems for people from minority ethnic communities who have learning disabilities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Ladyman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Stephen Ladyman
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Community

Acknowledgements

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Groups of people with learning disabilities from these places were also consulted, and we thank them for their contributions:

Asian People with Disabilities Alliance, London
The Bramingham Centre, Luton
Self Advocacy Group, Greenwich, London

Glossary

Culture

The term culture has been used to mean a person's life experiences drawn from their family, their community, their disability, their sexuality, their gender and their personal history. Thus everybody has a culture that is unique to them.

Cultural competence

Cultural competence occurs when people understand culture, are aware of its impact and act to ensure that the values of all people are respected.

Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated differently from others because of their membership of a particular group, eg ethnicity, class, age, sexuality and disability.

Ethnicity

A group of people who share certain background characteristics eg language, geographical origin, customs and history, which provide the group with a distinct identity as seen by themselves and others.

Racism

The term 'racism' is used to refer to the historical and institutional process which leads to minority ethnic people being treated less fairly because of their racial identity. This is attributed to those who have the power to turn prejudicial beliefs into acts of discrimination or unfair treatment at an individual or institutional level.

There are other interpretations but these are the ones used in this framework.

Introduction

Why should Partnership Boards pay special attention to services for people from minority ethnic communities?

- *Valuing People* states:

"The Government has identified many ways in which services and support to people with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities are failing to meet the needs of individuals and their families. There are a small number of innovative initiatives across the country. These are not widespread and the Government expects all agencies to improve their practice to fulfil the objectives of the NHS Plan and legal obligations set out in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Learning Disability Partnership Boards, which will largely be drawn from bodies which are subject to the new duty to promote race equality in the performance of their functions, should ensure that local services are culturally competent and can meet all the cultural needs of their communities." 8.9

- The Government expects Partnership Boards to have representation from local minority ethnic communities.

"The Chief Executive of the local council should ensure that the Board's membership properly represents the cultural diversity of the area, so that the views and needs of people from minority ethnic communities and their families may be addressed." (LAC (2001) 23. HSC (2001/016)

- *Valuing People* expects all of its objectives to apply equally to people with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities.

So what exactly should Partnership Boards do? Alongside *Valuing People*, the Government published "*Learning Difficulties and Ethnicity*" (G Mir et al (2001)). This excellent report showed very clearly how people are disadvantaged in education, employment, health and social care. The report offered many ideas on how improvements could be made. This framework now aims to add to these ideas with practical suggestions, examples and follow up materials. We hope boards will use it to bring about change and improvements.

Why a special framework?

In some ways it might be seen as a strange thing to produce a framework relating to people with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities. There are dangers that it might encourage the view that people from these communities are very different from others. It will be clear to readers of this framework that much of what is said is applicable to all communities. More person centred, flexible services should mean a better deal for everyone, whatever a person's ethnicity or culture. At the same time, the barriers to equal opportunities faced by people from minority ethnic communities revealed in *Learning Difficulties and Ethnicity* clearly call for focused and determined action. We hope this framework will help people striving to make *Valuing People* work for all.

Some important issues

Before setting out how we hope this framework will be useful there are two issues that have come up a lot from discussions with people.

1. Making sure *Valuing People* principles apply to all communities

With honourable exceptions, services have not built good enough links with people from minority ethnic communities. Many people are in effect excluded from services. Given this, it is not surprising that organisations, professionals and service staff have often not been good at tackling the cultural and religious issues that arise around principles like individual rights, independence, choice and control.

There are two big dangers:

1. That important religious and cultural issues are not properly taken into account by services resulting in low use or unsuitable provision
2. That differences are exaggerated and people stereotyped. This can lead to wrong assumptions that deny people opportunities.

A person centred approach should take into account ethnicity, culture and religion. It must also consider what is important to those that love and care for a person. For example, an understanding of "independence" that emphasises individuality may be seen to clash with the values of collectivism and close family relationships that some people hold dear. The role of the family and community networks needs to be taken into account when planning services for individuals. We must be clear that the idea of personal choice and control can work within a context of interdependence

2. Should there be separate services for people with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities?

Over the past 20 years or so, many agencies have responded to people's desperate circumstances by setting up specialist services for specific minority ethnic groups. These services have clearly improved the support available to the people and families that get them. Despite this, however, we have still not seen general improvements in the quantity or quality of service supports across the board.

Some people are worried that the existence of specialist services can lead other local services to avoid responsibility. Others point to the often crucial roles played, for example, by community based voluntary organisations. They argue persuasively that without some such services, many people would end up very poorly served.

There is a lot still to be learned about the right balance. It should not be assumed in advance that ethnicity is the only feature of a person's lifestyle or aspirations. However, supports based on a person centred approach may vary

widely. Some might be specific to a particular ethnic or cultural group if that is very important to them.

Getting the right balance should mean that people from minority ethnic communities have the same opportunities to benefit from Valuing People as everyone else. To achieve this:

- All local services must make sure that they develop their accessibility to people from all communities. In doing this they must learn from the experiences of any specialist services in the area
- Services that are specifically supporting people from minority ethnic communities need to spread the learning and expertise they have built up to other parts of services.
- Links can be used to offer training to local service staff and help with service development. They can also be used to help with problems faced by specialist community based services - isolation from other parts of service provision, poor access to skills training, career progression and management support and uncertain funding. Without these links, changes in mainstream services are likely to be piecemeal whilst specialist services will remain marginalised and insecure.

How this framework can help

This framework is written for Partnership Boards to help them improve local supports for people with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities. Some of the material will also be useful for those responsible for children's services and to support partnership working in important areas such as transition to adulthood. Each Board will be at a different stage and will have different needs. This framework cannot provide all the answers but offers resources to follow up and gives some useful examples (see appendix 3).

There is a shorter, easier to read version. Summary versions in a number of languages will also be made available.

There are three parts to the framework:

1. This guidance booklet (including appendix one - summary of suggestions for action)
2. An audit tool for partnership boards (appendix two)
3. A file of examples and follow up reading and resources (appendix three).
This file will expand as more examples and resources are collected over time

Readers can use the material in different ways. You may wish to read through this booklet, then complete the audit tool, referring back to the guidance, examples and resources in order to help develop a local action plan:

- **The audit tool** will provide partnership boards with a way of working out "Where we are now". It also provides you with a helpful list of questions to follow up what you find out in order to start to address important issues arising
- **This guidance booklet** puts the audit tool in context. The sections, which follow important parts of Valuing People, cross reference with the audit tool and offer:
 - Key issues and ideas for improvement
 - Suggestions for action
- **The resource file** provides:
 - Practice examples
 - Further information resources and materials

What can Partnership Boards do to improve local services for people with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities?

Partnership Boards around the country tell us that they are keen to make sure that they are delivering Valuing People for all local communities and that in doing this they comply with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. This part of the framework offers some practical ideas for action. The remaining parts go into more detail around key areas of Valuing People.

In putting forward these ideas we start with some key assumptions which we see as important starting points for promoting race equality:

- Every person has a culture that is unique to him or her
- People from minority ethnic communities are likely to have experienced racism, both direct and indirect
- Many people from minority ethnic communities, for understandable reasons, may not know about, be suspicious of, or be unhappy with services. Active steps are needed to build trust with people with learning disabilities, family carers and communities
- People from minority ethnic communities should be able to expect access to a choice of services and supports, securely funded that meet their needs
- Person centred approaches and planning should be increasingly happening and should take into account a person's ethnicity and cultural heritage

What needs to be in place locally?

We suggest that agencies represented on Partnership Boards will want to make sure that they have three things in place in order to help meet the requirements of Valuing People and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

1. A clear understanding of the current position

2. Action planning for improvement

3. Leadership and accountability for action

In the rest of this section we set out some ideas about what Boards might do and some suggestions about how they might do it.

1. A clear understanding of the current position

Studies suggest that by 2021 10% of people with a learning disability will be from minority ethnic communities. Obviously this will vary dependent on the geographical area. In order to plan and deliver effective services partnership boards and planners will need to know:

- a) How many people with learning disabilities from different ethnic and religious groups you should expect in your area and how many you know about

- b) How many people from different ethnic and religious groups are using different local services
- c) How well you are doing in some key areas of services and supports for people from minority ethnic groups

Using the audit tool

One way to establish numbers is accurate accessible learning disability case registers. Both Sheffield and Leicester report success in initiatives for minority ethnic communities linked to their effective case registers.

In the absence of a good register Parts 1 and 2 of the audit tool provide a reasonably simple way of putting together some local figures for your Partnership Board.

How many people?

In part 1, tables 1 and 2 are designed to help Partnership Boards get a rough idea of how many people with learning disabilities you should expect in your local authority area (using 2001 census data) set against how many you are aware of. The tool provides a series of follow up questions and advice where you find under/over-representation or where you have not been able to complete parts of the tables. It is likely that many areas will discover under-representation. This will have implications for local work around monitoring systems and strategies for reaching out to unidentified people

Use of services

In part 2, tables 3-6 are designed to help you look at the ethnic and religious profiles of children/young people and adults using services. These tables can help you to consider important issues about local services. The tool provides key follow up questions. Tables 7-9 are designed to help you look at the ethnic and religious profiles of people using family support and advocacy services and provide key follow up questions.

Areas with low numbers of people from minority ethnic communities (or from specific communities)

People from minority ethnic communities in such areas are very vulnerable to not being known about by local services with consequent lack of appropriate provision.

Managers in these areas should review their approaches and consider getting advice from experienced people from other districts. This could extend to sharing expertise and resources including sharing bi-lingual staff and community workers where this is feasible.

Refugees and asylum seekers

Increasingly there will be a demand for services from refugees and asylum seekers. Currently it is very hard to establish numbers, which will vary from area to area. Asylum support workers should have a way of informing service providers of anyone with a learning disability. Carers of people with a learning disability from this group are unlikely to have information about services. It will be important that those responsible for the task of auditing numbers of people from different communities make contact with those responsible for services for these groups.

Suggestion for action 1: Boards should use the audit tool (or other suitable system) to establish the current local situation in respect of numbers of and services for people from minority ethnic communities

2. Action plans for improvement

Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 organisations must work to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- Promote equal opportunities
- Promote good relations between people from different racial groups

Public authorities are expected to prepare and publish a race equality scheme and set out the arrangements for meeting their duty in the areas of policy and service delivery. Authorities are also responsible for arrangements to meet the duty in respect of private or voluntary organisations contracted to carry out their functions.

These requirements will apply to most agencies on Partnership Boards and those they commission. All these agencies should be able to show that what they commission and provide for people with learning disabilities complies with the Act, for example in local plans.

Valuing People Strategies and Frameworks

One way that local agencies can take action to comply with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act is to make sure that Partnership Board strategies and plans properly include people from minority ethnic communities. Circular LAC (2001) 23. HSC2001/016 sets out a list of dates for the development of strategies and frameworks. The requirement for a Quality Framework makes specific reference to services for people from ethnic minority communities but all should be inclusive in this respect. Reviews by the Valuing People Support Team show that only a small minority of all strategies properly identify needs and set out effective actions for people from minority ethnic communities. They have also found that strategies often do not link well together.

We suggest that Boards check all their strategies, using the audit tool:

- Have you established current use of services by minority ethnic communities set against expectations?
- Have you reviewed accessibility and suitability of current services?
- Have you projected future levels of need?
- Have you made sure that people from minority ethnic communities have been effectively involved in the consultation, partnership and development work being undertaken for the strategies?
- Do your strategies include clear actions relating to minority ethnic communities?

(There are more specific suggestions for particular strategies in other sections below)

Building blocks for inclusive services

We believe that there are some important building blocks to help make local services work for all:

- Building partnerships with a community based groups, including investing in advocacy and carers groups and via "outreach" including using community workers from appropriate minority ethnic groups
- Support for community based voluntary organisations
- Action to make sure that arrangements for provision of information, referral, interpreting, assessment, care planning and commissioning work for all communities
- Action to recruit, retain and support staff from minority ethnic communities to make sure that the workforce reflects the local community
- Review of agency policies to remove discriminatory barriers eg personal care, food, personnel practices
- Using lessons from person centred planning to change organisations and ways of working

Suggestion for action 2: Agencies represented on Boards make sure that race equality schemes properly cover learning disability services.

Suggestion for action 3: Boards review their strategies and frameworks to make sure they include action to improve services for people from minority ethnic communities

Suggestion for action 4: Boards include actions in their strategies relating to: investment in advocacy and carer groups; community based voluntary organisations and outreach work; culturally competent information provision, referral, interpreting, assessment and commissioning; recruitment and retention; agency policies; learning from person centred planning

3. Leadership and accountability for action

There is a danger that Partnership Boards, with their busy agendas, may not make sure that the needs of people from minority ethnic communities get the attention that they deserve. This is one of the problems when something is a "cross cutting theme". What can Boards do?

- Boards as a whole can make sure that they are well informed. For example, members can organise training for themselves to make sure they know about the important things raised in Learning Difficulties and Ethnicity and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- The most recent Valuing People Support Team survey showed that not all Boards reflect the cultural make up of the local area. In many areas improvement is needed
- Boards need leadership arrangements on services for people from minority ethnic communities if they are to tackle these things

Champions and sub-groups

Two ways that are often used to make sure good attention gets paid to specific issues are champions and sub-groups.

A **sub-group** can hold regular meetings and really move the agenda forward. It can make recommendations to the main Partnership Board. Sub-groups work well because those attending can concentrate on the things that are important to them. They can be informal enough to be less daunting for people not used to taking part in meetings. Sub-groups can be a place that family carers and people with learning disabilities feel more comfortable. People will of course feel more valued if they can see their recommendations producing results!

When setting up sub groups and recruiting to the Board some things to consider are:

- In order to involve members of minority ethnic communities in Partnership Boards there may need to be a period of outreach work and community liaison
- It might be necessary to have open meetings within community settings to talk about what Boards do and to share experiences about learning disability services.
- Such meetings need to involve as many groups as possible. It may take time for people to be ready to take an active part and even more time for them to become involved in Boards. Not all people from minority ethnic communities will speak English and some may not be used to going to meetings. Gender issues will need to be taken into account.
- Community workers from social services, health or voluntary organisations could be asked to help set up these meetings.
- Involvement of family carers could include taking part in focus groups or in one-to-one interviews with community workers
- When people with learning disabilities and family carers join Partnership Boards they should of course be supported to take a full part in all Board work

- Boards should make sure that all can take part in their regular business. While the chair should take responsibility for this all members should make sure issues of race equality are dealt with appropriately
- Boards should make their meetings as accessible as possible, for example varying the venue, allowing child friendly hours and providing notes and minutes that are accessible to all.

A **champion/champions** for ethnicity and cultural diversity could take on some important roles:

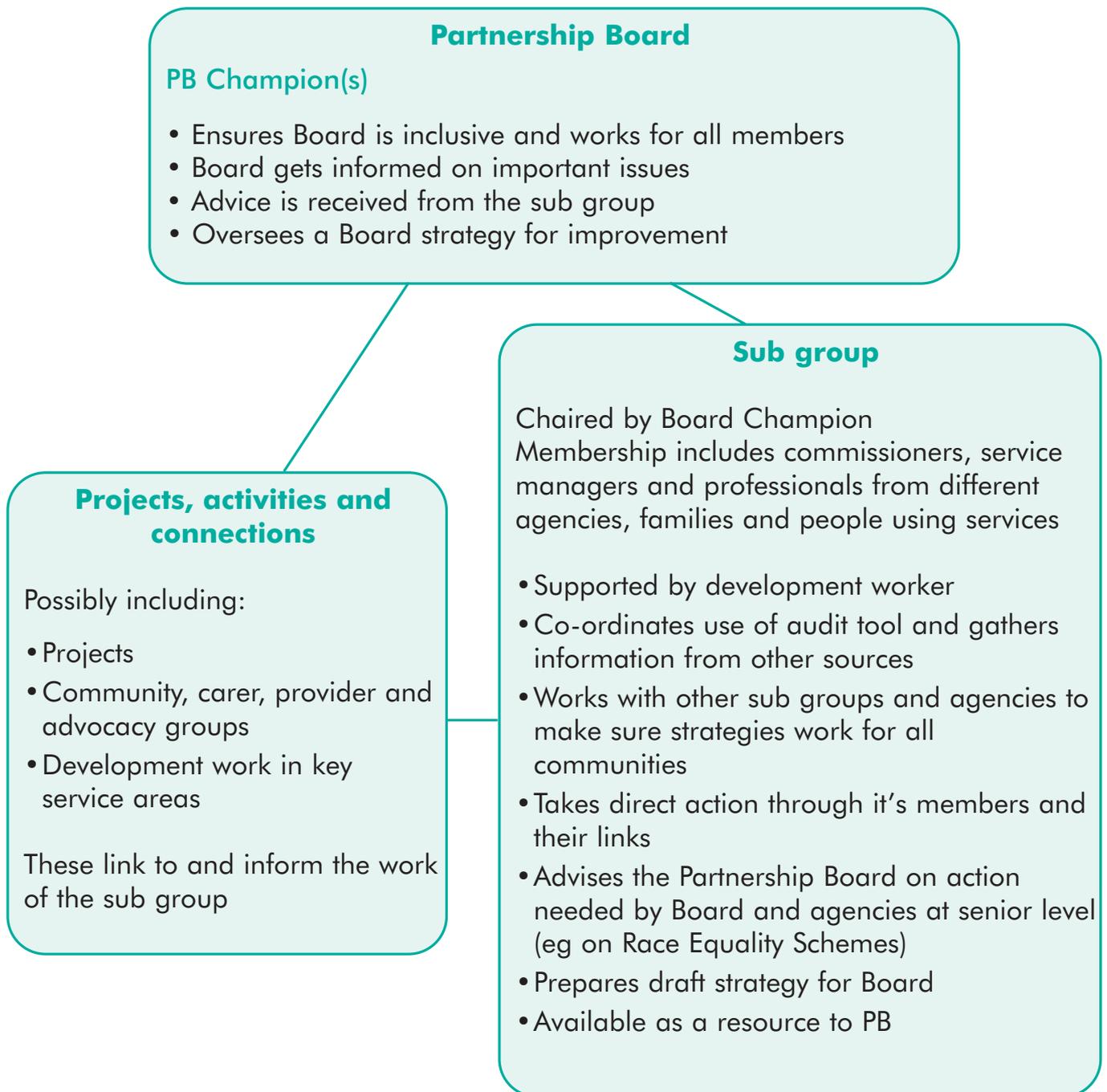
- Chairing a sub-group
- Ensuring co-ordination of action across the work of the Board and in linking with agencies on the board
- Making sure that the Board works well for all its members and takes account of ethnicity and cultural diversity in its regular work

A note of caution - As with all such roles there are dangers that others will not see race equality as their business or the issue becomes separate to the main business of the Board. Boards need to be aware of this danger when deciding on their local approach to keeping proper attention on race equality. It will be important that anyone being allocated such a role is seen as a co-ordinator rather than sole agent for race equality.

Suggestion for action 5: Boards arrange training for themselves to make sure they understand the expectations of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the important things in *Learning Difficulties and Ethnicity*

Suggestion for action 6: Boards set up arrangements for leadership on ethnicity such as champions and a sub group (see fig 1)

Figure one - Possible model for Partnership Board action



Supporting family carers

Valuing people recognises,

"Difficulties facing carers from minority ethnic communities include insensitivity of issues of culture and language and false assumptions about communities wishing to provide care within their own family environment or putting up barriers against statutory agencies. All services for carers should be responsive to the needs of people from the minority ethnic communities."

Valuing People 5.12

Introduction

Family carers consulted for this framework said that they were:

- Concerned about: the safety and well-being of their family member; that services would not recognise and value their beliefs or provide culturally appropriate activities, food etc; benefits and money issues
- Short of information and unsure about entitlements to service
- Often unlikely to be in communication with statutory services (e.g. social workers)
- Unsure of the future and what would happen to their son or daughter

These issues face all family carers but they are made worse when you do not understand service systems and information is not provided in an accessible way. There are important questions here for Partnership Boards and children's services about access to and suitability of services.

Audit tool

The audit tool can be used to test some of these questions locally. See the questions on eligibility, referral and assessment and contacting services on pages 10 and 11 in respect of family support services. On pages 18 and 25 there are specific questions about use, availability and accessibility of short-term support services for children and adults. There is a section on family support services starting on page 26. The service checklist, in part 3 of the audit tool asks you to rate service involvement with families

Key issues and ideas for improvement

Family carer support

- Caring for a member with learning disabilities without good information and support can place terrific strain on families. Carers can experience both physical and mental health difficulties as a result of the pressures of caring. Sometimes they can become elderly and infirm and still not be receiving any statutory support.
- When the system inadequately supports carers, younger family members can be called upon to help. This leads to loss of schooling and diminished life opportunities for the young carer as well as the stress and responsibility of care. These young carers may feel a duty to their family at great personal cost to themselves.
- Carers groups are a key support for families. They provide a place for mutual support, social opportunities and a forum for connection to services.
- It is important to recognise that for many people faith is a positive resource, which helps them make sense of and manage their lives. Links should be built with local faith communities. Such contact can be very beneficial both in sharing information and in gaining support for family carers.

Short break services

- Families may have strong concerns about using "respite care". This can be because of concerns about quality, especially when cultural values and religious beliefs are not addressed. Families may also feel guilty about using services because of their own sense of duty and need encouragement to use services. Traditional respite may not adequately meet needs, especially in respect of emergency support and journeys abroad.
- Research reported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation identified the barriers and some features of successful short-term support schemes (see resources file).
- Across the country many short breaks services have been working to provide support that is more designed around individuals and in more natural settings - using holiday and general leisure opportunities for example. The increased adoption of these approaches should mean that more people from minority ethnic communities can access short breaks that work for them and their families
 - Information needs to be friendly, clear and encouraging. Families must be able to make full enquiries and meet potential short break carers before use. This should happen as part of care planning so that even if there is a crisis appropriate care is available.
 - Short breaks have traditionally been geared up for the majority populations. Some families may have different requirements, these could include longer-term care whilst the family return to their family's place of origin. Alternatively families may feel that the best short break for them is just for a few hours when needed.

- Short breaks should be provided in suitable places e.g. for some people it may be more appropriate for staff to work at the home of the person with the learning disability.
- Short break carers need to have knowledge of the cultural background of the family.

Suggestion for action 7: Partnership Boards, and those responsible for children and families services, should ensure that services are taken into the community by setting up effective ways of making contact and providing accessible information

This should include acting upon the White Paper requirement to prioritise person centred planning for people living with older carers.

Suggestion for action 8: Services should review their carer support provision to make sure that families from minority ethnic communities are getting equal access.

This should include investments in carer support groups. In doing this social service departments should ensure that they are properly complying with the Carers and Disabled Children Act (2000) in respect of access to assessment and that the Carers Grant is being effectively used

Suggestion for action 9: Partnership Boards, with children and families services, should review local short breaks services to ensure their accessibility and suitability for people from minority ethnic communities

Children

There is a compelling body of evidence from research and inspection reports that disabled children and their families face many barriers to full participation in society

Valuing People 3.2

Introduction

Evidence shows us that families of people with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities are often suffering high levels of stress. They experience a lack of information and support, isolation and social stigma.

Audit tool

Part two of the audit tool offers a way for you to check use of local services by children and young people from different communities and give you information about likely under or over representation. If children are under represented in some services such as short- term support, this is a likely clue that there may be some discriminatory barriers operating. You may need to review the accessibility, flexibility and appropriateness of existing short term support with families across communities, with a view to developing creative options suitable for all communities. Similarly if young people from some communities are over-represented in some services this may suggest some discriminatory impact of, for example, referral or eligibility criteria.

Key issues and ideas for improvement

- Right from the start assessment tools and approaches at the point of identification of disability must be culturally sensitive. Staff involved must be carefully trained in use of these approaches.
- From initial diagnosis, professionals must make sure that any information given to families, for example on conditions, syndromes and outcomes, is fully understood. Translated leaflets are not enough. Involved professionals need training to do this well
- The provision of information to families must be delivered by staff with a good understanding of their religious and cultural background.
- Liaison and community workers need to be in place to support families as early as possible, linked to health, education and social care provision.
- Workers such as those involved in Sure Start and nursery provision must receive training to facilitate accurate assessments and make sure that children receive the right supports
- Families need to be kept well informed of their entitlements eg Family Fund,

Direct Payments, statutory benefits and how to access health and social care support

- Families need to be aware that schools can now provide health services, social care and housing support
- Child and adolescent mental health strategies need to be culturally competent
- (see also short break services above)

Suggestion for action 10: Those responsible for services for children and families with disabilities should ensure that key issues facing people from minority communities are identified and properly addressed within the services they commission and provide.

Suggestion for action 11: Those responsible for services for children and families should ensure that "mainstream" initiatives such as Sure Start properly benefit children with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities.

Young People and Transition

Disabled young people and their families often find the transition to adulthood both stressful and difficult.

Valuing People 3.35

Introduction

Valuing People, in Objective 2, sets out the problems facing young people and families in the transition to adulthood, and expectations for improvement. There are three main problems facing young people and their families:

1. Organisations and services are often uncoordinated, leaving people with a confusing and fragmented experience
2. Young people and their families are not able to strongly enough influence transition planning
3. People often do not get the services and supports that they want at school leaving

Young people from minority ethnic communities are particularly vulnerable to these problems. In preparing this framework, most families told us that they had lost service at this point. Many carers and people with learning disabilities stated that they had limited contact with social services, for example

Audit tool

There are questions in parts 1 and 2 of the audit tool which aim to help you establish the numbers of young people with transition plans and taking up adult services on leaving education (see questions on page 10 and 18). Set against expectations, answering these questions can give you an indication of issues arising.

Key issues and ideas for improvement

- It will be crucial to work closely across children's and adult services and with the Connexions service. Guidance to Connexions Partnerships on working with young people with learning difficulties and disabilities states *"Of particular concern are those individuals who are affected by multiple disadvantages such as disabled people who are from a black and minority ethnic group. The Connexions Service must be sensitive enough to be able to identify and address the needs of these individuals"*. Local Learning and Skills Councils are also key. They are required to have local diversity strategies and Partnership Boards should link with them to ensure these take proper account of people with learning disabilities from minority communities.

- Some key questions for local transition arrangements are:
 - How are issues relating to transition and young people from minority ethnic communities included in your day services modernisation plan (see below)?
 - What work is taking place to ensure that transition will work well for young people and families from minority ethnic communities? This includes arrangements for transition planning under the Education Act Code of Practice, assessments by key professionals and agencies, school link work, work experience, etc.
 - What training is being provided to ensure cultural competence of practice amongst key staff involved in transition? - Connexions personal advisors, social workers and care managers, health professionals etc
 - How are you making sure that the Valuing People priority for person centred planning for school leavers is being met for young people from minority ethnic communities?
 - How are you getting information about transition processes and post school opportunities across to families from minority ethnic communities?
 - How are those involved in transition planning ensuring that they work closely with families and that adult activities, with their greater emphasis on independence and self-determination are explained carefully and issues of concern addressed?

Suggestion for action 12: Boards, and in particular transition champions should take responsibility for making sure that they are personally well informed and that local systems such as protocols, registers, and dedicated staff, take proper account of key ethnicity issues

Health

"Most people with learning disabilities have greater health needs than the rest of the population".

Valuing People Chapter 6

"Poor health is associated with poverty. Some ethnic minority groups are among the poorest people in Britain and they also have the worst health. They also appear to be receiving poorer quality health care than whites."

J Nazroo (1997) - The Health of Britain's Ethnic Minorities PSI

"Planning and service delivery can be hampered by myths, misinformation and racist stereotypes about minority ethnic groups. For example that consanguinity is responsible for disability in South Asian families or that increased incidence of Rubella and low rates of immunisation is blamed on cultural practices rather than barriers to information and communication."

Ronny Flynn (2003) Health Action Plans and Black and Minority Ethnic Groups. Department of Health

Introduction

The guidance on Valuing People and Health Action Planning, section 8 covers all the key issues concerning learning disability, ethnicity and health (see resource file).

Key issues and ideas for improvement

- The Joseph Rowntree publication "On the Edge" showed that the professionals most frequently seen by minority ethnic families caring for a disabled child were health workers. The family doctor was the most seen as professional. Primary care settings are therefore good places for sharing information about health care issues e.g. doctors' surgeries.
- PCTs need to ensure that local health care workers are well informed about issues relating to the health of people from minority ethnic communities including local cultural diversity. Health trainers need to be equally well informed
- Community health workers need access to information in appropriate formats to share with local people and use other approaches to transmit information and identify issues (such as carers groups, bi-lingual workers)
- Health and social care staff should talk with people with learning disabilities and their families to establish how their religious beliefs impact upon any health care they may receive.
- Health and social care staff need to work with faith communities to organise training that will help them understand the implications and importance of beliefs.

- Issues around consent to treatment need to be explored with sensitivity and should be carried out by staff with knowledge of the belief system involved and if necessary, language skills.
- Workers who understand their heritage and speak their preferred language should explain HAPs to people and their families.
- Health action planners must be aware of conditions specifically affecting minority populations (e.g. haemoglobin disorders).
- Workers involved in HAPs must take account of differences between ethnic groups on health (e.g. diabetes is much more prevalent in minority ethnic communities than white people. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis have a greater risk of heart disease, and there is a higher prevalence of fibroids in African Caribbean women).

Suggestion for action 13: Health sub groups and those working on these issues, especially PCT representatives, should ensure links with local health care mechanisms and initiatives, including the equality sections of the Local Delivery Plan (see VPST publication *All Means All*).

Suggestion for action 14: The local framework for Health Facilitation and Health Action Plans should work well for people from minority ethnic communities and include action to address important issues

Choice and Control

The phrase choice and control is often interpreted in public services to reflect an approach based on meeting the needs of the individual person. However, for many people a more collective approach is important and in some cultures achievement based on everyone working together for the good of all is actively promoted. Where families feel their collective nature is undermined by services, there are likely to be problems with take up. This needs to be understood and carefully incorporated into work around choice and control. The understandable questions and concerns raised by people and their families around such matters as advocacy and person centred planning must be tackled with understanding and sensitivity and not form a barrier to opportunity. How services and their staff handle these issues will determine the success of these key elements of Valuing People

Advocacy

"People with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities can find it particularly difficult to gain access to the advocacy support they need. The Government will ensure that our new initiatives are responsive to their needs. The Department of Health will issue good practice materials to help with this".

Valuing People 4.11

Introduction

The availability of advocacy is central to Valuing People. We know that people from minority ethnic communities are less likely to have access to advocacy than majority communities.

Audit tool

Table 9 in part 2 of the tool is designed to help you look at the ethnic and religious profiles of people with learning disabilities involved in advocacy and self advocacy schemes. This table can help you to ask important questions about advocacy in your area. Part 3 of the tool also asks you to rate local access to advocacy by people from minority communities

Key issues and ideas for improvement

Developing advocacy for people from minority communities

- The benefits of self-advocacy must be explained carefully and by those who understand people's culture
- Models of advocacy that are inclusive of a collective family structure should be developed
- Self-advocacy may develop from person centred planning. It may become apparent that the person has not previously been supported around making their life wishes known.
- Self-advocacy is linked very closely with self-confidence. A person may have had their confidence damaged by both racism and discrimination against people with learning disabilities. They may need much encouragement to recognise and value their own self worth.
- This encouragement might be found in a self-advocacy group specifically for people from minority ethnic groups, examples of these are Black People First, Powerhouse and Advocacy Partners.
- Provision of advocacy can be very dependent on numbers of people from certain minorities in the community. Advocates should have a good knowledge of the culture of the person they are working with and often will come from the same community. Naturally people expect confidentiality from their advocates. This may be difficult to ensure in a very small community. Planners could make contact with other areas that have similar ethnic groups and share resources.

Ideas for advocacy groups

Some of the developing ideas for advocacy groups are:

- Advocacy groups should have policies and work to make sure that discrimination doesn't happen.
- Groups should make links with others that can help people to get advocacy - one example might be with interpreters
- Funding might be needed for a group that works with people from one minority ethnic group to provide advocacy for people with learning difficulties from that group
- Existing (or strong) groups might want to have a worker who concentrates on the needs of people from one or more minority ethnic group or to set up a new project to concentrate on the needs of people from one or more minority

Families and advocacy

- Values into Action hosted a seminar in May 2003 about involving people with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities in self-advocacy. In their preparation for this seminar they
"...talked about the issue of difference in cultures. This was seen as a big cause of the under-representation, in some areas, of Black people in self-advocacy. It was felt that to encourage more inclusion work would need to be done with families in mind. Even if self-advocacy groups are welcoming there is a need for them to recognise members' cultural backgrounds and work to educate their families as to what people are capable of with the support of their group. Advocacy with the family might involve, at least at first, working 1-1 with people."
- For families from all communities, citizen and self-advocacy may be new ideas that need explanation. Families may need to be supported in discussions in carers' groups, in their homes and community activities by trusted people, to see how advocacy can be helpful. Families should be helped to see how symbols, pictures, etc enable people with high support needs to express their wishes. It may take time for people that have not been aware of citizen and self-advocacy to understand the benefits. It may need work from people experienced as advocates and their partners with learning disabilities.
- Finding advocates can be helped by explaining what would be expected. Ways to find advocates could include going to places to explain, e.g. churches, temples, gurdwaras, lunch clubs and using the radio, particularly community radio and other media for volunteer advocates and their partners to give details of their positive experiences.

Suggestion for action 15: As part of their development of advocacy strategies Partnership Boards should review local availability of advocacy for people from minority communities. Spending of LDDF revenue against the advocacy priority should be examined. Commissioners of advocacy should respond to the findings to ensure good local provision for all communities.

Person centred planning

Person centred planning is a process for continual listening and learning, focussing on what is important to someone, now and in the future, and acting on this in alliance with their family and friends

Planning with People - Towards Person Centred Approaches (DH 2002)

Introduction

Valuing People sees person centred approaches as one means by which people can get greater choice and control over their lives. The White Paper set out some priority groups for access to person centred planning

2003 - People in long stay hospitals and young people moving from children's to adult services

2004 - People using large day centres, people living with family carers over 70 and people living on NHS residential campuses

The Department of Health Guidance Planning with People, Towards Person Centred Approaches (2002), offered detailed advice on the development of local frameworks and the use of person centred planning within broader strategies for change

Audit tool

Part two of the audit tool includes checking how many people from different communities have person centred plans. It suggests follow on questions based on the findings about accessibility of the processes, involvement of families, and capacity to act on findings. In Part three, the service checklist, you are asked to rate your delivery of person centred planning to people from minority ethnic communities.

Some important issues

- Person centred planning is seen as one of the important ways that can help people get the services and supports that they need to live the life they want. It is really important to make sure people from all communities get this opportunity
- There are general issues of access and others around delivering person centred planning in ways which properly acknowledge cultural and religious issues
- There are challenges with following on from plans to getting good services

- In keeping with one of the key features of person centred planning (see DH guidance) family members and friends should be important partners in planning (see below)

Nabela Rahim and Nizakat Khan have been learning about making person centred planning work for people from South Asian communities in the North West of England. They have planned with people and supported others to do so. They have shared some of their early learning in a recent paper (see resources file). They talk about what helped person centred planning to work for people and their families. Most of the principles would apply to planning with people from other minority ethnic communities. When asked the question what does it take to plan well with people from South Asian communities? they say:

There is, of course a danger of stereotyping here. One answer might be "the same as for everyone else" Our experience though is that people from South Asian communities are often cut off from opportunities to learn about developments like person centred planning and that they are more likely than other people to face barriers within the process itself without careful attention to these. We accept that others are also at risk of being excluded as well. Individual situations need to be carefully considered. You might say we need person centred, person centred planning!

Some of the advice from their work to date is:

- People and families need good advance information so that they can decide if it is right for them/which is the right method for planning for their circumstances. Boards should ask locally how they have made sure that the awareness raising has been extended to all communities.
- Families should be involved in the process, because they are often afraid that their issues will not be considered. In order to do this facilitators need to plan with the person and the family and negotiate a balance
- Time is an important part of successful planning; this will help to build relationships, trust and confidence. This will enable you to have a better understanding of the person's lifestyle and culture and help families know better how to influence service developments and be more involved.
- In the early stages, looking at what is important to the person and the family. Take steps to link these things into service development to bring about cultural change in the service. People can then see their plans coming to life and they do need to see early wins.
- Two trained facilitators are needed to do the planning because of language. One should be bi-lingual in the language spoken by the person and family. Don't use a facilitator with an interpreter who is not trained/aware of the PCP process.
- Facilitator to have a good understanding and awareness around religious and cultural issues so they are able to ask the right questions.
- Make sure any graphic recorder is able to capture a true image of what the person is saying, through appropriate symbols.

They also offer advice on what action is needed by local organisations.

- Local pcsp framework to have specific objectives relating to minority ethnic communities.
- Training to incorporate diversity.
- Sufficient availability of facilitators representing local communities.
- Good information provided about services in community languages and networking opportunities for individuals and families to empower them in planning for the future.
- Training in community languages, and support so individuals and families can lead their own planning.
- Staff to assist families in gaining information about non-specialist services bringing about more choices and opportunities. This would also encourage partnership working with local community members.
- Independent and individual advice and support. This could include facilitation of plans, advocacy and self-advocacy and other support for example bringing carers together, and making links with other carers support initiatives.
- Professionals from statutory agencies including care managers, should work to ensure that their assessment practice is complementary to the planning.

Service co-ordination

- * Valuing People stated that all people with learning disabilities who make substantial and long-term use of publicly funded services should have a named service co-ordinator. If people are not aware of services or informed of their opportunities to access services it is unlikely that they will make substantial use of them. People with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities would certainly gain benefit from having a named co-ordinator. The document "Clarifying the Nature of the Named Person / Service Co-ordinator" emphasises the role of the named person will vary dependent upon the nature of the service the person receives. It suggests three tasks for the named person: "Help to get services", "Service co-ordination" and "Communication". It suggests it would be unlikely for one person to carry out all three tasks. All three tasks are likely to be particularly important for people from minority ethnic communities. Many family carers have spoken of their difficulty in understanding the system and would need a person in the "Communication" role who was their first point of contact for information about the services. People carrying out these roles must have knowledge of relevant cultural issues.

Suggestion for action 16: Partnership Boards review their person centred planning frameworks to ensure that they identify how people from minority ethnic communities can properly access person centred planning, especially people in the White Paper priority categories.

Direct Payments

Direct payments are highly effective in enabling people with learning disabilities to gain greater control over their lives, because they can choose how they want their support needs met. In autumn 2000 only 216 people with learning disabilities were receiving such payments out of a total of over 3,700 people. This needs to change.

Valuing People 4.13

Introduction

Of the families and people with learning disabilities consulted for this framework no one had heard of Direct Payments! Community workers said that there was a general lack of information and that families main concerns were that their sons and daughters might be at risk if they had access to significant amounts of money or would lose benefits.

It is vital that people from minority communities not be excluded from the benefits of direct payments. For some people they may indeed offer one answer to the problem of existing services not being flexible enough to meet people's cultural and religious needs.

Audit tool

Table 5 and Table 6 in Part two of the audit tool includes checking how many people from different communities are using direct payments.

Key issues and ideas for improvements

Those responsible for direct payments should consider some key questions:

- What is the local level of take up from minority ethnic communities, what strategies do you have to make necessary improvements?
- How are you ensuring that people from minority communities can find out about direct payments in ways which allow them to properly consider whether they may be useful to them as required by the DH guidance? Paragraph 4 of the Practice Guidance says "Care should be taken to include people with different kinds of impairment, people from different ethnic backgrounds and people of different ages....Different forms of consultation should be tailored to meet the needs of different groups of potential service users."
- How are local direct payment support schemes ensuring they are accessible to people from minority communities, and offering appropriate assistance?

Suggested action 17: Local authorities should ensure Direct Payments are fully accessible to people from minority ethnic communities and that they are following the guidance issued by the Department of Health

Fulfilling lives

"For decades, services for people with learning disabilities have been heavily reliant on large, often institutional, day centres. These have provided much needed respite for families, but they have made a limited contribution to promoting social inclusion or independence for people with learning disabilities. People with learning disabilities attending them have not had opportunities to develop individual interests or the skills and experience they need in order to move into employment."

Valuing People 7.21

Day service modernisation

Introduction

The modernisation of day services will result in big changes to the way people spend their time. Traditional day services have been building based and concentrated on group activity. The modernisation agenda will lead to services being led by the people that use them and community based.

Audit tool

Parts one and two of the audit tool will help you to develop a better idea of the representation of people from minority communities in respect of current and projected use of day and employment services. The questions on page 25 will help you interpret your findings. You will want to ask questions about access to particular types of services and for people from different communities and in different circumstances.

Key issues and ideas for improvement

- It will be vital to ensure that developments to day supports are properly understood by all people who use them. People and their families should be able to expect full opportunities to work with Partnership Boards on these changes. The investments in partnership working referred to earlier in this toolkit become extremely important in this area
- Work on improving transition and strategies in relation to employment, education and leisure are vital components of strategies for modernising day services. The material in this framework covering these areas should be carefully reviewed to assist local planning
- The Valuing People Support Team, reviewing plans for day service modernisation have been concerned, in general, that these have often not effectively considered how developments will be made to work well for all communities

Some questions for day service strategies and action plans are:

- Have you established current use of services by minority ethnic communities set against expectations?
- Have you projected future levels of need from people from minority ethnic communities?
- Have you made sure that people from minority ethnic communities have been effectively involved in the consultation, partnership and development work being undertaken in respect of your strategy?
- Have you reviewed accessibility and suitability of current services?
- Have you ensured that the requirement to develop person centred planning for people using day services applies to people from minority ethnic communities?
- Are you using information from your planning to explore the adaptation of current services or the commissioning of others that can properly respond to people's cultural and religious needs?
- Are you reviewing, with colleges, education department and LSCs, access to further and adult education for people with learning disabilities from minority communities?
- Are you reviewing strategies to promote leisure and social activities to ensure that they are accessible to people from minority ethnic communities?
- What training strategies for staff are being developed to ensure culturally competent day services?
- (see also transition above and employment, education and leisure below)

Suggestion for action 18: Partnership Boards should review their strategies for the modernisation of day services to make sure that they properly address issues important to the local population of people from minority ethnic communities.

Employment

Valuing People Objective 8 aims:

"To enable more people with learning disabilities to participate in all forms of employment, wherever possible in paid work and to make a valued contribution to the world of work."

Introduction

People from minority ethnic groups have higher unemployment rates than white people and are more likely to be in low paid manual jobs. Discrimination (even covert) may be encountered in finding work if a person has a learning disability and is from a minority ethnic group (double discrimination)

Audit tool

(See section on day services above)

Key issues and ideas for improvement

- As for all communities low expectations about the possibility of employment of people with learning disabilities within minority ethnic communities are common. This is not surprising, given the low employment rate of people with learning disabilities and the fact that the provision of supported employment programmes is historically recent and still very patchy. It is likely that people from minority ethnic communities are under-represented in supported employment.
- The meetings for this framework revealed that most people knew very little about the world of work.
- Given this, it will be crucial to undertake direct work with people and families to set out the possibilities in relation to employment and respond to family concerns.

Some specific questions for local employment strategies are:

- What active approaches are being taken to raise awareness of the possibility of employment and address concerns?
- What strategies do you have to improve levels of employment for people from minority ethnic communities?
- What contributions to removing discriminatory barriers to employment are being/can be made by key agencies such as Connexions, LSC, Job Centre Plus? Are people with learning disabilities benefiting from equality initiatives undertaken by these agencies?

- Do you have good knowledge of employment related initiatives within local minority ethnic communities? What are your plans to commission and support such initiatives?
- What opportunities exist locally in respect of such as European and Regeneration funding?

Suggestion for action 19: Partnership Boards should review their employment strategies to make sure that they properly address issues important to the local population of people from minority ethnic communities

Education and lifelong learning

Many people with learning disabilities make use of further education provision, Local Education Authority adult and community education and adult work-based training opportunities to develop and extend their skills. They need to have the same access as other people to opportunities for education and lifelong learning

Valuing People 7.29

Introduction

Adult and further education are playing an increasingly important part helping people with learning disabilities pursue the lives they want. It is vital that people from minority ethnic communities get access to these expanding opportunities.

As well as general barriers relating to such as information about availability, Fisher has noted that commissioners and providers must work to ensure:

"that courses are not culturally exclusive, and that they reflect all students' experience, that some students have English as a second language which may be hampering their learning other than their learning disability. Support staff will need to know how to assist with dress, toilet care, etc. Canteens should provide a range of suitable food. Staff and students should be given training in racism awareness and in how to support students who have experienced racism."

Services For All (Fisher 2001)

Key issues and ideas for improvement

Boards need to consider:

- What action is being taken by local colleges and LSC to commission and develop programmes and courses which meet the needs of people from minority ethnic communities?
- As well as courses being appropriate to their needs, students with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities may face other barriers. Guidance should be set out so there is action covering the following:
 - Explanations of courses available in formats that can be shared with families
 - Transport that is accessible and appropriate e.g. a taxi service that is gender specific
 - College staff across all areas able to work in a culturally competent way
 - Minority ethnic students supported to overcome any racist incidents
 - ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) courses for those minority ethnic students whose first language is not English, appropriate for their level of disability.

- Cross college training to enable students with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities to move on to mainstream
- Ownership and a sense of belonging are crucial for students from marginalised groups. Helping Black students "feel culture", for example, through art and drama can help via visits from Black arts groups, for example
- Courses can be developed that explore cultural heritage (as well as the more general life skills courses commonly offered - If life skills courses are offered the question "whose life style is being promoted" should be asked. Staff will need good cultural knowledge so that learning programmes meet the needs of individual students.
- Some voluntary sector organisations provide culturally appropriate Post 16 services. For example at APASENTH courses are run for young people with learning disabilities in the East London Bangladeshi community. All are delivered in single gender groups and with appropriate food arrangements etc.

NB See also suggestions and ideas in day services section above

Leisure, social activities, friendships and relationships

At present many people with learning disabilities do not take part in community activities or participate in wider social networks with non-disabled people. Few have friends apart from those paid to be with them, their close family, or other people with learning disabilities with whom they live. Being part of the local community benefits everyone

Valuing People 7.20

Introduction

People with learning disabilities advising on the development of this framework told us that friendships had been made through family contacts, through day time support, at temples and by belonging to an advocacy group. People had found friends through common interests often based on their culture. An African Caribbean young man who lived in residential care said that he had no friends there and nothing reflected his interests or background. The friends he had made were connected to West Indian music. Good practice would suggest that those supporting him should enabled him to develop these interests and get housing and support more likely to make this possible

Key issues and ideas for improvement

- Person centred planning pays attention to access to inclusive opportunities, including leisure and social activities. Boards should make sure that people from minority ethnic communities benefit from this.
- Strategies for modernising day services need to take into account the need to build and develop social and leisure opportunities suitable for people from minority ethnic communities. This may include, for example, developing gender specific options, individualising day supports and commissioning initiatives with community based groups and organisations such as resource centres.
- It will be important to work with closely with "mainstream" departments and organisations such as leisure services to make sure that their services are properly accessible and culturally competent.

Intimate relationships

Valuing People states:

"Good services will help people with learning disabilities develop opportunities to form relationships including ones of a physical and sexual nature. It is important that people can receive accessible sex education and information about relationships and contraception."

Valuing People 7.39

This may, of course cause concern for families worried about intimate relationships. This can also be an area of great concern to staff as they see potential conflict between the family and the person with learning disabilities.

Some important issues and ideas for improvement

- During planning with people, hopes for the future can be discussed with sensitivity. If people with learning disabilities want relationships they can be supported by workers to approach families to help alleviate some of their fears.
- Staff should develop their understanding of the ways relationships form in other cultures, eg arranged marriages. They should behave sympathetically and appropriately when people form relationships or are married. Some families perceive marriage as a way of ensuring ongoing care for their relative with learning disabilities. In a situation where statutory care is so fragmented this is not surprising. Also within some cultures marriage confers status on an individual and may remove some of the stigma of learning disability.

Suggestion for action 20: Local agencies should make sure policies on sexuality, personal relationships and abuse properly cover issues of importance to people from minority ethnic communities.

NB See also suggestions and ideas in day service section above

A place to live

Most people with learning disabilities live with their families. Often they leave the family home only as the result of a crisis such as the illness or death of the carer. Planning ahead to move to more independent living is not always possible as the appropriate housing, care and support options may not be available. With growing numbers of people living with older carers, the Government wishes to see better forward planning by local councils so that carers do not face continuing uncertainty in old age and their sons and daughters gain greater independence in a planned way.

Valuing People 7.1

Audit Tool

Parts one and two of the audit tool will help you to develop a better idea of the representation of people from minority communities in respect of current and projected use of housing and support services. The questions on pages 24 and 25 will help you interpret your findings.

Introduction

People with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities have generally unmet housing needs, producing a situation of double discrimination

Key issues and ideas for improvement

- Families are often very concerned about future care. Because they are unaware of housing options or there are no viable options, as parents age or die the duty of care passes to another family member. This leads to the erroneous assumption of "They look after their own".
- As with other communities there are differing views within minority ethnic communities about "independent living". It will be very important to explain options carefully and provide opportunities for people to help design housing and support.
- People may wish to move out of a family home but not to want to move out of their community
- Families may not always realise that even people with high support needs can be supported to live independently of their family.
- Community meetings should be set up that explain all housing initiatives (including those new to that locality). Community workers need to spread important information.

Some specific questions for housing strategies and action plans are:

- Do you know how many people from minority ethnic communities are living in out of area placements? What plans do you have to develop suitable local services in consultation with people and their families?
- How have you linked with Supporting People and local authority corporate strategies to ensure that they are relevant to people from minority ethnic communities?
- How have you made sure the plans for person centred planning have been met in respect of people from minority ethnic communities living in long stay hospitals, with older carers, on NHS residential campuses?
- How will you make sure that people from minority communities get information and advice about housing and support?
- What action is being taken to commission or support community based housing and support initiatives and work with providers with specialist experience and knowledge?

Suggestion for action 21: Partnership Boards should review their housing strategies to make sure that they properly address issues important to the local population of people from minority ethnic communities.

Benefits and entitlements

For many learning disabled people, the social security system represents their main source of income. Only a small proportion are in paid employment and they are likely to be receiving benefits as well.

Valuing People 7.44

Key issues and ideas for improvement

- Making sure all information on benefits and schemes such as Independent Living Funds is reaching people and their families. People often don't know about their entitlements
- The procedures for people to apply for benefits must be clear and straightforward. People may need support to apply.
- Any person centred plans should help people with learning disabilities gain greater control over their lives. Access to funding to fulfil their wishes should be discussed with them and their family carers.

Suggestion for action 22: Agencies represented on Partnership Boards to engage with benefit agencies and ensure their own staff are providing full and accessible information to people and families from minority ethnic communities

Workforce training and planning

Valuing People objective 10:

"To ensure that social and health care staff working with people with learning disabilities are appropriately skilled, trained and qualified, and to promote a better understanding of the needs of people with learning disabilities amongst the wider workforce."

Introduction

The challenge here is to ensure that in future people working or dealing with people with learning disabilities are culturally competent via workforce training and planning.

Audit tool

Part three of the tool includes a suggestion that you review to what extent your recruitment and retention has produced a workforce representative of local communities

Key issues and ideas for improvement

- Cultural competence is more than understanding how to greet a person from a minority ethnic community or know dates of festivals of particular religions. It comes from knowing our own values and how they differ from the values of the other person, and then recognising the ways in which these are demonstrated in behaviour. 'Services For All - A Guidance Manual for Providing Culturally Competent Services For People With Learning Disabilities' (Fisher 2001) provides a detailed insight into the issues.
- Understanding and promoting cultural competence can be achieved by including people with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities and their family carers in training and development of staff. Staff and managers at all levels need to have a chance to hear directly from people with minority ethnic people with learning disabilities and their families and carers about their experiences and expectations.
- Training and development opportunities should be provided for all staff, which raise awareness of equality issues, maximise their skills and improve their ability to deliver culturally competent services to minority ethnic people with learning disabilities.
- Representation of people from minority ethnic groups within existing mechanisms that drive change and service development should be encouraged.
- The workforce should have an understanding of 'double discrimination' issues i.e. the impact of racism and disablism upon the individual.

Some specific questions for workforce strategies are:

- How are race equality issues promoted, implemented, monitored and evaluated as part of Race Equality Schemes?
- What special measures are being taken to recruit and retain staff from minority ethnic communities?
- How will partnership boards involve people from minority ethnic communities, their families and carers in the further development of a workforce and training plan?
- How will the workforce strategy become increasingly representative and reflective of the community it serves?
- How are issues relating to people from minority communities taken up within the workforce mechanisms of key agencies - for example use of training grants and inclusion in workforce plans submitted to Workforce Development Confederations
- How is joint training on issues of cultural competence in key areas being taken forward which agencies such as Connexions?

Suggestion for action 23: Partnership Boards to review their workforce development strategies. All partnership board partners should act to implement existing legislation, standards and policy guidance on race equality issues.

Appendix 1 Summary of suggestions for action

- 1: Boards should use the audit tool (or other suitable system) to establish the current local situation in respect of numbers of and services for people from minority ethnic communities
- 2: Agencies represented on boards should make sure that race equality schemes properly cover learning disability services
- 3: Boards should review their strategies and frameworks to make sure they include action to improve services for people from minority ethnic communities
- 4: Boards should include actions into their strategies relating to: investment in advocacy and carer groups; community based voluntary organisations and outreach work; culturally competent information provision, referral, interpreting, assessment and commissioning; recruitment and retention; agency policies; learning from person centred planning
- 5: Boards should arrange training for themselves to make sure they understand the expectations of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the important things in *Learning Difficulties and Ethnicity*
- 6: Boards should set up arrangements for leadership on ethnicity such as champions and a sub group
- 7: Partnership Boards, and those responsible for children and families services, should ensure that services are taken into the community by setting up effective ways of making contact and providing accessible information

This should include acting upon the White Paper requirement to prioritise person centred planning for people living with older carers
- 8: Services should review their carer support provision to make sure that families from minority ethnic communities are getting equal access

This should include investments in carer support groups. In doing this social service departments should ensure that they are properly complying with the Carers and Disabled Children Act (2000) in respect of access to assessment and that the Carers Grant is being effectively used
- 9: Partnership Boards, with children and families services, should review local short breaks services to ensure their accessibility and suitability for people from minority ethnic communities
- 10: Those responsible for services for children and families with disabilities should ensure that key issues facing people from minority communities are identified and properly addressed within the services they commission and provide
- 11: Those responsible for services for children and families should ensure that "mainstream" initiatives such as Sure Start properly benefit children with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities

- 12: Boards and in particular transition champions should take responsibility for making sure that they are personally well informed and that local systems such as protocols, registers, and dedicated staff, take proper account of key ethnicity issues
- 13: Health sub groups and those working on these issues, especially PCT representatives, should ensure links with local health care mechanisms and initiatives, including the equality sections of the Local Delivery Plan (see VPST publication *All Means All*)
- 14: The local framework for Health Facilitation and Health Action Plans should work well for people from minority ethnic communities and include action to address important issues
- 15: As part of their development of advocacy strategies Partnership Boards should review local availability of advocacy for people from minority communities. Spending of LDDF revenue against the advocacy priority should be examined. Commissioners of advocacy should respond to the findings to ensure good local provision for all communities
- 16: Partnership Boards should review their person centred planning frameworks and action plans to ensure that they identify how people from minority ethnic communities can properly access person centred planning, especially people in the White Paper priority categories
- 17: Local authorities should ensure Direct Payments are fully accessible to people from minority ethnic communities and that they are following the guidance issued by the Department of Health
- 18: Partnership Boards should review their strategies for the modernisation of day services to make sure that they properly address issues important to the local population of people from minority ethnic communities
- 19: Partnership Boards should review their employment strategies to make sure that they properly address issues important to the local population of people from minority ethnic communities
- 20: Local agencies should make sure policies on sexuality, personal relationships and abuse properly cover issues of importance to people from minority ethnic communities
- 21: Partnership Boards should review their housing strategies to make sure that they properly address issues important to the local population of people from minority ethnic communities
- 22: Agencies represented on Partnership Boards to engage with benefit agencies and ensure their own staff are providing full and accessible information to people and families from minority ethnic communities
- 23: Partnership Boards to review their workforce development strategies. All partnership board partners should act to implement existing legislation, standards and policy guidance on race equality issues

