

Papworth Trust Response

Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Interim Report

"Improving the life Chances of Disabled People"

Background to the Organisation

The Papworth Trust is a Registered Charity and Company Limited by Guarantee, which has been providing a number of services to disabled people for over eighty years. Papworth helps over 4,500 people each year to achieve more independence in their lives. These services are provided across the six counties that comprise the Eastern Region.

The Papworth Rehabilitation Programme does accept referrals from across the UK and Ireland. The initial part of the programme is delivered on a residential basis in Papworth Everard, Cambridgeshire, with the programme being completed in the client's local community.

Papworth employ 240 staff directly who are supported by around 40 volunteers to deliver its services. The organisation operates from 7 centres across the region and also delivers a number of its services, particularly its Employment Programmes, on an outreach basis in client's local communities.

As an organisation Papworth is fairly unique in both the range of services it delivers and the clients it supports. Services Papworth provide cover the full range of social, care and work related activities and include specialist housing, residential care and employment related services; such as vocational assessment, work preparation, vocational rehabilitation, and support in to and during employment.

Papworth works with people who have a range of impairments and health conditions including; physical disabilities; learning disabilities, mental health conditions and acquired disabilities. Where ever possible Papworth work with partner organisations in providing appropriate expertise and services for its clients.

Papworth works with a range of organisations from the private, public and voluntary sector to achieve the best service for its clients. These organisations include Jobcentre Plus, Social Services, Health Services, LSC, educational establishments, private employers and other voluntary sector service providers. A number of these organisations act as both Funder of and referrer to various programmes, as well as partner and/or sign posting organisations delivering added value to its services and for its clients.

Response

As a provider of Care, Housing, Employment and Progression services, Papworth agrees with the general analysis of the report, its key findings and its aspirations for the future. (It should be noted that Papworth do not provide services for children. Comments made do not include any sections of the analysis covering Early Years).

As part of its organisational culture and philosophy, Papworth is striving to embed the "Social Model of Disability" within the services it offers, and to this end has been working with the Essex Coalition of Disabled People.

Papworth would like to see the values and principals of true social inclusion for disabled people being an embedded framework for Government policy to be taken forward.

Papworth supports the positive action that the report recommends and identifies the issues and challenges that will be faced in bring about further change. Papworth would encourage Government, working with disabled people and other stakeholders developing a clear action plan over an extended period that will implement change that are the rights of disabled people as equal citizens within our society. This strategy should counter the history of disability and much of present day service, which has been based on imposed segregation. This view needs to be challenged whilst at the same time recognising the benefits of Disabled People having control of their own lives as a matter of choice.

Papworth agrees with the analysis of the disadvantages and barriers that are presented to disabled people and the reasons why these need to be overcome. Papworth also supports the vision presented within the report to overcome both discrimination and exclusion and allow people with disabilities to live inclusive lives. As outlined previously, Papworth would promote the Social Model of Disability and endorse its inclusion as the guiding value for future policy.

Whilst Papworth agrees with the analysis of the report and sees no serious omissions, as an organisation it would emphasise the following points:

- The increasing role played by the community and voluntary sector in delivering both mainstream and added value services, and the increasing need of Government to invest in this sector. Initiatives such as Future Builders and Investing in Communities need to be enhanced and developed into core funding streams. This will become an increasing issue with the demise of European Social Funding.
- Effective Vocational Rehabilitation Services preventing people from falling out of the labour market into long term sickness benefits. This would include the necessity for clear requirements regarding the role of employers within absence management policies, occupational health and vocational rehabilitation for people who acquire a disability or long term health problem.
- Transport in rural areas being seen as a priority within overall transport policy
- The identification and filling of gaps in vocational and/or skills training prior to supported employment initiatives. These gaps are very often the issue of conflicting eligibility criteria across related provision.
- Incorporating within the current housing proposals of the ODPM appropriate and available accessible housing. As part of the Pathways to Accessible Housing Project, in conjunction with Habinteg Housing Association, Papworth identified a need for up to 100 additional wheelchair accessible homes in each Local Authority housing district.
- Service provision and access to opportunities that is both integrated and provided with in a local community.
- Review of the application of eligibility criteria across all service provision.

Within the UK, public organisations and businesses are becoming increasingly aware of their social and legal responsibilities regarding disability equality and access issues. Papworth believe it is vital that future provision should:

- Develop accessible, integrated facilities that will create a bridge across the community, reducing prejudice and increasing understanding.

- Further develop best practice in services that give disabled people access to learning and experiences which help them to progress towards their own goals and aspirations.
- Support disabled people in pursuing and achieving independent living with greater access to, and involvement in, the community.

By incorporating these principals into its service development, Papworth are building a service centre in the heart of Huntingdon town that will promote and support community inclusion for disabled people. From this centre, the Papworth Trust and its partners will offer specialist training and advice which will enable disabled people to realise educational and recreational choices that other members of society take for granted. As part of this development Papworth is building complementary, integrated, high-quality housing, which will significantly increase independence for a number of local people who have a range of impairments. A number of these properties will be available for purchase.

A special feature of this scheme is that it is intended to be, and to be seen to be, a generic community resource. It will bring members of the wider community into an accessible environment, to use services where disabled people are also learning, working and socialising. As a result, the project has the ability to become a bridge that reduces prejudice and promotes integration, by building relationships and understanding over time.

Papworth believe that this development has the potential to become the finest in the U.K.; a model that will shape future development of integrated community facilities across the country and anticipates the analysis of need outlined in the report.

Papworth also identifies as a key policy development, the role of vocational rehabilitation in preventing disabled people dropping out of the labour market. In providing both vocational rehabilitation and other mainstream employment programmes, Papworth has an evidenced based knowledge that confirms the analysis found in the report regarding the barriers that disabled people or those with long term health problems encounter in finding, returning to and sustaining employment.

In Papworth's experience there continues to be a separation of employment and health services which has a detrimental effect on how people can be supported back into work. This can be demonstrated by:

- Lack of information within the NHS of the means of re-integrating individuals into employment. This is compounded by the attitude of many GP's and what they perceive as their role i.e. Clinical only.

- Vocational rehabilitation is usually only considered after the completion of health treatment. For many people this increases the psychological barriers to eventually return to work
- Many rehabilitation services are predominately focussed on promoting independence in personal daily life and enabling people to leave hospital rather than a return to productive work. Rehabilitation is often targeted at assisting early hospital discharge or maintaining those with disabilities in the community.
- Lack of Absence Management Schemes, Occupational Health and Welfare Support from employers. Strategies directed towards job retention are of proven value: they are needed in the first months of sickness absence.
- A shortage of work based training provision and accessible and appropriate skills training to help people meet the needs of the labour market.

Papworth recognises, and is participating in, a number of important pilots that are currently taking place as part of the Government's Welfare to Work agenda:

- NDDP
- Job Retention & Rehabilitation Pilots
- Pathways to Work Pilots (particularly Condition Management Programmes)

Information is required on how these interventions are working to inform the debate. Appropriately focussed health care has the potential to prevent the progression of patients on to incapacity benefits. This needs to be developed through GPs.

Investment needs to be made in services available to and training for both external provider and Jobcentre Plus staff. This will overcome further barriers presented by:

- Inadequate access to health professionals
- Inadequate availability of vocational rehabilitation services
- Inadequate funding of vocational rehabilitation services
- Lack of recognised career paths for vocational rehabilitation professionals
- Lack of legal obligation on the State or employers to provide rehabilitation services

The potential value of Occupational Health Services in facilitating employment rehabilitation is poorly recognised by the NHS. Provision in the UK is variable

and patchy. General practitioners have a pivotal part to play in vocational rehabilitation. Because they have responsibility for certification for fitness for work they are in a position to trigger access to vocational rehabilitation. The current shortage of resources combined with a lack of GP focus on employment generally precludes this.

In developing future Government policy more discretion and autonomy should be facilitated at a more local level through powers invested in commissioning and funding agencies and matching the needs of local communities within their own living environment.