

REPORT TO: Healthy Halton Policy & Performance Board
DATE: 9 June 2009
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Health & Community
SUBJECT: Valuing People Now : A New Three-Year Strategy for People with Learning Disabilities

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform members of Valuing People Now (VPN), the accompanying Delivery Plan (Appendix 1) and the implications for Halton.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

Members are asked to note and comment on the report and plan.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 VPN was published in January 2009 and launched through a series of regional events in the following months. There was good representation from Halton Partnership Board at the North West Launch on 9th March at Bolton.

3.2 VPN, whilst led by the Department of Health is supported by all government departments who have signed up to the strategy. The messages set out in VPN are clear and start from the principle that people with learning disabilities are people first with the right to lead their lives like any others with the same opportunities, responsibilities and to be treated with the same dignity and respect. There is particular reference to people with complex needs, people with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder and a recognition of the importance of health in response to the July 2008 report, Health Care for All.

3.3 The Strategy was accompanied with a Delivery Plan which will set out key priorities for the next three years. For 2009/10 the priorities are:

- to raise awareness of VPN across national and local government, private and voluntary sectors, and within wider society
- to have an effective Learning Disability Partnership Board operating in every Local Authority area
- to secure access to, and improvements in, healthcare, with

Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) responsible for, and leading, this work

- to increase the range of housing options for people with learning disabilities and their families, including closure of NHS campuses
- to ensure that the Personalisation agenda is embedded within all local authority services and developments for people with learning disabilities and their family carers, and is underpinned by person centred planning
- to increase employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities

3.4 For Halton, while there is existing activity in each of these areas, further work is required, particularly on developing the Learning Disability Partnership Board. The Partnership Board will require additional capacity to make it truly effective and to have meaningful representation from people with a learning disability on the Board. It is planned to develop a Shadow Board to address this.

3.5 The Partnership Board requires additional capacity to improve accessibility. The Customer Care Service within the Directorate ensures minutes of the Board are made into an accessible format, however there is no capacity for any further work on accessibility such as reports and presentations, which come to the Board. A request has been made that a provider is commissioned to translate complex information into formats that are accessible to people with learning disabilities, which will enable them to appreciate, participate and influence development in design of the services in Halton.

3.6 Health care issues are currently being addressed by the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and this is to be welcomed. A sub group has been chaired by Dave Sweeney from the PCT to cover both Halton and St Helens. Additional capacity has been agreed and the Health Performance Framework for people with learning disabilities will sit within this group, which will be accountable to the two Partnership Boards.

3.7 Performance Management

The Delivery Plan sets out the governance arrangements for VPN. The Department of Health (DH) has established a National Learning Disabilities Programme Board, which has cross-Government representation. This will link to the new Regional Learning Disability Boards and through them to all local Partnership Boards. It will monitor progress, highlight best practice and work to remove barriers to successful implementation. The National Forum for People with Learning Difficulties and the National Valuing Families Forum will provide representation on these boards.

3.8 The local Learning Disability Partnership Boards will be required to submit an annual report on progress to the Regional Learning

Disability Programme Boards. A Business Plan has been developed by the Partnership Board to address this requirement. Whilst these will not be evaluated nevertheless it is likely that CQC will approach the Regional Boards when looking at the performance in Learning Disabilities of individual Councils.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

VPN will need to be incorporated into relevant Commissioning Strategies, Policies and Procedures to demonstrate that the Council is adhering to the principles contained within VPN.

5.0 FINANCIAL RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The development of a Shadow Board and meaningful inclusion of people with learning disabilities requires additional resource. This has been costed at £9,000 per annum. The commissioning of a service to improve accessible formats has not yet been costed but is unlikely to be more than £10,000 per annum. Funding has been identified within the pooled budget following the transfer of funding agreement with the Primary Care Trust.

6.0 FURTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

VPN and the Delivery Plan needs to be disseminated across the Council, Partnership Agencies and public. Articles are planned for In Touch, local newspapers and Members' Information Bulletin.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The key risks of not implementing VPN are:

- failure to meet the principles set out in VPN will discriminate against people with learning disabilities
- there will be an impact on the CQC judgement on Adult Social Care performance in Halton

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

VPN promotes people with learning disabilities as people first and citizens rather than people with a condition. This will be fully supported by the Learning Disability Partnership Board.