

Learning Disability Listening Lunch

Listening Lunches are a forum which allows the Carer Representatives who sit on the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board to make contact with other learning disability carers in the City in order to truly represent their views at the LDPB, they are intended as a contextual background for issues to be raised by carers and fed to the Carer Representatives. They are an informal space where carers set the agenda but themes will normally be taken from the agenda of the upcoming LDPB.

At the Listening Lunch on the 6th January 2011 there were group discussions around budgets as this was the main item on the agenda for the LDPB on the 17th January. Carers came up with a list of priorities as to where they feel money should be allocated within learning disabilities services. They are as follows:

- **Home care** – it is especially important for carers to receive adequate homecare support which enables them to continue their caring role. If homecare provisions were dramatically reduced many carers would be unable to continue caring, which would cost services more money in the long term.
- **Carer Support** – This includes funding for listening lunches as well as continued funding for the Carers Centre. Carers risk becoming socially isolated due to their caring role and it is vital that appropriate support is there when they need it.
- **Respite Care and Day Services** – Both of these allow carers some ‘time for me’ which is vital should they hope to continue caring.
- **Housing** – It was felt that service users should be in accommodation which is in Brighton (this is not always the case) so that carers can get to see their loved one easily. It was also felt that there should be less use of agency staff to ensure more cost effectiveness and that better management could ensure a more streamlined and cost effective service.
- **Services for people with less profound learning disabilities** – Carers feel that all too often, when cuts are being made, they will be made from services for those with less profound learning disabilities. It was felt that this is a false economy as often when people have services withdrawn they will develop other problems associated with isolation, such as mental health difficulties or problems with the criminal justice system. This will cost services more in the long term.