

NDA Annual Conference 6th October 2009

Members of the National Federation secretariat attended the NDA (National Disability Authority) Annual conference in Dublin on the 6th October 2009. It was a one day conference and the subject of the conference was *"Promoting Independent & Community living for people with Intellectual Disabilities"*

The conference opened at 9:30am with a welcoming address from Siobhan Barron, Director of the NDA who talked about the aims of the conference and what would be happening during the day

Then the person who would chair the morning session spoke about the presentations that would be made during the morning session.

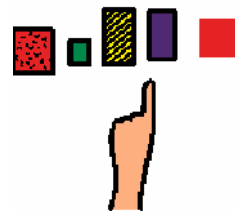
The first presentation was made by Professor Jim Mansell from the Tizard Centre, University of Kent UK. He spoke about how community living for people with disabilities was far less expensive than institutions or clustered housing.

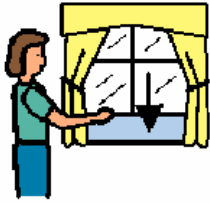
The next presentation was made by Dr. John Agosta from the State of Oregon USA. He spoke about how only 11 states in the USA now have people with disabilities in institutions and that they will continue to work until there are no institutions left open.



There was a 30 minute coffee break

After the coffee break there were three more presentations. The first was by Lisa Gregg-Herrret who runs a company called Choice Support in the UK. She had worked in an institution/hospital for people with disabilities in the 1980's and had been involved in closing the hospitals and moving people to group homes in the 1990's. She found that while doing this work that people were not being put where they wanted to be so she set up Choice Support in order to work with both staff and people who used services to get people to where they wanted to be.





The next presentation was by Marie Zura & Christine Lampard. Marie Zura is the Director of Developmental Services at the Howard Centre in the state of Vermont USA who worked to close Vermont's only institution that was called the Brandon Training School and return the residents to the community. Christine Lampard who lived for several years in the Brandon Training School before moving out into the community is now living independently with the support of Safety Connection which was a system set up by Marie. Christine spoke about having good neighbours and being able to come and go from her own apartment.

The next presentation was given by Mary Kealy, CEO of Brothers of Charity Clare. Mary spoke about changing people's lives and how it is done with one person at a time. She spoke about how the service changed from supporting people in a centre in Ennis to supporting people in their own home towns and villages.



There were some questions before the lunch break

After lunch there was one more presentation before we broke into Parallel sessions. This was by the inclusive Research Network who were presenting the findings from a survey entitled Where We Live which was done during the year. The survey was supported by the National Institute for Intellectual Disability and the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies. There were 11 co-researchers who carried out 43 interviews around the country. The co-researchers were based in Clare, Cork Dublin, Monasterevin, Galway, Roscommon and Waterford. There were 16 males and 27 females. There were 45.5% between the ages of 20-35, 36.6% between the age of 36-50, 19.5% between the ages of 51-65 and 2.4% under 20. Most people lived at home with family, some lived in a service and others shared a house with a friend.



Understanding the results

- Not enough services for those who want independent living.
- People would like choose where they live & who they live with
- Attitudes of families need to change.
- There should be support in place to make it easier to be independent
- There aren't enough opportunities for people's voices to be heard.

After this presentation we all broke into parallel sessions with 4 presentations in each Brian and Breda went to different sessions.

Brian went to session C Innovative models on community living which included the following presentations

A New Residential Model

This was a presentation given by a Clinical Psychologist & a Social Care worker from St Michael's House. They spoke about a new model of residential service as some people are still in inappropriate settings



Direct payments; a model of Independent living for people with Intellectual disabilities This was a presentation given by the Centre for Independent Living. The speakers talked about the benefits of direct payments and the barriers that have to be overcome.

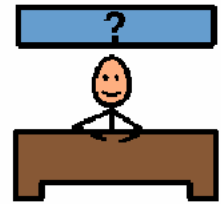


Contract Families; A new way forward for family and community living. This was a presentation given by speakers from Ability West and Brothers of Charity Galway who came together 10 years ago where families take a person with a disability on a respite basis and are given an amount of money per month for taking part.



A Review of Adults Living in Community Group Homes

This was a presentation given by the Health Research Board on the statistics relating to adults living in Community group homes over the last 10 years.



Written by Brian Donohoe National Federation of Voluntary Bodies