

Westminster Briefing

**Implementing the Independent Living Strategy:
Delivering Choice and Control for Disabled People**

Westminster Briefing, in partnership with the **House Magazine**, presents a series of events aimed at providing a forum for practitioners, local policymakers and civil servants to debate key issues with leading figures from within Westminster, Whitehall and Local Government.

Title: Implementing the Independent Living Strategy: Delivering Choice and Control for the Disabled
Date: Wednesday, 9th July 2008
Time: 10.40am – 2.00pm
Venue: London, Westminster

“Disabled people should have the same choice and control over how they live their lives as everyone else. The Strategy is unique as it was developed in partnership with disabled people from the outset, to ensure it reflects their real life experiences and has drawn on their expertise to identify how to address the barriers they face”.

Rt Hon James Purnell MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, 3rd March 2008

“User-led Organisations are key to achieving independent living for disabled people. Today’s announcement is a step toward a more self-sufficient system for disabled people to lead their own lives, with the availability of advocacy support if it is needed. The best practice resulting from the organisations receiving this grant will be shared to ensure every locality has the chance to develop and have access to a user-led organisation”.

Ivan Lewis MP, Minister for Care Services, 3rd March 2008

The recently launched cross-governmental *Independent Living* strategy underlines the Government’s commitment to supporting disabled people. It aims to provide more choice and control over how their needs will be met as well as putting in place measures to tackle barriers in accessing health, housing, transport, and employment opportunities. It is designed to make a real and measurable impact on the lives of disabled people with a commitment to monitor its impact, year-on-year, in partnership with disabled people.

Delegates at this *Westminster Briefing* will have the opportunity to consider how the strategy will be implemented, its implications and the way forward to fully achieving the goals of “independent living” for disabled people. These and other key issues to be discussed, include:

- Will the strategy meet the aspirations of disabled people and is there still a need for legislation? Are there enough resources and levers for disabled people to influence swifter local progress and accessibility of services?
- How can national policy and local grass-roots delivery be better harmonised?
- Will the awareness campaign bring clarity to practitioners and disabled people about what “independent living” actually means and what is required to meet it? Will the strategy reach seldom heard groups?
- Will disabled people have adequate advocacy rights? How will the 2010 target of each locality having a user-led organisation modelled on existing CILs (Centres for Independent Living) be achieved?
- Is the performance framework robust enough to ensure that the “independent living” targets are being met?

Delegates will be drawn from a wide range of stakeholders, including disability, welfare, social services, health, housing, employment and transport practitioners and officers in local authorities; local, regional and national disabled people health service providers; relevant central government departments and bodies; disabled charities and associations; advocacy groups and any organisation that has an interest in the *Independent Living* strategy.

All Westminster Briefings take place within close proximity of the Palace of Westminster; a light breakfast will be served upon arrival with a networking lunch to follow proceedings.

Places on our briefings are strictly limited; I advise you, therefore, to book as early as possible to secure your delegate place(s).