

Statement from the National Valuing Families Forum regarding the end of their Department of Health funding

The National Valuing Families Forum was created in 2005 as part of the family carer work of the Valuing People Support Team. It was an acknowledgement from the Department of Health that families had an important voice, and a critical role to play in the lives of people with learning disabilities.

The National Valuing Families Forum worked together with the National Forum of People with Learning Disabilities to support the implementation of Valuing People and Valuing People Now, and following the end of these policies, to make sure that the Government understood the issues affecting people and families across the country and the reality of their lives.

Valuing People was a time of hope for many people with learning disabilities and their families. The Government said people should have rights, inclusion, choice and independence.

Seventeen years on, despite a lot of work, the cuts to support and services that are happening across the country leave people and their families feeling tired, sad and angry. The work and change that Valuing People achieved feels reversed and the voice of people with learning disabilities and their families are no longer seen as important. The parity of esteem for family carers that the Care Act established is undermined by the loss of both these voices.

The funding for both National Forums ended on March 31st 2017. The Government is looking at new ways of working with people with learning disabilities and families. We hope that they will work with people with learning disabilities and their families across the country. We hope that they will hear a range of voices, including from those with the most complex needs, but we are not convinced.

The National Valuing Families Forum will continue. At the moment this will be as an informal network, facilitating an information

exchange whilst we plan and build for the future. We are a national collective of active and committed families. We remain committed to working alongside and in partnership with people with learning disabilities to make rights, inclusion, choice and independence a reality for all people with learning disabilities and their families.

If you want to work with and support us, please get in touch, we would very much welcome you!

You can do this via our Facebook page or Twitter account

Twitter: @natvalfamforum

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Our website is www.nationalforums.co.uk