

RESPONSE TO IMPROVING THE LIFE CHANCES OF DISABLED PEOPLE

I was particularly encouraged to read from the summary of this Report that the Government is committed to promoting independence for disabled people. Having had to spend some weeks in a home I am particularly aware of the disadvantages of that way of life. Indeed, as a result of that experience, I was motivated to try and set up a nationwide scheme of care co-operatives/collectives.

My plan is firstly to establish an organisation which will bring together suitably qualified and vetted professional carers with disabled people needing care, so that the best use can be made of the direct payment system.

Local authorities are encouraging recipients of direct payment to employ their carers at the lowest possible rate in order to maximise the number of hours for the available money. This is a flawed concept that benefits only the local authority.

In order to carry my plan forward I have brought together a group of interested people who are working to set up a not-for-profit organisation.

If we are going to obtain, and retain, the services of qualified and committed carers we need to show that we value them. We also need to offer access to additional training which will improve and enhance their existing skills.

By doing this, together with zoning carers and clients, we can reduce travelling costs and maximise time spent with clients. Where a number of clients live close together, we should be able to pool the hours assessed by social services in order to make the best use of time and money to the advantage of clients and public resources.

This all adds up to a package of care which will lead towards the most effective form of independent living.

Our aim is to keep people in their own homes for as long as they want to be there (the element of choice and control which, as the PM indicated, underpinned this report). This could be further encouraged by provision of 'group housing' of flats or houses.

Clients would be able to rent or purchase these. It would allow for carers to be on call 24 hours a day from a central point.

This new organisation will provide a model for the care of disabled people throughout the country. Part of its remit would be to set standards and lay down rules which local care co-operatives/collectives must follow.

We feel that this would “transform the life chances of disabled people” as proposed in your Report.

MONICA RYAN