EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

People with learning disabilities are amongst the most vulnerable and socially excluded in our society. Very few have jobs, live in their own homes or have choice over who cares for them. This needs to change: people with learning disabilities must no longer be marginalised or excluded. *Valuing People* sets out how the Government will provide new opportunities for children and adults with learning disabilities and their families to live full and independent lives as part of their local communities.

Where we are today

Problems and Challenges

There are about 210,000 people with severe learning disabilities in England, and about 1.2 million with a mild or moderate disability. Health and social services expenditure on services for adults with learning disabilities stands at around £3 billion. In the 30 years since the last White Paper *Better Services for the Mentally Handicapped*, progress has been made in closing large institutions and developing services in the community, but more needs to be done. There are major problems, including:

- Poorly co-ordinated services for **families with disabled children especially for those with severely disabled children;**
- Poor planning for **young disabled people at the point of transition into adulthood;**
- Insufficient support for **carers, particularly for those caring for people with complex needs;**
- People with learning disabilities often have little **choice or control** over many aspects of their lives;
- Substantial **health care** needs of people with learning disabilities are often unmet;
- **Housing choice** is limited;
- **Day services** are often not tailored to the needs and abilities of the individual;
- Limited opportunities for **employment;**

- The needs of **people from minority ethnic communities** are often overlooked;
- **Inconsistency in expenditure and service delivery**; and
- Few examples of real **partnership** between health and social care or involving people with learning disabilities and carers.

The New Vision

- Four key principles of **Rights**, **Independence**, **Choice**, **Inclusion** lie at the heart of the Government's proposals. Legislation which confers rights on all citizens, including the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, applies equally to all people with learning disabilities, and the Disability Rights Commission will work for people with learning disabilities.
- New national objectives for services for people with learning disabilities, supported by new targets and performance indicators, to provide clear direction for local agencies
- A new **Learning Disability Development Fund of up to £50 million per annum from April 2002**: £20 million capital and up to £30 million revenue. The revenue element of the Development Fund will be created from within old long-stay health funding as it is released over time. The Development Fund will be targeted on the key priorities of the White Paper, including modernising day centres, enabling people to move from long-stay hospitals to more appropriate accommodation in the community, developing supported living approaches for people living with older carers, developing specialist local services for people with severe challenging behaviour and developing integrated facilities for children with severe disabilities and complex needs. The Development Fund will be made available subject to the condition that resources may only be used where they are deployed as pooled funds under the Health Act flexibilities.
- A new central **Implementation Support Fund of £2.3 million a year for the next 3 years** that will be used to fund a range of developments including advocacy and a new national information centre and help line.

Better life chances for people with learning disabilities

Disabled Children and Young People

- Learning disabled children and their families face many barriers to full participation in society. The Government's objective is to ensure that disabled children gain maximum life chance benefits from educational opportunities, health and social care while living with their families or in other appropriate settings.
- To achieve this we will ensure that learning disabled children and their families are an integral part of the Quality Protects programme, the Department for Education and Employment's Special Educational Needs Programme of Action and the Connexions Service. Disabled children will be a priority group under the Quality Protects programme with £60 million over the next three years earmarked to provide better support. The Schools Access Initiative will provide funds to improve accessibility of mainstream schools and the Standards Fund will be used to improve provision for children with special educational needs.
- Transition from childhood to adulthood can be a particularly difficult process for both disabled children and their parents/carers. Our objective is to ensure continuity of care and support and equality of opportunity for young people and their families so that as many learning disabled young people as possible take part in education, training, or employment. The Connexions Service will provide new help and advice to disabled young people as they move into adult life.

More Choice and Control for People with Learning Disabilities

- People with learning disabilities have little control over their lives, few receive direct payments, advocacy services are underdeveloped and people with learning disabilities are often not central to the planning process. The Government's objective is to enable people with learning disabilities to have as much choice and control as possible over their lives and the services and support they receive.

- To achieve this, we are investing at least **£1.3 million a year for the next 3 years to develop advocacy services** for people with learning disabilities in partnership with the voluntary sector. We are extending eligibility for direct payments through legislation. We will also set up a national forum for people with learning disabilities and enable them to benefit from the improvement and expansion of community equipment services now under way.
- A person-centred approach will be essential to deliver real change in the lives of people with learning disabilities. Person-centred planning provides a single, multi-agency mechanism for achieving this. The Government will issue new guidance on person-centred planning, and provide resources for implementation through the Learning Disability Development Fund.

Supporting Carers

- Caring for a family member with a learning disability is a lifelong commitment. Our objective is to increase the help and support carers receive from all local agencies in order to fulfil their family and caring roles effectively.
- To help carers, we are providing **£750,000 over the next three years to fund the development of a national learning disability information centre and helpline in partnership with Mencap**. We will implement the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000. Councils will be encouraged to identify carers aged over 70 and those from minority ethnic communities. We will also ensure that carers and their organisations are represented on the Learning Disability Task Force.
- Carers will benefit from our package of extra help worth more than £500 million over 3 years, which the Government announced in the autumn of 2000. In April 2001, the carer premium in the income-related benefits will rise to £24.40 a week, and the Invalid Care Allowance (ICA) earnings limit will rise to £72 a week. As soon as the legislative programme allows, people aged 65 and over will be able to claim ICA and entitlement to ICA will continue for up to 8 weeks after the death of the disabled person, to allow carers time to adjust.

Improving Health For People With Learning Disabilities

- Many people with learning disabilities have greater health needs than the rest of the population. They are more likely to experience mental illness and are more prone to chronic health problems, epilepsy, and physical and sensory disabilities. The Government's objective is to enable people with learning disabilities to have access to a health service designed around their individual needs, with fast and convenient care delivered to a consistently high standard and with additional support where necessary.
- We will ensure that people with learning disabilities, including those from minority ethnic communities, have **the same right of access to mainstream health services** as the rest of the population. The NHS will promote equality for people with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities in accordance with its new general duty in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which comes into force on 2 April 2001. **Health facilitators** will be appointed from each local community learning disability team to support people with learning disabilities in getting the health care they need. We will ensure that all people with learning disabilities are **registered with a GP** and have their own **Health Action Plan**. There will be a new role for specialist learning disability services, focusing on making best use of their expertise.

Housing, Fulfilling Lives, and Employment

- **Housing**. People with learning disabilities and their families currently have few options about where they live. Our objective is to enable people with learning disabilities and their families to have greater choice and control over where and how they live. We are legislating to improve provision of advice and information by housing authorities, and will be issuing joint DH/DETR guidance on housing care and support options. We will complete the reprovision of the remaining long-stay hospitals to enable people still living there to move to more appropriate accommodation in the community by 2004.

- **Fulfilling Lives**. Our objective is to enable people with learning disabilities to lead full and purposeful lives in their communities and develop a range of activities including leisure interests, friendships and relationships. To achieve this, we will take forward a 5 year programme to modernise local councils' day services. The Learning and Skills Council will ensure equal access to education. We will outlaw discrimination against people with learning disabilities on public transport. Services for parents with a learning disability will be improved. Department of Social Security staff will receive disability awareness training to help them work with people with learning disabilities.
- **Employment**. Very few people with learning disabilities – probably less than 10% – have jobs. Our objective is to enable more people with learning disabilities to participate in all forms of employment, wherever possible in paid work, and to make a valued contribution to the world of work. We will develop **new targets for increasing numbers of people with learning disabilities in work** and ensure that the Workstep programme meets the needs of people with learning disabilities. There will be a study of the links between supported employment and day services. The Department of Social Security will ensure careful assessment of entitlement to Disability Living Allowance. Job Brokers under the New Deal for Disabled People will have the skills needed to work with people with learning disabilities.

Quality Services

- The Government is committed to raising standards and improving the quality of services for people with learning disabilities. Good quality services that promote independence, choice and inclusion will lead to good outcomes for people with learning disabilities. We will look to the Social Care Institute of Excellence to be a leading source of expertise. Local quality assurance frameworks for learning disability will be in place by April 2002. We will issue guidance on user surveys and on physical intervention. We are taking action to assist vulnerable or intimidated witnesses to give evidence in Court and so improve their access to justice.

- At present, most of the learning disability workforce is unqualified. The Government wants to see an appropriately trained and qualified workforce. Health and social care workforce strategies will provide new opportunities for learning disability staff. We will also introduce the **Learning Disability Awards Framework** from April 2001 which will provide a new route to qualification for care staff. We will also support a range of leadership initiatives through the Learning Disability Development Fund.
- Good quality services will provide the right care for people with additional or complex needs. This includes people with severe and profound disabilities, people with learning disabilities and epilepsy, those with learning disabilities and autism, people with challenging behaviour and older people with learning disabilities.

Delivering Change

Partnership Working

- Effective partnership working by all agencies is the key to achieving social inclusion for people with learning disabilities. To promote stronger local partnerships, we will build on existing joint planning structures to establish Learning Disability Partnership Boards within the framework of Local Strategic Partnerships by October 2001. Partnership Boards will be responsible for agreeing plans for the use of the Health Act flexibilities.

Making Change Happen

- Delivering these ambitious plans will take time and requires a long-term implementation programme. At national level, we will be investing new resources in 2001/02 to support implementation. We will:
- Set up a **Learning Disability Task Force** to advise the Government on implementation;
- Establish an **Implementation Support Team** to promote change at regional and local level;
- Fund a £2 million learning disability research initiative *People with Learning disabilities: Services, Inclusion and Partnership* from 2001/02;

- At a local level, Learning Disability Partnership Boards will have lead responsibility for ensuring implementation. They will need to develop local action plans by 31 January 2002 to supplement their learning disability Joint Investment Plans;
- The Social Services Inspectorate will carry out a national inspection of learning disability services in 2001/02.