



VALUES INTO ACTION SCOTLAND

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2011

VIAS- much achieved, but much still to be done!



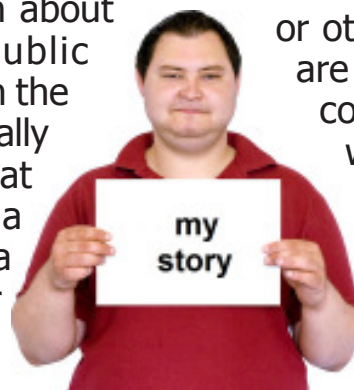
VALUES INTO ACTION SCOTLAND'S recent Annual General Meeting highlighted a lot of the important strands of work that VIAS has been involved in over the last year. These include:-

- Developing a Career Planning Pack, which we hope will be rolled out nationally for people with learning difficulties and individuals on the autistic spectrum.
- Promoting a positive message regarding work for young people through Young Scotland's Got Talent (YSGT)
- Providing reference materials and resources primarily through the website
- Taking a strong role in publicising the share of the cuts carried by disadvantaged people, through Campaign For a Fair Society.

One of the areas where Norma has really made a difference has been our collaborative working, with strong alliances with other organisations where we have a common purpose, whilst still having a distinctive voice or approach.

There has been a lot of concern about the impact of the cuts in public expenditure for some time, but in the last few months the impact has really begun to bite, with the country at risk of returning to recession, a drop in household income and a significant drop in public sector employment.

So where do we go now?
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VIAS intends to continue supporting people to tell their story, to put a human personal dimension on what can often seem very impersonal and just a game of numbers, without showing the individual impact for each of these people. Through this we intend to challenge the conscience of the wider public, to see if people are happy with what is being done in their name. At the same time we need to keep a positive approach to people moving into work, through areas like YSGT and the Career Planning Pack.



While VIAS plans its future approach to addressing these issues, we would very much like to hear views from members or other interested people on how we are doing, what areas we should be concentrating on, and the impact we are making. So please contact us with views and ideas on how we should approach the rapidly changing world we all live in.

James W. West
Co-Chair VIAS

Cardinal Keith O'Brien's Perspective on Welfare Reforms

WE ARE delighted and honoured that Cardinal Keith O'Brien has taken the time to send an email to Campaign for a Fair Society to express his concerns about the welfare reforms proposed by the UK Government.



These are his words:-

I am very aware of the concern being expressed regarding the proposed changes to the welfare system (Welfare Reform Bill) and the potential impacts on individuals in receipt of benefits. While there is a general acceptance of the need of the system to be reformed, those concerns highlight the danger of many genuinely vulnerable individuals being made more vulnerable and placed at risk. In particular I am conscious that those with disabilities have particular concerns that over time they will see a reduction in the overall value of their benefits, as well as reduced access to social care services. For many, they are particularly worried that a loss of Disability Living Allowance will mean a loss of their independence altogether.

The role of the Catholic Church in this situation is not to take political sides or support particular policies. It is however, to draw attention to our commitment to the Common Good which encourages us to give particular

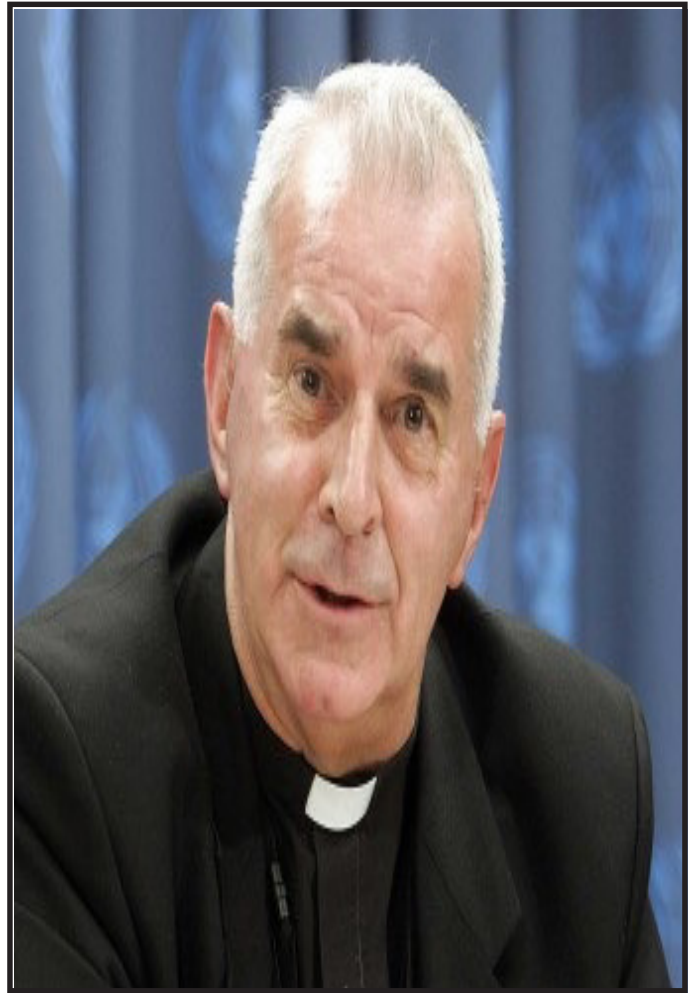
attention to the needs of those who are most vulnerable. This commitment has at its heart the understanding that how we organise society directly affects human dignity and the ability of individuals to grow in community.

If there is a possibility that government policy will be to the detriment of the Common Good then it is the role of the Church to speak out for, as Pope Benedict points out, the Church "cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. She has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper." Deus Caritas Est. 28a

With this regard I therefore urge all those involved in policy making, and those working on behalf of those who are affected by these benefit changes, to work together to strive for a welfare system that has the Common Good at its heart, one that is just, fair and compassionate, for the moral test of a society is how it

treats its most vulnerable members as pointed out in the pastoral letter 'Economic Justice for All':

All members of society have a special obligation to the poor and vulnerable. From the Scriptures and church teaching, we learn that the justice of a society is tested by the treatment of the poor..." This 'option for the poor' does not mean pitting one group against another, but rather, strengthening the whole community by assisting those who are the most vulnerable. As Christians, we are called to respond to the needs of all our brothers and sisters, but those with the greatest needs require the greatest response." Economic Justice for All, 16



With my blessing and good wishes.

Yours sincerely

Keith Patrick Cardinal O'Brien

Campaign for a Fair Society Goes to Holyrood!!

WE ARE delighted to announce that Jackie Baillie has kindly agreed to sponsor an event at The Scottish Parliament on Wednesday, 7th December 2011.

Our aim is to show the diverse group of people affected by the cuts being imposed by the UK Government and to consult on the UK manifesto which is currently in development.

We will be reporting on how it all goes in our next newsletter and hope to video the various presentations given by campaign members so watch this space for details.....

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Co-Production Explained

C O-PRODUCTION means working together to produce better outcomes for the person. It is a way of reminding professionals that outcomes matter only because citizens want them and that producing better outcomes depends upon using the skills and expertise of both the professional and the citizen.



Background

There is a tendency to treat public services as if they exist for their own sake. But this is a false perspective - services exist in order to help achieve outcomes - improvements in health, safety, wealth, contribution etc. Accordingly, services must be judged by the degree to which they help us achieve those valued outcomes. Ultimately it is people themselves, sometimes with considerable help, who achieve these outcomes: it is our health, safety, wealth or contribution.

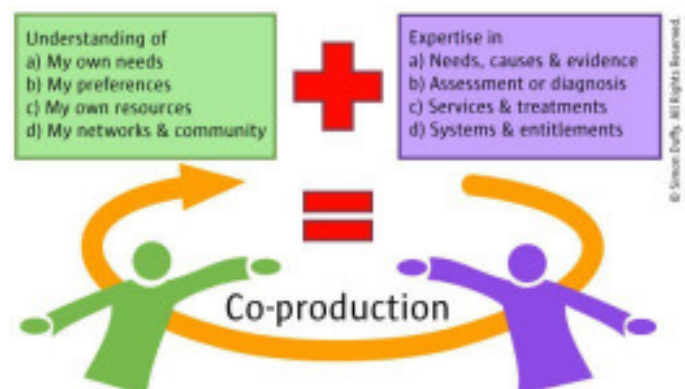
Once we realise that people are at the heart of achieving valued outcomes then we need to reconsider the relationship between the person and the professional. It is clear that this needs to become a mutually supportive relationship - where the professional supports the person to achieve their valued outcomes - and the person supports the professional to fulfil their responsibilities. This relationship of mutual support and creativity is called co-production.

Concept

It is important to note that the

dynamic of co-production will change depending upon the context. In some situations we will rightly expect professionals to exercise considerable authority and leadership (e.g. a surgeon performing an operation). But usually the reverse is true and most of the leadership must come from the person themselves (e.g. finding and keeping a job).

The value of the co-production relationship depends upon the synergy that comes from the combination of these diverse forms of expertise. And again the detail of the balance of expertise will vary with context and the individuals concerned but generally speaking we can distinguish two kinds of expertise.



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Citizen expertise:

- citizens know their own situation
- they know their problems and the kind of impact they have on their whole life
- they will know more about themselves, their gifts
- they know their friends, their family and their community

Professional expertise:

- professional will have seen many people with similar problems
- they may have expertise in the factors which have created those problems (whether that be physical, psychological or social)

- they will know more about the resources which they control
- they may know about the resources and services available from other parts of the system

Co-production is particularly valuable where problems cannot be easily solved with standard solutions. It is ideally suited to helping people to manage and improve their mental health, a circumstance which demands careful attention to the perspective of the person, but one which must also be balanced by a supportive external perspective.

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Putting People in the Picture

TO MARK the first anniversary of Campaign for a Fair Society on 8th February 2012, we are planning a range of things.

- We will launch a manifesto that shows our vision of what a fair society would look like
- We are also organising a range of publicity events on or around the date of the campaign launch

In Scotland, we are producing a new poster. We would like to cover the map of Scotland with pictures of people who support the campaign. We want to show that the cuts will affect people of all ages across the country. We will follow this up with events which will enable people at a local level to tell their stories. We hope that you will take part in either

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producing the poster or in the wider publicity campaign.

At this stage, all we need is a head shot photo and a brief explanation of why you support Campaign for a Fair Society. These must be sent to us by 9th December 2011.

To download a flier and sign up form, please follow this link <http://www.viascotland.org.uk/content/putting-people-picture-scottish-campaign-fair-society>.



Sharp rise in demand for food handouts from poverty-stricken families

FOOD CHARITY FAIRSHARE sees a 20% rise in demand, much of it from people hit by unemployment and benefit changes.

Britain has seen a sharp increase in the number of people unable to afford to feed themselves at the most basic level, thanks to the worsening economic climate and changes to the benefit system, according to a survey by a leading food charity.

In the past year FareShare, which redistributes waste food from major food manufacturers and supermarkets to social care charities, has seen a 20% rise in the number of people it is feeding – from 29,500 a year to 35,000.

And many of those, blighted by rising unemployment and business failures, are coming from the sorts of stable family backgrounds once considered immune to the worst effects of recession.

The new findings, which are backed up by research from other organisations working in the same field, will make sobering reading for the Conservative party as it gathers in Manchester this weekend for its annual conference, where the direction of the government's stringent deficit reduction programme will be carefully scrutinised.

The number of charities that have signed up to receive food from FareShare, which operates from 17

sites across the UK, has also risen in the past 12 months, from 600 to 700. More than 40% of those charities are recording increases in demand for their feeding services of up to 50%.



“People in our communities are going to bed hungry because they can’t afford to feed themselves,” said Lindsay Boswell, chief executive of FareShare. “This is a huge problem and it’s right here, in our neighbourhoods, on our streets. This is outrageous enough even before you factor in the thousands of tonnes of good food thrown away each year. It’s illogical and frankly immoral that these problems coexist.”

The food that FareShare distributes would generally end up in landfill sites.

It is discarded by major supermarkets such as Sainsbury's, Tesco and M&S, because it's out of date, or surplus to demand or as a result of printing errors on the packaging.

It's estimated that three million tonnes of food like this is being wasted in Britain

every year, of which FareShare gets hold of about 1%. "Demand for our food is going up far faster than we can source it," Boswell said. "As a charity we started out purely interested in liberating waste. We are an environmental charity that gets bloody angry about food being thrown away. However, we're clear that it is the alleviation of poverty which now leads what we do."

One of the major changes seen by FareShare and organisations like it is in the type of people they are now feeding. Where once it was single homeless and the chronically destitute now it's increasingly families and working people who have fallen on hard times.

In the past year, the Salisbury-based Trussell Trust has seen the number of people it is feeding rise from 41,000 to 61,500. It runs more than 100 food banks around the country, distributing emergency food parcels to people in dire need who have been referred to it by social care organisations and charities.

"We're seeing a big increase in what you could call, for want of a better



phrase, normal working people, those who have lost their jobs or seen their own businesses go under," says Jeremy Ravn, manager of the food bank network. "The big problem is that the welfare state is not reacting fast enough to need."

An increasing time lag between benefits

claims being accepted and the date when payments come on stream is, Ravn says, resulting in some people suffering serious hunger.

A spokesperson for the Department of Work and Pensions denied there had been any changes to the system for paying benefits which could be blamed for the sharp increase in the number of people requiring food aid.

However he said that a series of reforms, including the controversial plan by work and pensions secretary Iain Duncan Smith for a universal credit to replace a slate of existing benefits, was now more necessary. "This will help us get back to a working welfare state where people don't have to rely on food parcels," the spokesperson said.

- More than one in five workers now earn less than a "living wage", says the Resolution Foundation think-tank. Its head, Gavin Kelly, said the research showed how pervasive low pay is.

This article was written by Jay Rayner and first appeared at www.guardian.co.uk on Saturday 1 October 2011.

Mining the disability market

NEW YORK BASED disabled businessman and former Wall Street trader, Rich Donovan, looks at the opportunity that the disability market holds, how to get it moving and the benefits to all concerned.



Getting gold out of the ground seems simple enough - dig a hole, and poof, there it is.

The reality of gold mining, however, is that there are steps that must be taken which require more than a shovel and a dream. The good thing about taking those steps is that, at the end of the day, you have the increased potential to strike it rich by finding ... well, gold.

New and different action in disability holds the same promise - a significant economic benefit with relatively small outlays and adjustments. These new and different actions must come from three sources: government, business, and disabled people themselves. Let's look at all three.

Government

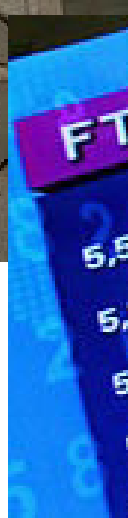
Governments must help unlock the economic potential in disabled people by enacting policy that encourages a generation of self-sustaining disabled consumers. What governments can make a difference with right now, is prepare them for earning higher levels of income through education. So-called Special Education is not focused on prepping disabled people to compete for jobs. This is simply

because, at its inception, few thought a career for a disabled person was a viable goal. Things have changed, and our education system needs to play catch-up and adjust its expectations. Disabled kids today are not taught to dream about a career. It troubles me every time I meet a bright fifteen year old disabled kid who has never been asked the simple question: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Progress has been made with a social focus. Now governments need a shift to an economic focus by equipping disabled students with the tools and passion to build their careers.



Business

The path for business is simple - do what you are best at. There is no need to become experts in disability. Attack this market as you



would any other: find out the desires of disabled consumers as they relate to your profitable enterprise, adjust your product and messaging to attract their business then execute this in line with your company's process and culture.

Mistakes are made when companies try to 'disablise' their business or do just enough to comply with regulations. Disabled people don't want 'special' products ... but they are hungry to be included in the mainstream consumer experience.

Doing this right is OXO Good Grips, a US kitchen tool company. OXO's products don't scream 'designed for disabled', yet they were inspired by a woman with arthritis who loves to cook. Their branding makes them attractive to twentysomethings who just think they are cool.

Message to CEOs ... if disability is not part of your annual strategic business plan you and your shareholders are missing a big opportunity.

Disabled people

Disabled people must become 'inspired consumers' and 'motivated

investors'. The last thirty years of lobbying governments and the courts, has come and gone.

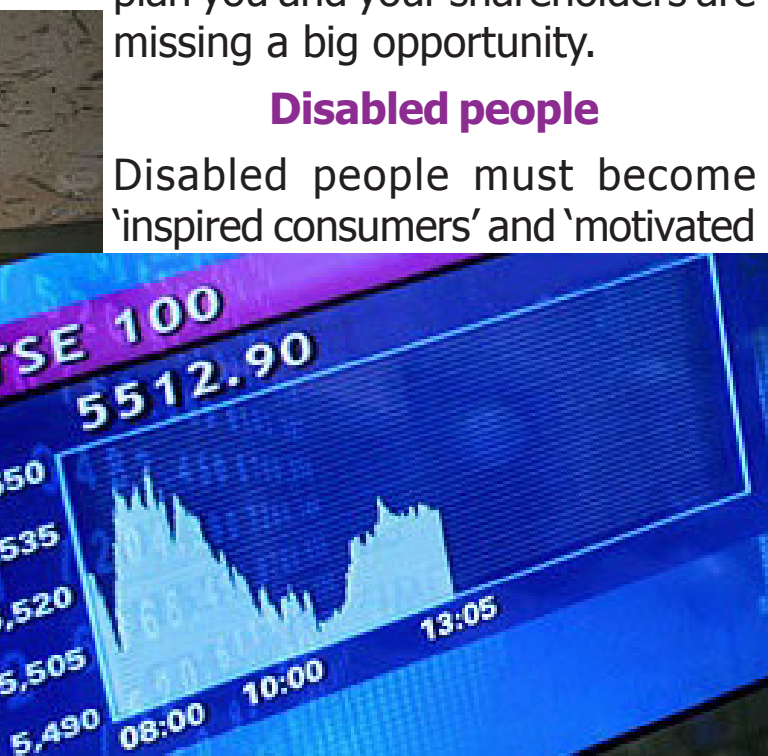
We must turn our attention to informing companies on how to improve our consumer experience. Rather than marching on Parliament, shift your focus to products and services that you enjoy that could be better. Start telling companies how their offerings could be best tailored to you.

Here is some 'inside insight': companies actually want to hear from you. They make their 'stuff' better by collecting feedback from their customers. Great companies love feedback, and the ones that don't, you can feel free to ignore.

Communication from consumers to companies happens in two primary ways. First, reward companies that earn your business by buying their products aggressively, and tell them why you did so. Punish companies that 'do disability' poorly, or who merely comply with the law, by not buying their products, and tell them why you did so.

As part of this process, individuals and groups must start flowing information about product/service improvements to companies. This can be as simple as calling the number on the back of the package, and can be as sophisticated as organized groups publically reviewing products that work or miss the mark. It is important that this happens in large numbers, say in the low thousands.

To paraphrase what I've been told by more than 10 corporate executives - 'disabled customers are too quiet;





and their 'champions' must start to pressure large investors to pay attention to the emerging market of disability.

The toughest part of successfully mining for gold is bringing all of the right pieces together prior to digging a hole. All

we would do more if it was demanded'. They need to hear from you.

The second and more complex way to entice companies to better serve the disabled customer is through ownership. By owning shares in companies, disabled people can exert power to ensure they are represented in the boardroom.

There is a long history of how to do this - women and the environmental movement have done it well through funds like Calvert Investments.

Part of Calvert's role is to work with the boards of the companies they invest in and, alongside maximising value for shareholders, they do business in a way that addresses their investors' social and green agenda.

Large investors like pension funds and endowments can play a role in encouraging and investing in funds like Calvert to support progressive goals.

Similarly, disabled people

involved in disability acknowledge that the economic potential in this segment is about the size of China, yet attempts at unlocking the potential have yielded limited results.

We know that there is 'gold in them hills', how we get it out is more important than its mere existence. What is missing today is new and different actions, producing new and different results.

©BBC. This article first appeared on the BBC Ouch! Website. To follow the Ouch blog, please use this link

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/BBCouch/>



VIAS AGM 2011

MANY THANKS to all of you who braved the tail end of Hurricane Katia and attended our Annual General Meeting on 13 September. As many of you will know, our themes this year were self-directed support and employment.



James West, our Co-Chair steered us through the necessary business quickly and professionally and then gave an update on VIAS activities during 2010/11. Highlights were:-

- The launch of Young Scotland's Got Talent (YSGT) in partnership with Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability (SCLD) on 9th June 2010
- Our new website going live on 20th July 2010
- Our transition presentation at the Holyrood Festival of Politics on 21st August 2010
- The first YSGT road show in Forth Valley on 22nd January 2011
- VIAS playing a key role in the launch of Campaign for a Fair Society on 9th February 2011

He then gave a brief overview of our activities this year which include:-

- More YSGT road shows
- Developing and participating in the Geeza Life, Geeza Job pilot
- A range of activities as part of Campaign for a Fair Society
- Submitting a consortium application to the Scottish Government for self-directed support capacity building

He then introduced the speakers, the first being Maura Lynch (SCLD) who talked about the Geeza Life, Geeza Job pilot project. This is a partnership November 2011

initiative between Empower, SCLD and VIAS. Maura talked passionately about the initiative. She gave an example of someone who (after some initial job coaching support) worked independently 20 hours per week in a busy commercial enterprise but who had never learned to do anything independently in his home environment where he is supported by a supported living provider. She stressed the importance of teaching people skills within a work, social and domestic environment. Geeza Life, Geeza Job offers a new and exciting way of giving support workers and personal assistants the tools to help people achieve this. Her presentation was well received and there were many questions from the floor.

Alistair Law then went on to talk about personalisation and the services that North East Community Care can offer people who want to direct their own



support. He stressed the importance of power, control and choice for individuals. A real supporter of personalisation, Alistair said:

“Personalisation could help you to do the things you have always dreamed of – it is a very positive and exciting way for you to make things happen.”

He then invited questions from the audience. There were a range of questions but the emerging picture is that of a postcode lottery in terms of :-

- Whether or not you can access a direct payment as part of your self-directed support. Local authorities across Scotland tell people different things when they ask even although the Scottish Government has set out a 10 year strategy for self-directed support. Some authorities say that they can't offer a direct payment.
- The amount of money offered to people varies depending on where you live. One area reported a person being offered 10 hours support at approx. £6.87 per hour. It was agreed that it would be virtually impossible to find a provider who could offer the person services at this price so this would lead to the person receiving much less than the 10 hours support they need. No-one on their approved providers list could offer support for any less than £12.
- Each local authority sets down different rules on how a person can spend their budget.

The Scottish Government recently announced its Programme for Government. The Self-Directed Support (Scotland) Bill was included in this.

If enacted, the bill will:-

- Introduce the language and

terminology of self-directed support into the statute;

- Provide a consistent, clear framework in law; imposing firm duties on local authorities to provide options available to citizens – and in all cases making it clear it is the citizen's choice as to how much choice and control **they** want to have;
- Widen eligibility to those who have been excluded up to this point, such as carers and people on compulsory treatment orders, and;
- Consolidate, modernise and clarify existing laws on direct payments.

In the long term, it is hoped that this will make life much easier for people who wish to access self-directed support but at this time, your experience will vary greatly depending on where you live.

The formal meeting concluded with James thanking everyone who attended and we rounded off the day with some informal networking and a finger buffet. Many thanks again to everyone who attended; our presenters and our committee members who worked hard to make the day a success. Special thanks also go to Capability Scotland at Upper Springlands for their attention to detail and hard work!



Alastair Minty, Committee Member

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Rolling Around in my Head

- Joe's Blog

FOR THOSE of you who don't follow Dave Hingsburger's blogs (Rolling Around in my Head), you are missing out on something special. They are thought provoking and moving. Dave, who lives in Canada, has worked in the field of disability since graduating from university over 30 years ago and is a very inspirational and much respected individual. The following is a blog he wrote on 3 September 2011 on behalf of his partner Joe.



Joe walks mad

I can tell from a distance if he is upset, and I could tell in the few steps he took from door to dining room that he was really, really angry. He plopped down on the chair beside the desk and, though he normally waits to see if I'm working on something or writing an email, he started right in. "People and their Bloody cell phones," he started, it's a rant that we've both made several times, but I knew something was different, 'I was in the line at the bank ...' he pauses and shakes his head.

'I was right behind a woman who was there supporting a young guy with Down's syndrome. She was on the phone the whole time she was in the line up. Don't people realize that they are always talking louder on the phone than they think they are that they can be heard by everyone around them? She was gossiping with someone on the other end of the phone, I think it was probably a co-

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worker. All sorts of private information about the people they served was tossed out for all to hear. The man with her was really, really embarrassed listening to her. It was clear he knew that everyone else could hear. I didn't know what to do. Then when she said that she was at the bank and that she had to go soon because he needed help because he couldn't sign his name ...' here he paused to take a breath, 'I reached out and tapped her on the shoulder.' Anyone who knows Joe knows what a big deal this is. He is naturally reticent and almost never confronts anyone. Well, not true, he confronts me regularly. So doing this would have been very hard for him. 'I told her,' he said, 'that she was in public and we could all hear her. I told her that he could hear her. She hung up and told me that I needed to mind my own business. I wanted to tell her that it was her who needed to mind her mouth and not share his business

with everyone in the line. When she said that he couldn't sign his name he looked like he wanted to die or to disappear.'

We talked this through. We decided two things. First, Joe wanted me to immediately write an email to all staff at Vita and tell them what happened and remind them that when they are in public, if they are on the phone, they are speaking publicly to everyone around them. He wanted me to try to make sure that everyone, at least at Vita, was careful. I wrote that email then and there. Joe doesn't ask these kinds of things of me often. Then he asked me to make this a blog so that everyone else would think about it too ... parents would be careful about talking about their kids publically on the phone, staff would be careful about sharing information out loud in public, that everyone would just be a bit more careful.

'His face will haunt me for a very long time,' Joe said. I didn't know what to do, I should have acted sooner, but I kept thinking it wasn't my responsibility - but then when I saw his face, I knew that it was.

I'm proud that Joe acted. I'm proud that he wanted me to do something to make sure that what he saw isn't repeated. Concern that becomes action is exactly what we need.



So from Joe to me, from me to you ... when you can be heard, even if only in your own heart, choose carefully the words that you say.

Norma's comment

I can completely relate to this blog, first posted on 3 September 2011, as I had a similar experience on the way back home from the first Campaign for a Fair Society UK steering group meeting recently. It had been a very long day; I had missed my train from Newcastle to Edinburgh and was now on the third and final train journey home.

A young guy was on the phone to his partner, oblivious to the fact that everyone on the train could hear his conversation. It was bad enough that we quickly established that his partner had done something wrong at work and had received a written warning but my blood really started to boil when he began talking about his day. He was a teacher and went on to tell his partner a very detailed story about a pupil, named in full, who had lashed out at another pupil. He described what she did, what she said (swear words included), how he handled it and gave details on the subsequent punishment she received.

He then spoke about another pupil (again named) who had left his wallet at school by mistake and how he hoped his sister (with whom the teacher had

entrusted the wallet) would give it back to him without removing any of the cash.

I only wish I had Joe's spirit as the most I could do was to draw him several very dirty looks but, in my head, I rehearsed a few things to say, not least "If I knew where you worked, your partner would have company as you'd be up on a disciplinary too!"

I was stunned both professionally and personally. Confidentiality?? My son who has ADHD didn't always have an easy time in school but if I



thought for a minute that he was being discussed in a very loud voice, on a train, during these difficult times then I would have wiped the floor with the person who made the comments. This man can consider himself very lucky that I don't know where he works as I would have contacted the school in a heartbeat. People need to remember that mobile

phones don't make you invisible and that you are bound by confidentiality wherever you are. I only wish I had been as brave as Joe . . .

US Labor Department awards more than \$21 million in Disability Employment Initiative funding to 7 states

We recently stumbled upon this article on the Disabled World website. It shows that even in these difficult financial times in the world, governments who are serious about encouraging disabled people to work are prepared to invest in good quality supports to enable them to do so! Perhaps our policy makers should follow this example.



On 6th October 2011, The U.S. Department of Labor announced \$21,166,560 for seven states under the Disability Employment Initiative to improve education, training, and employment opportunities and outcomes for youth and adults who are unemployed, underemployed and/or receiving Social Security disability benefits. The initiative is jointly funded and administered by the department's Employment and Training Administration and its Office of Disability Employment Policy.

"During these difficult economic times, it is important to ensure that all workers, November 2011

including those with disabilities - who as a group face employment barriers even during times of prosperity - are able to benefit from the Labor Department's employment and retraining services," said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. "These federal grants will help to provide services and support to individuals with disabilities in seven additional states, and put them on the path to permanent and secure jobs."

This round of funding is the second under the Disability Employment Initiative, which now supports 16 state projects. The new grants are part of cooperative

agreements with California, Hawaii, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee, Washington and Wisconsin to implement exemplary employment services for individuals with disabilities in the public workforce system. The states with continuing grants under the initiative are Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, New Jersey, New York and Virginia.

All projects under this initiative build upon the department's Disability Program Navigator Initiative by hiring staff with expertise in disability and workforce issues. The grants also support extensive collaboration across multiple workforce and disability service systems in each state, including vocational rehabilitation services, mental health and developmental disability agencies, Medicaid Infrastructure Grant-supported activities, independent living centres, business leadership networks, and other community and non-profit organizations.

"Our priority is to provide individuals with disabilities the foundation of education, job training, and employment and support services to achieve economic stability," said ETA Assistant Secretary Jane Oates. The Disability Employment Initiative also expands the workforce

development system's participation in the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program by requiring participating state workforce agencies or local workforce investment boards to become employment networks. Many Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries use the mainstream workforce system to seek employment opportunities. By serving as employment networks, grantees will expand the capacity of the department's One-Stop Career Centres to serve Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities. "Access to high-quality employment and training services is vital to moving youth and adults with disabilities into the workforce and preparing them for good jobs in high-growth, high-demand industries," said ODEP Assistant Secretary Kathy Martinez.

The department's priority is to serve individuals with disabilities and those who are receiving Social Security disability benefits, and it is working on early intervention strategies to assist people with disabilities before they become Social Security disability beneficiaries. States will work closely with the Social Security Administration's Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Program and its Community Work Incentive Coordinators to expand services to beneficiaries.







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