

Comments of Richard Mills, Research Director of Research Autism, on Haringey Council's proposed rationalisation of adult social care services using the 'reablement model' *

1. There is no evidence to support this approach and in the case of autism, where an informed and nuanced approach is essential, I would be very concerned about potential harm. I have not come across 'Reablement' via the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (Nice) or the Social Care or the Social Care Institute for Excellence (Scie).

2. It looks to me be something of a fad or gimmick - heavily promoted by this company [Gerald Pilkington Associates] - and as with any such approach there is a high risk of bias in the way that the benefits are portrayed. No adverse effects are reported, which adds to my scepticism.

3. The personalisation agenda does actually offer quite a lot in the case of autism but as part of a community-based approach and not an alternative to it. It works when people are properly trained and experienced in autism. I have personally been involved in moving people into better circumstances. Such cases do not of themselves provide evidence and I suspect they work more because of such training and experience and also a will and investment to make them work . In every case it provided better outcome and saved money but there was a great deal of investment that went into it. So I would argue that if you want to save money have properly planned and well-designed services that involve parents and autistic people - not accountants.

4. To starve local services of resources and then close them down on the premise that things 'will be better' with the latest fad - whatever that fad might be - has a very bad track record. It almost always results in the burden being borne by disabled people and their families and costs more over time. It must be resisted.

5. Change must be on the basis of comprehensive review of local conditions set against the context of the bigger picture and available unbiased evidence. Winterbourne View is one costly and heinous example of what happens when local services are decimated on grounds of either cost or simplistic and misguided ideology. The fact that there are more people than ever in these places speaks to the demise of local provision.

6. I can foresee a situation where there will be more and more people at home with their parents - who may themselves have support needs as they age - and an increasing use of psychotropic medication - a ticking time bomb that could be avoided.

This is timely as Research Autism is about to put out a call related to the anxiety faced by parents and autistic people around future security. This was based on research we did last year on autism in women and the largest problem identified by the Personal Wellbeing Index (a quality of life measure (Cummins 2005) was around future security. Local provision that involves local stakeholder groups can go a long way to providing practical help and reassurance that people need and I wish you every success in your effort.

*Mills, R., Francis, J., (2010) *Access to social care and support for adults with autistic spectrum conditions(ASC)*, Scie Research Briefing 32, Social Care Institute for Excellence.
<http://www.scie-socialcareonline.org.uk/scie-research-briefing-32-access-to-social-care-and-support-for-adults-with-autistic-spectrum-conditions-asc/r/a11G00000017qo1IAA>