

A Place Called Home: What kind of Home is Best and How Services can get you there.

Presented by Dr. Brian McClean, Brothers of Charity Services Roscommon

Presented at the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies Master Class “Inclusive Living Options for People with Intellectual Disability” Wednesday, 24th March, 2010.

In the past fifteen years there has been increased trend in individualisation and personalisation of supports for people with intellectual disabilities, and person centred approaches have come to dominate the rhetoric and mission statements of service providers. However, almost half of all Irish people with intellectual disabilities continue live in large residential settings. Research in the UK shows smaller dispersed community-based housing models are associated with better performance and more positive outcomes than either larger residential facilities or group homes (Hatton and Emerson, 1996). These differences have been found for people with mild intellectual disabilities, severe and profound intellectual disabilities, people with multiple disabilities and people with severe challenging behaviour. The findings prompt the question; if smaller, more personal models of service produce better outcomes, without significant increase in cost, what changes are needed for services to become more person-centred? Recent research evaluating the effectiveness of person centred planning (Robertson, Emerson, Hatton et al, 2006) found modest positive changes, at best, in terms of the number and variety of community based activities and non-inclusive social activities, but no change in stronger markers of social inclusion. The present paper presents preliminary findings of an Irish action research project in which the effectiveness of 46 person centred planning processes was studied. Approximately half the participants made effective transitions to a home of their choosing. This paper offers some insights into the features of effective person centred planning, and therefore the transformations services need to make to become more person centred.