

Institutionalised Hate Crime, who's accountable?

Many of us at **self direct** watched the Panorama programme Undercover Care: The Abuse Exposed with horror, it was devastating and left us reeling. Some of us couldn't bear to watch; one a parent of someone who has Autism knew the effect it would have on her and decided not to be exposed to the hurt it would inevitably result in. Others didn't want to watch yet another report about care in an institutionalised setting; one of us with over 30 years of experience in the social and health care sector looks back over those years and sometimes wonders if we have learnt anything?

So we still have institutionalised systems of care in the UK, we still have a regulatory body that is unable to detect abuse in institutions, even when this is reported to them directly by a whistle blower. Many are not surprised, how depressing. One of our associates spent some time the morning after the broadcast in a discussion group with a number of disabled people who were surprised at how upset she was. Many of them had experienced similar abuse and said it had been going on for years. One of our associates with a learning disability, Di Lofthouse MBE, has worked with the police to raise the awareness of hate crime against disabled people. What we witnessed on the programme was described as torture; it was and is Institutionalised Hate Crime.

So what do we do about it, who's accountable? Do we find someone guilty and decide the job is done?

Yes those found guilty of these alleged crimes should pay the highest penalty possible and those responsible for not dealing with the reported abuses should be subjected to the appropriate professional penalties, including dismissal. But these actions alone will not be enough to ensure this does not happen again.

An institutionalised system of care is the problem, power and control over someone's life is in the wrong place and enough is enough. We need to stop putting people into these institutions; we need to free those people who are locked away in them, so that they are free to live as equal citizens in the community.

At **self direct** we welcome like minded people and organisations to join us who want to change where the power and control lies. Decision making, power and control over someone's life, should be with the person who needs support or when appropriate people should be supported with decision making by people around them that love them, know them well and care about them. This is called Self Directed Support and is one of the cornerstones of the Government's Personalisation agenda.

What we saw on the programme left us shocked and angry, now we all must work together to turn those feelings into action so that, as one of our associates said, "some good must come from this".

1. We need to put a stop to institutionalised systems of care now and accelerate the move to Self Directed Support.

2. At **self direct** we already work alongside organisations that share this vision and want to make it happen as quickly as possible for all people that need support to live their lives with dignity and respect, we need like minded people and organisations to sign up to this vision.
3. Regulation and Inspection in its present form is not the answer, which has been made clear.
4. Power and control needs to be with people that need support and/or with people that know them well, love them and care about them; their friends and families.

The people who carried out these horrendous acts are responsible for their actions and need to be dealt with by the law.

If we do nothing working together to change the institutionalised system of care that allowed this to happen we are all accountable for the sort of Institutionalised Hate Crime we were shown this week.

On behalf of all at self direct

Don Derrett, Chief Executive, self direct

Notes to the editor:

Founded 3 years ago, **self direct** is a social enterprise, a national organisation that works with social and health care professionals in provider organisations, Local Authorities and Health Authorities across the UK.

self direct people include people with real life experience of how services affect lives who work alongside professionals as equal experts to deliver training and consultancy. Our aim is to change the way support is provided so that people that need support self direct that support and live their lives in a way that makes sense to them. We do this by promoting changes to the social and health care market place to develop and implement the model of Self Directed Support.

self direct offers the opportunity for like minded organisations and people to become members of **self direct** and our first members only meeting is in Oct. 2011 in York.

Next month, in July, **self direct** becomes an international organisation as we start working with provider organisations in Australia and help to set up **self direct Australia**, which will be hosted by the National Council for Intellectual Disability in its first year.

For further information including talking to individuals and family members about their experiences contact

Don Derrett

Chief Executive

self direct

York Eco Business Centre

Amy Johnson Way

York YO30 4AG

Contact no: 07814574307, email don@selfdirect.org

Or visit our website at www.selfdirect.org