

Please see below comments of Lancashire County Council Social Services Directorate on the Interim Analytical Report produced by the Prime Ministers Strategy Unit.

1) We broadly agree with the analysis of the issues in the report as a whole which are dealt with comprehensively and are pleased to see the emphasis given to the Social Model of Disability. It is hoped that this will continue to the next stages of the process and also it will feature prominently in the forthcoming NSF Long Term Conditions. We are also pleased to see the use of the term "barriers", particularly at points of transition. This approach was used by ourselves in a Best Value review of services for people with a physical disability.

2) We do not disagree with any part of the report.

3) We feel that the analysis on transport and housing two of the most important issues facing disabled people was weak and could have been explored more fully.

4) We think the proposal to reduce the number of care pathways is important. Disabled people shouldn't have to navigate through a variety of different agencies and systems to obtain support. Policy needs to take into account the whole person rather than define them by their impairment or the barriers they face.

5) Employment is an issue which is handled well in the report. There is no doubt that this defines a person's social identity and self worth and is often a huge barrier in terms of life chances. In many ways the report restates the Welfare to Work agenda. The disincentives to work, particularly the financial ones are analysed thoroughly and will obviously need political will to make changes. Social Services have a significant role in capacity building in the pre employment work with an individual helping them to gain confidence as well as offering practical support. We believe this role was understated. Perhaps this will be more obvious when the NSF for Vocational Rehabilitation and Occupational Health proposed by the DWP is implemented.

6) There is considerable similarity in the report to " Independence matters" issued by the DOH and Stephen Ladyman's vision for Adult Social Services.

7) The issue of a different agency focus and the recommendation of a whole systems approach is laudable. This will be difficult to achieve but together with more flexible use of funding, a strengthening of the message of partnership and collaboration it is the only effective way of moving forward. Whilst the report is somewhat hesitant about the use of mainstreaming legislation and directives this approach could send out a powerful message. Collaboration and whole systems working must happen at Central and local levels.