

Communicating the Needs of Older Deafblind People: Campaigning and Politics

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Today's journey

- Explore the UK political context
- Consider the influence of voluntary organisations
- Present a specific SENSE campaign
- Develop some personal action steps

The Political Context

The Role of Central Government

- Legislation – general disability
- Policy and Guidance – Section Seven specific for deafblind
- Standards
- Inspection – star ratings

The Role of Local Government

- Develop local plans with health/other agencies
- Employ social care professionals
- Assess needs of disabled individuals and carers
- Arrange provision of services

National Voluntary Agencies and their Role

- RNIB and RNID
- 1928 National Deafblind Helpers League (now Deafblind UK)
- 1960s National Deafblind and Rubella Handicapped Association (now SENSE)
- Campaign/provide services/develop standards/raise awareness

The Political Influence of the National Deafblind Organisations

Achieving National Recognition of Deafblindness

- 1986 National Deafblind Services Liaison Group formed
- Working Party established
- 1989 Report “Breaking Through” produced - 16 recommendations for service improvements by local authorities

The Impact of “Breaking Through”

- Recognition of a unique third sensory disability – deafblindness
- Increased awareness and understanding
- Nationwide development of initiatives
- DH produces Best Practice guidelines and training packages

Going Further – Achieving Statutory Guidance

- “Yes to Access” Campaign by SENSE and Deafblind UK
- 100 Deafblind people lobby Parliament
- Meeting with Ministers
- DH set up a Working Party and Consultation
- Guidance issued: “Social Care for Deafblind Children and Adults” 2001
- New duties placed on Local Authorities and deafblind people achieve new rights

What do Local Authorities have to do?

- Identify, make contact, record
- Employ a specifically trained assessor
- Provide appropriate “dual sensory” services
- Ensure one-to-one support
- Provide information in accessible formats
- Appoint responsible Senior manager

Fill in the Gaps >

www.sense.org.uk/fillinthegaps

Why a campaign on older people?

- A world in which all deafblind people can be full and active members of society
- The majority of deafblind people have an acquired dual sensory loss in later life

Numbers

- 22% of people over 60 have a hearing and sight impairment
- 2 million with hearing and sight loss in the UK

The problem

- Deafblind people entitled to specialist assessment and services
- Older deafblind people often not getting this

Why?

Sense outreach workers identified two problems:

- People don't get referred for help
- When they are referred, older people's teams don't know what support to give

The causes

- Social services divide older people's services from adult services
- Everyone sees sensory loss as a natural part of the ageing process
- People don't know what they/their family member are entitled to

The campaign

- Phase 1 – June 2006
- Targets older people's teams in social services
- Aims to improve their ability to respond to referrals

How?

- Produce a resource pack for older people's teams to help them respond appropriately to referrals
- Encourage sensory teams to make links with older people's teams
- Promote the resource pack at conferences and through specialist media coverage
- Provide some training to older people's teams

Progress

- “As soon as I return to work I will contact sensory requesting shadowing them on visits, learning what’s out there.”
- “Whilst carrying out my assessments I have identified people who come under the deafblind criteria and have referred them on to the sensory services team for a deafblind assessment.”

Phase 2: June 2007 - 2009

Aims to increase the numbers of referrals

- People who work in GP surgeries
- People who work in care homes
- The public, especially those aged 60 - 80

How

- Resource packs for GP surgeries and care homes
- Training for these professionals
- Information for the public about deafblindness and ageing and where to go for help
- Use media, advertising, email campaigns, etc. to get the message across
- The debate on ageing

The future



Now it's up to you!

- What changes for deafblind people are needed in your country?
- What can you do to influence these changes?
- Share one action on a yellow sticky!