

# Report to the National Valuing Families Forum

<b>Region/organisation:</b>	<b>West Midlands</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>25.11.11</b>

(Please use easy words where you can)



## What do you want to tell us about?

### What is going well?

1. One area reported that they have a strong carer voice and good communication with decision makers. They have been able to influence policy on bus passes and the development of a transition team.
2. One area is working on 'raising our sights' report – sorting through the recommendations to find out what's working well and not so well locally.
3. One area has developed a new "Short break" service for people with behaviours that challenge. This includes an emergency bed.

Most areas did not report any good news

## **What are your 3 big issues?**

1. The impact of personalisation on families. Most areas reported that the principle of personalisation is very good, **BUT** it is not being introduced well.

The difficulties include:

- Cuts in personal budgets, and families having to fill the gap
- No services and opportunities for people to purchase
- No brokerage
- Paperwork is complicated and invoices are often wrong-this is very stressful
- No direct payments in children's services
- Poor communication with social workers
- Few opportunities for people leaving school or college
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2. Cuts in services

The difficulties include:

- Short Break (respite care). Several areas reported that there are cuts in respite care, and it is cancelled at short notice.
- Changes to and reduction of day opportunities, with no clear picture of alternatives
- Changes in eligibility criteria, so that some people have a very reduced service

3. Quality of life and keeping safe. Carers feel that cuts and changes are being introduced in a way that people's quality of life is reduced, and they are not always kept safe. Staff are demoralised and there is a high use of agency staff in some areas. There is also a lack of training for staff.

Overall, families feel that they are bearing the brunt of cuts in services and benefits. This is impacting on them and their families.

## **Other news:**

The family carer network steering group has new members, and we hope to host a family carer event next year.

Equip 4 Change has also made links with Kaleido-scope (London) and Inclusion North. We plan to share information for family carers.



Please email this report to [cbaker@carers.org](mailto:cbaker@carers.org) by 25 November 2011