

**Reach Report to  
Learning Disability Partnership Board  
Thursday 25th October 2012**



**Reach**  is part of **asist**  advocacy services in staffordshire

# Reach Update



Since the last Partnership Board meeting there have been two Reach Parliament meetings.



At the September meeting, MPs and Experts met to discuss the changes to bus passes and to plan the next two Parliament meetings.



Some of the key comments and questions about the changes to bus passes are on pages 4, 5 and 6 of this report.



At the October meeting, MPs and Experts met with Kevin Day from the Joint Commissioning Unit to talk about the updated Learning Disability Strategy.

# Reach Update

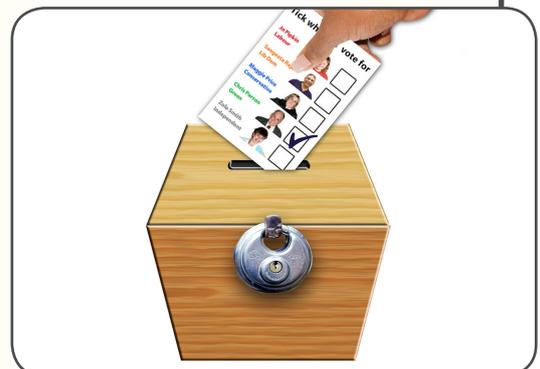
Reach will send Kevin Day a full report from the meeting by the end of October.



Some of the key comments and questions from that meeting are on pages 6, 7 and 8 of this report.



Reach have been working with people at St. John's Cafe and Waterside to run campaigns, hold elections and choose new Reach MPs.



The St. John's Cafe election is on Wednesday 7th November and the Waterside election will happen before the end of November.



## Bus Passes - Case Study



### Bus Pass



Reach are still hearing about the problems the new rules are causing for people.

One Reach member shared his experience with us.



“People with learning disabilities who are carers need the free bus pass. The earliest I can get a bus is after half past nine and I care for my mum. I live about three miles away from her but I need to go and see her every day. She has got worse and even though I’ve had a carers’ assessment nothing’s changed at all. It’s really hard for me to get my mum to go the doctor’s. We end up arguing and it makes my nerves bad. Now she’s in that much pain, she rings me if she needs me but she needs me more now. I can’t be in my flat now, I need be with her. Part of the problem is she’s got worse and part of it is the travel. People need care before 9:30am.”

## Bus Passes - What People Said

Reach MPs and Experts looked at this person's story and said:

- "its appalling, the way it is."
- "He still needs his bus pass to get out and care for his mum. He needs it be free."
- "I think it's wrong. He should get help, as a carer."



Reach members have now spoken up about the changes to bus passes at the last **3** Partnership Board meetings and at **5** of the last **7** Parliament meetings.



At the September Parliament meeting, Reach members shared more thoughts about how the new rules are affecting them and other people with learning disabilities.



## Bus Passes - What People Said



"I go to drama on a Friday. I have to get there for 10am. I already pay to do drama and now I have to pay out. I haven't got a paid job. My money for the bus comes from my benefits and I could use that for other things. "



"People at Meakin House are not happy. They used get there about half nine but now it's ten, half ten. They're late for things now."



"At half eight, nine o' clock you have to pay. I have to pay to go to my placement. I have to pay to go and volunteer. I found out about having to pay from a bus driver. I didn't know before. Mum gives me the money. "



"What happens if you've got hospital appointments before half past nine? Who pays?"

# Learning Disability Strategy

At the October Parliament meeting, Reach members met with Kevin Day in the morning and talked about the updated commissioning intentions (plans) in the afternoon.

People spoke to Kevin about things like:

- personal budgets
- spending cuts and service changes
- day services and drop-ins
- bus passes
- paid jobs
- accessible toilets
- including people in council consultations
- hospital treatment.



# Learning Disability Strategy



Some of the things Reach members said about the commissioning intentions (plans) are below.



People said they wanted more information about the plan for a new network of community based support.



Reach members said it was good that people with complex needs will be moved out of NHS campuses because "it's about people's independence."



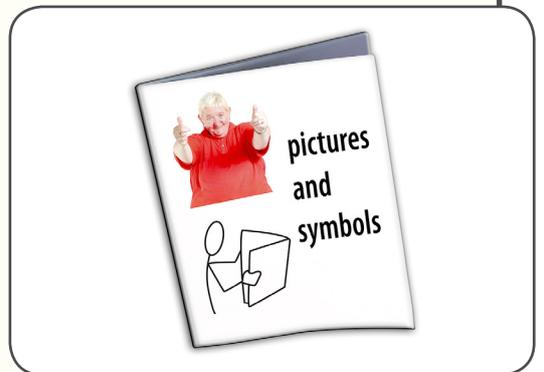
Reach members were worried about where people who leave campuses will go to and if they will get the same support with medication and health in the future.

# Learning Disability Strategy

Reach members said there should be more respite and short break places and more choice about where people can go and what support they get.



People said there should be more updates and clear information from the city council about what is happening with services.



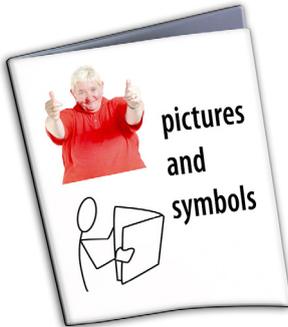
Reach members said it was important for social care and health services to work together more in teams but were worried because "they've tried this before and ending up cutting them and it all comes down to finances."



People were mostly happy with the ideas for the commissioning intentions (plans) but were very worried about how much would happen because of more spending cuts next year.



# Clear Communication



Reach have been working on some accessible booklets to help Reach members and other people with learning disabilities to speak up about their lives.

The **co-operative** membership   
Community Fund

The Co-operative Membership Community Fund gave Reach some money to write Steps to Speaking Up, a guide to help people speak up for themselves.



Steps to Speaking Up will be a free resource that anyone can use.

It will be finished in November and people will be able to download it from the Partnership Board website.

city of  
**stoke-on-trent**



Reach are also working on a guide to help people find out more about who their city councillors are and what they do to speak up for people.

# Clear Communication

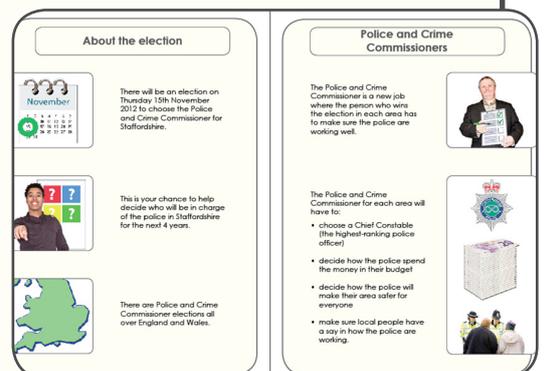
At the October Parliament meeting, Reach shared some information about the election for Staffordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner in November.



Reach asked the two people running for election - Matthew Ellis and Joy Garner - what they would do to help people with learning disabilities.



Their comments, and lots of information about the election are in the booklet.



Reach MPs took copies of the booklet to share with other people at day services and drop-ins.

You can download a copy of the booklet from the Partnership Board website.



## More Information



To find out more about any of the issues raised or talked about in this report, please contact Reach project workers Andrew Garvey or Mark Evans.



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Reach is part of Asist, Advocacy Services in Staffordshire.



Thanks to Photosymbols for some of the images used in this booklet.