



The researcher

Joyce Howarth has worked in a wide range of settings supporting individuals with learning disabilities, staff and organisations to reflect on issues around general health and specifically sexual health for people with learning disabilities. She is an experienced trainer and has worked on several projects to create resources as a

result of her training experiences. Joyce worked at Norah Fry Research Centre at the University of Bristol as a research associate, working on both UK and European wide projects. She was part of the research team for 'Finding the right support for parents with learning difficulties.'

Further information

For information about the project please contact Joyce at:

07531 318 437

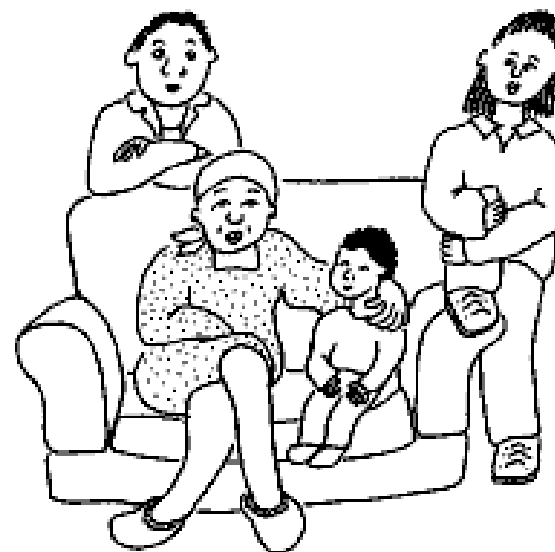
01633 838672

joyce.howarth@tpfirst.org.uk

Learning Disability Wales
c/o Torfaen People First
54 Victoria St
Cwmbran
Torfaen NP44 3JN

www.learningdisabilitywales.org.uk

Finding the right support for parents with learning disabilities in Wales



September 2008– June 2009



Background

The Welsh Assembly Government's policy document 'Statement on Policy and Practice for adults with a learning disability', 2007, states that 'All people with a learning disability are full citizens, equal in status and value to other citizens of the same age.' It is recognised in the document that people with learning disabilities may become parents and will need support from various agencies to fulfil this role. The Assembly are interested in the numbers of parents with learning disabilities in Wales, the support they currently receive and how to ensure good support is available to all parents in Wales.

'Finding the Right Support for parents with learning difficulties (Tarleton, Ward, Howarth 2006, Baring) found that up to 50% of parents with learning disabilities throughout the UK had their children removed. Support available was patchy, with occasional beacons of excellence shining in isolation. The rights of the child and its parents to enjoy a family life together under Articles 8, 12 and 14 of the Human Rights Act were often ignored. A more detailed picture of the current situation in Wales is needed to be able to move forward.

Aims of the project

1. To scope the approximate number of people with learning disabilities known to services and contacts who are parents, whether their children are living with them or not, in two counties - one in North Wales and one South Wales.
2. To find out more about the experiences of men and women with learning disabilities who are parents.
3. To explore how the parents have been supported by the services and professionals with whom they are involved.

4. To make recommendations to improve service delivery for this group in Wales.

Methods

1. A questionnaire will be distributed to all service providers and relevant organisations in the counties chosen to ascertain the approximate numbers of parents with learning disabilities. Included with this will be a short outline of how to recognise a person with learning disabilities for those professionals working in mainstream services.
2. Case study visits will be made to up to 10 parents, to explore their experiences, the support they have received and what was seen as the most useful.
3. Informed consent will be sought from the parents to then visit the professionals and others who have supported them, to gain information on how they have worked, how services worked together and what further support they themselves need. All the interviews offer complete confidentiality.

Outcomes

- A report will be presented to the Welsh Assembly Government with the research findings and recommendations. This will be available for interested parties.
- The findings and recommendations will be presented at a conference in summer 2009.
- An accessible leaflet of the findings will be available for people with learning disabilities.