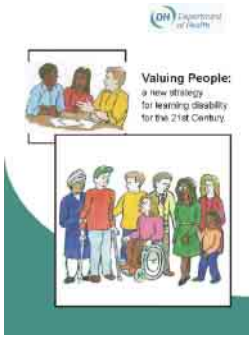


## **Breaking the cycle**

**Better help for people with learning disabilities at risk of committing offences**

**A framework for the Northwest**





In Valuing People, a strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century the Government said what it will do to change things for people with learning disabilities so that they have the same chances as anyone else to lead a full and interesting life and be respected.

The plan is based on 4 main beliefs:



Rights.



Choice.



Independence.



Inclusion.



These beliefs apply to all people who have a learning disability. This includes people with learning disabilities who are at risk of offending.

Sometimes people with learning disabilities, just like other people who do not have a disability, do things that might mean they come into contact with the police. This we call at risk of offending.



The Regional Task Force decided to ask people at Lancaster University to find out about people with learning disabilities who come into contact with the police to decide what can be done to help.

This is what they found:



5 – 9% of people who come to police stations for questioning have a learning disability.



At the moment services are not good at supporting people who might or who have come into contact with the police. Often people have little or no support whilst living in the community.



Some people have been sent to live in hospitals or secure units. These are places very similar to prisons.



Services do not seem to know or they find it difficult to support people with learning disabilities who are at risk of offending.

This is because:



Problems about how to pay for services and support.



Staff having no training and not knowing how to support people who are at risk of offending.



Services not working together.



Not enough community based services with trained staff.



Not all people who have a learning disability who come into contact with the police have committed a crime.

Sometimes people with learning disabilities are just like other people who have committed a crime and it is very serious such as stealing, hurting other people, starting fires and sexual assault.



People who have committed offences or are at risk of committing offences should still have:



Legal and civil rights.

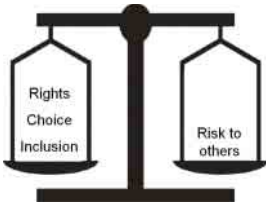


The right to support and treatment.





The right to as much independence, choice and inclusion as possible.



But this must be balanced against the risk to others.

We must protect the rights of people with learning disabilities who are at risk of offending but we must also protect the public.

## What must be done



Partnership Boards need to:

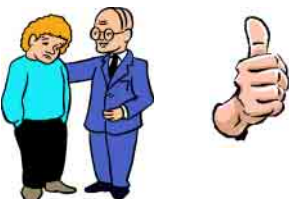
- Find out how many people they have who are at risk of offending in their area.
- Find out what services are available.
- Write a plan for better services.

Services must start supporting people who are at risk of offending as soon as possible. This means that:

- ✓ Children's Services.
- ✓ Youth Justice teams.
- ✓ Connexions Services.
- ✓ Transitions workers.



Must all work together.



People need good support in the community. This should be provided by the local community learning disability teams or from other specialist teams.

These should provide:



A central referral service.



Specialist advice and assessment for police courts and probation.



Different kinds of assessments and interventions – ways of working with people to help them.



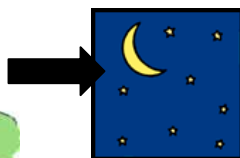
Risk assessment and how to manage any risk.



An on-call service – this will mean that someone is available to help at evenings and weekends.



Small specialist registered homes able to offer a home to people who have been sectioned under the mental health act. The workers will be specialist nurses. Psychologists and psychiatrists should be able to help.

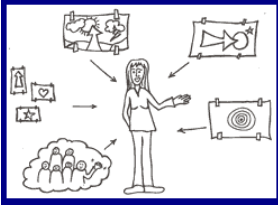


Support workers need to be flexible – available when people and their families need support.



Staff need to be trained in working with people at risk of offending.

If there is no specialist team then the local community support team must provide these services.



It is very important that like any other person with a learning disability people who have offended should have the opportunity to have a person centred plan.

People should also have:



Different types of accommodation.



Day opportunities.



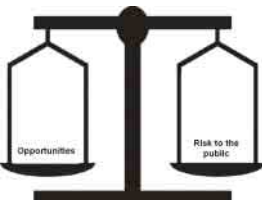
Employment opportunities.



Care Managers.



Advocacy.



These opportunities need to be offered to people but balanced against risk to the public.

## The Criminal Justice System

If a person comes into contact with the police they may also come into contact with other services. These services are:

- The Probation Service
- The Courts.
- The Prison Service.
- The Multi – Agency Public Protection Panel.



These services need to work with the community learning disability teams.



There needs to be training for staff who work with people with learning disabilities so that they understand the criminal justice system and training for staff who work in the criminal justice system so that they understand about people with learning disabilities.



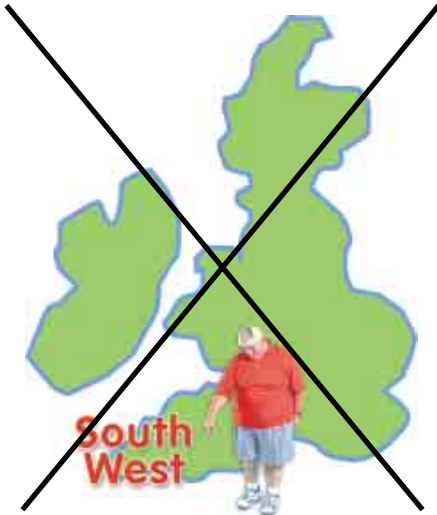
The police, probation service, prisons and courts need to know how to check if a person has a learning disability. This is called screening.



If the person has a learning disability the police need to ask for an appropriate adult. This is a person who knows about the criminal justice system and can act as an advocate. They will support the person during their time at the police station and when being interviewed by the police.



There needs to be some secure services available. Medium secure services will need to be shared across different areas. Low secure services will need to be small and local.



We need to stop using out of borough placements and plan to provide local services.



If services make a plan and do all of the things recommended by Lancaster University then people with learning disabilities at risk of offending will get better help and support.