



White Paper

Future Lives and the Internet:



the Good,



the Bad,



and the Ugly.

Published 5th December 2013

To be debated on Friday 31st January 2014

Introduction

Future Lives | ageing well
recovery
new models of care
assistive technology

'Future Lives – pathways to independence' is a plan that Worcestershire County Council has written. It is about services for adults with learning disabilities. The County Council has written this plan because of the following things:

- The national Government is bringing out a Care Bill which says that the County Council must keep giving people services if they need them
- There will be more people needing services in the future because better health services help people live for longer
- The national Government is cutting the amount of money that the County Council has to pay for services



'Future Lives' explains how the County Council wants to respond to all these things. The ideas in 'Future Lives' will change the way things are done and money is spent.



A lot of the changes involve adults with learning disabilities using the internet.



We have called the White Paper 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly' because we think that this describes the internet very well.

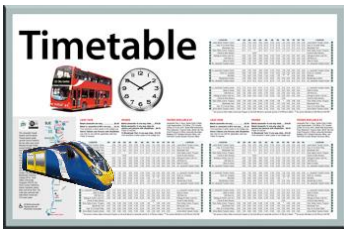


We experience lots of good things about the internet every day.

Several MWP's use social networking sites.



Some surf the web for information.



Some check things like train times.



Some use the web for buying things.



But we don't all use the internet. Very few of us are able to use it without someone's help and support. Some of us have no access or are scared of it.



In this White Paper Members of the Worcestershire People's Parliament (MWP's) ask questions about the 'Future Lives' changes.



We also say what we think is needed if the people we represent are to get the best deal.



We hope that the White Paper helps you think about this important subject.

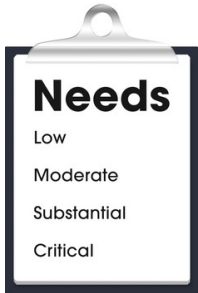




Our questions

We looked at two parts of Future Lives:

1. Promoting health and independence



2. Assessment for Care



The County Council wants more people to keep themselves healthy and independent by staying healthy and being involved in their communities. It thinks that this will stop people needing their help.



Future Lives says people will use the internet more to find out about services.



We ask,

? How easy is it for people with learning disabilities to access the internet?



A good and reliable broadband connection is not cheap. In shared houses it means everyone has to contribute.



Computers in the library may only be available for a short time.



People are worried about privacy in public places.



People are worried about their private information being safe on the internet.



With less money, fewer people and places, how will people get help to overcome these problems?



Future Lives says there will be a website where people can find details of volunteers to help them.

We ask,

? If people need help to use the internet in the first place, what use is a website for finding volunteers?

One of our MWP's phoned the County Council and pretended they were supporting a person with learning disability. They asked where to get help with online assessments.



They were told to go to Carewise:

<http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/worcestershire/directory/home.page>

At one of our meetings we used a laptop to see if Carewise would help us. We noticed all these things:



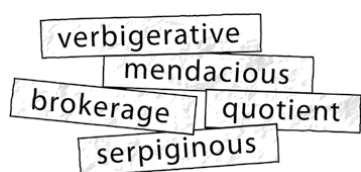
- The letters on all the pages are very small and there is a lot to read.



- It is not in Easy Read, which means that there are no pictures and images to support the words.



- It wasn't easy to decide which button to click.



- As we clicked from one page to another the words got harder to understand, there was less information and fewer pictures.



- The first sentence on the final page read, “Over the next few months this feature will be developed to provide information on issues of interest to people with a learning disability.” There was no information.

Carewise has been going since April 2013.

? With less money to spend, how will the County Council make this service better?



Future Lives says people will get support to use the internet through voluntary groups and at the library.

We ask,

? How can we make sure we can keep our information private when using the internet in public places?

We like to use the library. Often there are helpful members of staff there. But often they are very busy and can only give us a little time. Getting started on the internet is not the biggest problem we have. We need to know that there are people we can trust who can give us enough time. Otherwise we won't want to go.



Future Lives says that in future the County Council will have to do lots more assessments.

To let social workers concentrate on more complicated cases, they want people to do self assessments. They want them to do this online. This includes financial assessments.



They will also do some by phone.

We ask,

? Will forms be easy to understand and in Easy Read?





? If social workers are only dealing with more complicated cases, what training and skills will people doing phone assessments have?



? How can we make sure we can keep our information private when using the internet in public places like the library?



? What will be done to help people who are worried about identify theft and internet security?



Our ideas

MWPs have collected ideas about what adults with learning disability need if they are going to use the internet to find out information about services and assessments.



➤ We need people who know us to help with face to face assessments



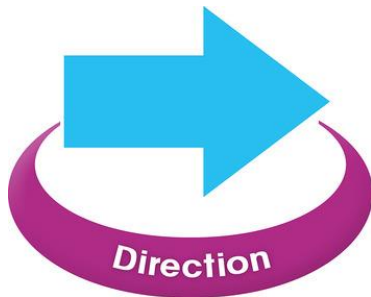
➤ We need good, cheap training courses so that people can practice and get confident.



- We need people that we can trust who have skills to help us find out information about services.



- We like using libraries but we need someone there who has time and skills to help us find information.



Our Next Steps



- We will take our White Paper to self-advocacy groups all over the county



- We will send copies to the County Council and Health organisations and Housing providers and voluntary groups



- We will send copies to the papers , radio and TV



We will invite people to our People's Parliament

- On Friday 31st January 2014
- at County Hall



At the end of the Parliament we will ask commissioners and providers to make Pledges about how they will improve their plans.



Get involved!



To give us your ideas please contact our Coordinator, Ian Craigan.



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