



Active Support

# network news

Spring 2009



## Here's to Active Support



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# Just ordinary lives

Interview: Michelle Williams. Photos: Darren Whitby

**G**wyn has had support from Cartrefi Cymru for ten years. He's a busy man and, while making us a cup of tea, he talked about his day-to-day life.

"Sometimes I like doing the potatoes with staff. Cutting up... and cutting the carrots. I like putting the bins out – they went out last night. They have to go out at night because they come very early in the morning. I like putting the [re] cycling out. And I do the rota – putting the marks on the board. The crosses are for anybody doing the sleep-in.

"I like changing my bed a lot. Sometimes I do a toilet with one of the staff – with Maureen. I can't do a lot, but I clean it up. I put the Hoover around before I go to day centre.

"Do you prefer watching someone else doing it or doing it yourself?" we asked.

"I like doing it", he said emphatically. "It's alright, Ashley does a bit then I do a bit. Share it. I like to do a lot but I can't do it all".

Gerwyn Jones, a support worker for four years, says that Gwyn's doing a lot more for himself these days.

"He hooovers round. He strips his own bed and puts the bottom sheet on. As he's just got the use of one hand we tend to go up and support him in making the rest of the bed. Now he's cracking on with what he can do himself and then coming down and saying 'Look, I've done this, can you come and give me a hand with the

rest'."

But behind Gwyn's ordinary life is a lot of thought, planning and commitment, and much of Gwyn's obvious engagement with life is down to Active Support. For Gerwyn the Active Support training was an eye-opener that made him think about how he was working, and the emphasis on 'holding back' rather than 'taking over' has made his job even more rewarding.

"It's one of the best jobs I've ever had. I've just been working in factories and things like that. Something like this is really good, especially with Active Support. You can see the two more able people living here are doing a hell of a lot more around the house. You notice as well that they're starting



to enjoy it. With Gwyn, you'd ask him to do it, now he's asking you 'Can I do this now?' and 'Do you want help with that?'

"You can see then that, gradually, people do more for themselves and are more single minded. Gwyn now goes up and makes his own cup of tea and things like that and he gets on with a sandwich. Before, staff would be buttering the bread for him but now it's just that little holding the plate for him - that's all he needs. He gets on with it himself.

Gwyn calls out, "Cup of tea anyone?"

### A wider perspective

We asked Susan Jones, the area manager, what the general reaction of the other staff had been to Active Support.

"For some staff it was like the light had been switched on", she told us. "It was, like, 'Oh yes! That's what we should be doing! That's what we're getting paid for. Not to do for but to do with'.

"They find the paperwork a lot easier too. Originally, we had a lot of different plans set up so it was a lot of paperwork. Active Support has merged everything together so it's all in one file instead of 'You have to go here for this and there for that'. It's a lot easier".

Like many people, she has good things to say about the ARC Active Support training.

"It was excellent. Excellent training. I first had the training about 15 years

ago but what's happened over the years is key people who were trained in Active Support have left or moved on in their role, so we lost it a bit. I'd like to thank Christine and everybody involved for providing us with the training and the work that Christine does after as well. Christine is at the end of the phone if we need any advice".

Wendy Wines, area manager for Bridgend, is also pleased. She feels Active Support has raised the quality of services and hopes that it will develop throughout the company. Lynne Morris, the Participation and Quality Development, officer agrees. They have both seen individual service users making huge strides in what they can do and in their confidence and self-motivation.

Wendy said, "I think the training was very good and a good motivator for staff. It certainly starts people thinking about their job role and their attitudes and values".

Someone else who would recommend the training is support worker Rhys Gatis. He refers to it as "insightful" and feels it is key to the work that he does.

"You can get sidelined with keeping everything nice and clean and concentrating too much on that and not concentrating on getting the service users involved in everything to do with their own home. It's a lot more rewarding when you do something with the service user rather than having them there watching".



Gwyn & Gerwyn enjoy a cup of tea

"It's one of the best jobs I've ever had. Something like this is really good, especially with Active Support".



Wendy Wines, Darren Whitby, Rhys Gatis and Michelle Williams

“For some staff it was like the light had been switched on... It was like, ‘That’s what we should be doing! Not to do for, but to do with.’”

He’s seen the people he supports becoming more motivated and more engaged with general life but it isn’t only the service users who have had their confidence built up.

“I think it can give staff the confidence to go and do new activities and involve the service users with those activities. When you’re working in a team in a home, you can get bogged down in all the paperwork and the running of the home and you can almost... not forget that the service users are there, but forget to involve them in everything to do with their own home.

“A lot of staff aren’t sure how to start to carry things out or what exactly they can do. I would never have thought that Active Support would involve something as simple as hand-on-hand support. But with the training you see that and you hear about it and you get confidence.

“When we all came back from the training we had a lot more ideas about what we should be doing. What we could be doing. I was doing things in more detail and organizing

it better. It gives the staff confidence. You get bogged down in all the other training you do. You’ve got Health and Safety, POVA, all this training but none of it involves training to do with the service user directly”.

The gentleman Rhys supports uses a wheelchair and has little communication. Rhys has found that hand-on-hand support has meant that he is now much more involved in everyday life.

“It’s simple things like helping him unzip his own coat when he comes back from day services. Hand-on-hand again. Hand-on-hand to polish his room. In the past, he’d always be there when you’d do the activity but you wouldn’t think of getting him involved with actually doing it.

“Now, even though he can’t mow the lawn he’ll come outside when I’m mowing it and he’ll stay by the power lead so he’s involved in the activity because it’s his house and it’s his garden. Before, he’d probably stay in the house or maybe he’d go out in the garden, but he wouldn’t be near the lawn mower. Also, this way he’s

getting the sounds of the mower. He’s definitely involved more in it”.

We visited another person receiving Active Support from Cartrefi. Tina opened the door to welcome us in and proudly showed us around the ground floor of her house. Before we sat down to talk, she made us a coffee, and then told us about her life. She’s a very independent lady and has a busy social life.

“I do everything around the house, I do the cooking, choosing the eating and shopping. I like craft and going to Gateway to see friends. And Trinity Church. I Couldn’t go out today because you’re here”.

We apologize.

“Don’t worry one bit!” she says.

Tina’s house is a bit of a meeting place. Friends drop round for a coffee or a bite of supper.

“It’s a friendly house”, she tells us. “One of my friends went to London to see the Queen with one of the staff”.



Christine Harcombe,  
Active Support Co-ordinator

# A Message from Christine:

## Tackling disengagement is key to reducing challenging behaviour

I recently presented at an excellent conference on Person Centred Active Support, organised by the Kent Challenging Behaviour Network. The conference tried to show how, when implemented in a structured way, Active Support can make significant differences to the lives of people with learning disabilities and people with autism.

The emphasis was on frontline support teams, examining opportunities to involve people and enable them to be more effective in their own lives. It also demonstrated how challenging behaviour can be significantly reduced when using Active Support as part of a positive behaviour support programme. One organisation at the conference, Avenues Trust, gave an excellent presentation about their root and branch implementation of Person Centred Active Support.

Early evaluation of pilot sites found that levels of inclusion in everyday activities had increased by 94%. Equally, behaviour that had previously been seen as challenging had reduced by 24%. Person

Centred Active Support had not only improved the lives of people being supported, but it had also improved staff morale, team working and retention of staff. Staff had a better understanding of their role and how to deliver support to each person, and are being supported to do this more effectively by their managers.

**“Reviewing support, to ensure that independence, choice and inclusion are always promoted, is key for enabling individuals to participate fully.”**

In many organisations, managers are beginning to look at the amount of time people are not supported to be engaged in an activity, when, in fact, a person is actually disengaged. This is a crucial evaluation of whether or not the person being supported is really motivated to be involved or if they are just there as an onlooker?

Monitoring ‘chilling out’ and extended periods of ‘relaxing’ is also important as they can be another form of disengagement. This is especially pertinent as some services are now recognising that times of disengagement correlate with times when behaviour can become challenging.

Reviewing support, to ensure that independence, choice and inclusion are always promoted in an activity is key to providing the best opportunities for enabling individuals to participate fully. This will include presenting new and exciting activities, as well as supporting people with their own day to day responsibilities, and ensuring that they are not being overlooked for extended periods of time. These first steps of actually looking at what is happening in our services are the first steps to enabling people who need support to truly have a valued and exciting life.

For further information about the ARC Active Support Project, visit [www.arcuk.org.uk/wales](http://www.arcuk.org.uk/wales), or contact me at [christine.harcombe@arcuk.org.uk](mailto:christine.harcombe@arcuk.org.uk), telephone 07701099861.

**V**alues in Care is a small organization in South Wales that specializes in supporting people with complex learning disabilities and challenging needs, particularly those with Autism and Asperger's Syndrome. They became interested in Active Support about three years ago through the ARC project and, after piloting Active Support in one of their services, company director Tina Donovan has decided to roll out Active Support across the whole organization.

"We want people to be as independent as possible and to be able to live their lives to their full potential. Active Support encourages people to do that and I'd like it to be part of our model of support so that everyone in Values in Care can benefit from it".

complacent about it, saying 'But we know what they can do already', they weren't. They took the challenge on and they've worked really well with people".

People living at Towyn Way had very full vocational programmes – activities that Values in Care develop to build new skills and enable community engagement. Staff were concerned that supporting service users to become more involved in personal care and essential household tasks would mean cutting down on activities outside the home, so the management had to find a solution:

"We realized that taking part in tasks inside the home can have as much value as being out in the community, so we built it into the vocational programme. That meant that while

they're doing it they're doing it for themselves, much more so than if somebody has done it for you".

Christine Rees, the senior support worker at Towyn Way, has gained a lot personally from the new way of working and pinpoints self-confidence as one of the major gains for all of the service users.

"Everyone here has benefitted and they are now far more confident in engaging, interacting and communicating. It is very positive when you see people becoming able to carry out activities more independently. It gives a great deal of satisfaction to that individual, and, as a member of staff, you feel that you've achieved something as well".

# Active Values

## Changing Perspectives with Active Support

Interview: Phil Glyn Williams. Photos: Robbie Morris

The service singled out for the pilot was chosen because the staff team there was well established and stable.

Tina told us, "Towyn Way was the first home we opened and we made a deliberate choice to try Active Support there because we knew we've got a good, committed staff team with no staff turnover. We knew we'd be working with a group of staff who knew the residents very well and, while they could have been

people probably did do a bit less outside, they were learning new skills and doing things for themselves within the home", said Tina.

She is full of praise for the commitment that the staff team has shown towards Active Support.

"They have really championed it", she said. "Visiting professionals have commented on how well people are doing. People take pride in what

Although the method was new to Towyn Way, this wasn't the first time that service manager Alistair Howard had come across Active Support.

"I had the original training with Sandy Toogood, back in the late 90's. It was very innovative at the time and from the point of view of the staff it was something new that they didn't quite understand because traditionally staff had waited hand and foot on residents and that was the ethos of



"If clients are able to do more for themselves it gives them dignity and self-respect".



care at that time. Now the ethos is that we provide support for people to care for themselves in a sense.

“The peculiar thing I remember about it was that it was not so much the residents that had an issue with it. They took to it quite readily. It was the staff who had to change their mindset about working in this new way”.

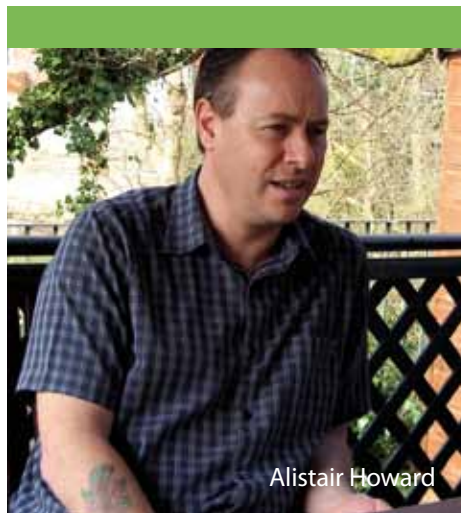
He remembers that it was effective in alleviating issues around challenging behaviours.

“The home I was in had quite challenging people and part of that was down to boredom and a relatively meaningless life. Active Support came along and actually gave people things to do that were meaningful to them. Although it may appear mundane and domestic tasks aren’t particularly exciting, it’s the principle of being involved in your own life that’s important. So that was how we found it at the time. That was ten years ago.

The effects that he noticed ten years ago have been replicated ten years on in Towyn Way and Alistair talks easily about the benefits for people with learning disabilities:

“If clients are able to do more for themselves it gives them dignity and self-respect. I think meaningful engagement also helps to alleviate people’s anxiety and stress and boredom. It makes them less dependent on other people.

“Rather than the environment being a hotel type environment people have ownership of their own lives



Alistair Howard

“Although it may appear mundane and domestic tasks aren’t particularly exciting, it’s the principle of being involved in your own life that’s important”.

and homes. It also means the staff are not there as waiters or waitresses – they’re there to support people. It’s “Active Support”. They’re actively supporting people rather than actively waiting on them”.

We asked Tina Slocombe and Maria Hrycia, support workers at Towyn Way, whether the Active Support training had changed the way they worked. They agreed that it had, changing the focus of their work from care to enabling.

“There’s a lot of household activities that they participate in now that they

didn’t do previously. In the past, he would fetch his washing down to us to sort out. Now, he’s putting his own washing in the machine, putting the powder in himself and asking us which number it is he has to turn the dial to, which is really good. He’ll also transfer it from the washing machine to the tumble dryer and he’ll try and fold it himself now as well”, said Maria.

The move from ‘hotel model’ to Active Support doesn’t just involve a change in mind set for the staff. These may seem like small developments, but they reveal a huge shift in the service users’ attitudes and abilities. Tina told us about the changes she’d seen in two brothers who live at Towyn Way.

“All they would do before was bang a cup to let us know that they wanted a drink and then we would get it for them. Now they’ll go to the cupboard to get a cup and the squash and then bring it to us and, with help, they can do most of it themselves. It’s happening at their father’s house as well”.

Active Support is something that Tina Donovan wants to keep firmly on the agenda.

“We won’t lose the momentum. We’re very pleased with how it’s gone and want to see it cascaded across the rest of the organization. I think if Active Support is management led and you are committed as an organization then you just make sure it happens, through observation, through good management, and through good supervision and leadership – that’s what I believe”.





"I think if Active Support is management led and you are committed as an organization then you just make sure it happens, through observation, through good management, and through good supervision and leadership".

Director, Tina Donovan with Vocational Services Manager, Bob Williams



Interview: Phil Glyn Williams. Photos: Robbie Morris

# You're never too old

Active Support brings new opportunities for older people with a learning disability

**In** previous issues of the News we've found out that Active Support is having a positive impact on the lives of children and young people in Wales. Our visit to Care Management Group showed us that older people with a learning disability are also benefiting.

Twelve months ago CMG made contact with the Tizard Centre and asked for training in Active Support

for their regional managers. Following that, Claire Gunning, the regional director for Wales, asked for our support to train and advise managers in establishing Active Support across their services in South Wales.

Claire's determination to see Active Support in all of their services has come from witnessing the results of implementing the method in a home supporting four older ladies with

learning disabilities.

"I've seen the dramatic changes it can have on people's lives. Meira\* is not a young lady and to see her now in her 60's being able to do things that she's not had the opportunity to do before, I think it's absolutely marvellous. I can see how it improves her self-esteem and allows her to participate, as she should be".





Regional Manager, Claire Gunning

"I believe everybody has the capability to learn so we're supporting people to do new things. I hope to see the people that I'm working with enjoying life and getting more out of life than has previously been assumed that they could. I think that lots of people assume people can't do things but Active Support really shows that people can".

This is something that Joan Maslen, a support worker for three years, would also agree with. She's noticed a new enthusiasm in these older ladies.

"Before we were doing everything for them, but now we're involving them: like in the morning at breakfast they're getting the dishes out and generally helping with the running of the house; like helping to load the washing machine, putting the washing in the dryer. Before, they'd bring their washing down and put it in the basket... now, they want to do things – we don't have to ask. Dusting and polishing.... Iris\* will spray the whole can of polish! But she's participating in something and I think it's really good.

"Instead of sitting around when you're preparing lunch they're involved with preparing the food. They enjoy doing it and it's not a task to them. They're not so bored. They're getting more involved. It's a bit harder sometimes because obviously you could do it quicker yourself but it's better for the service users. I think it is anyway.

The registered manager, Susan Potter thinks Active Support is "fabulous".

"The four ladies here are much more independent than they used to be and Iris especially, she's been leading the way with it and she's brilliant. I think it's fantastic. If you tailor it to each lady's individual requirements they can get so much out of it and you can really see them growing in potential and you can see the things that they do are fabulous. We learn from them to be honest".

Her inspiring vision of the future for the ladies doesn't involve a sedentary retirement in front of the TV!

"I hope that we can go on from this and eventually the ladies should be involved in all decisions around the home but it's more than that. It's about them taking pride in the things that they do and taking pride in their home and in their own bedrooms. It's their house. I'm hoping that they will take it as far as they want to go so we'll go along with them and see where they go".



Registered Manager, Susan Potter

"I'm hoping they will take it as far as they want to go, so we'll go along with them and see where they go".

\* Names have been changed





# Tackling Challenging Behaviour

by Simon Sherriff

**S**imon Sherriff is a behaviour analyst working in the Behavioural Support team within the North Wales NHS Trust. The team consultant is Dr Sandy Toogood, one of the pioneers of Active Support, so the method has played a significant role in their services for many years. The team works primarily with people with learning disabilities in Wrexham, Flintshire and Denbighshire whose behaviour challenges services.

Referrals to the team are typically made when a person's behaviour is placing them at risk of being moved into more specialized services, often out of county.

Simon sees 'challenging behaviour' as an attempt to communicate and has found that Active Support can help to improve communication between the person with a learning disability and staff.

"We often find that when somebody challenges through their behaviour, there's a message there that they are trying to communicate and, for whatever reason, people aren't able to either understand or listen to that message", he said.

"We find that Active Support can do two things: it can work to promote somebody's independence by helping them to explain their message more clearly but it also helps the staff be more responsive – listening to that person's needs and wants. We find that it helps both the clients and their staff teams to work better together".

He has many examples of success, but told us about one in particular:

"There was a gentleman who we worked with about 3 years ago who was living out of county at the time. He had lived in the community locally close to his family but had lost that placement on a previous occasion due to behavioural concerns. He was given an opportunity to take up residence in a house in the local area and it was at that point that we got involved with his staff team and worked quite intensively with them to train them up in supporting this gentleman using the principles of Active Support.

"Now that was a very successful piece of work for this gentleman. Not only did he move back into the area with his staff team, he flourished under that support arrangement and that staff team are still with him, still in the same house and he is very closely involved with the local community and has a very good quality of life in comparison to where he was 3 or 4 years ago".

Simon and a colleague are currently

completing a piece of research that specifically looks at the relationship between Active Support, staff assistance, service user engagement and levels of challenging problem behaviour.

"Although there is a good body of evidence about improved quality of life factors for people who are able to have Active Support in their immediate support network, there's not much researched evidence as to what, if any, effect Active Support has on challenging behaviour. Some say it reduces it, some say it makes no difference, and some say it actually increases it. Our research looks specifically at that question. We're in the final stages and the evidence is looking pretty positive".

It is our hope that the research report will get the attention of both support providers wanting to deal positively with challenging behaviour and Ministers seeking alternatives to expensive Out of County placements.

Simon Sherriff commented, "We want this to be piece of work that will inform services, not for it to be a dusty piece of research. We want to say "Why don't we roll Active Support out as a given for everybody? Let's get this model right, help service users say what they want in their lives, listen to people. Support them appropriately and there's less need for inappropriate behaviour".

# Learn How to Be and You Will Know What To Do!

Andy Bradley asks “How good are you at being with the people you support?”

**Do** you think of Active Support as something else to do? Is it programmed into the rota – another task to add to checking the petty cash tin balances or making sure the fridge is at the right temperature?

Active Support is not about doing – it is an expression of togetherness.

When a worker tunes in to being fully with a person they support without judgement or expectation and they give that person the gift of their full attention then what we call Active Support is possible.

I learned, when working with people with profound and multiple learning disabilities that this togetherness is not the norm. The pervasive culture is about doing things to people rather than doing things with them; it is often not about being together.

Many people have learned about Active Support with the help of skilful and committed teachers – but some are not living what they have learnt; they do not embody the values of inclusion and togetherness. Why? It is important to step back and reflect on the dynamics that lead to separation and functional ways of working.

What is the core purpose of the place we call a service? Is to provide

a service – keeping people safe and clean, looked after and maintained – or is it to be ‘of service’... where the voices of people are honoured, where we deepen our understanding and relationships over time and where we celebrate and model the value of being together?

**“Active Support is not about doing – it is an expression of togetherness”.**

Being together requires a shift of culture, intention and awareness. Workers must be focused and present – mindful of their core purpose which is to be with the people they support. This requires a raising of self awareness – workers becoming aware of their motives, their needs and their way of being – are they cold and functional, authoritarian and directive or smothering and overprotective? These unhelpful, controlling ways of being are very common – if a worker inhabits one of these places, togetherness (and Active Support) is impossible.

I have witnessed some people who are ‘doing Active Support’ without the shift of awareness from providing



Andy Bradley

a service to being of service. It pains me to see people being made to load dishwashers and open letters by workers who don't seem to want to be with them – if it were me being supported in this way, I think I would rather be alone.

All of us need people who want to be with us – being with people you trust, doing things you enjoy which make you feel good is one of the foundations of a happy life. The core purpose of all services must be questioned – until we deepen our awareness and learn to BE TOGETHER there can only be more separation.

Andy Bradley is the Director of Frameworks 4 Change, an organisation committed to “creating togetherness”. To find out more about their work and their resources (including My Life Plan and the DVD ‘It’s My Life, Not Just Your Job!’ visit [www.frameworks4change.co.uk](http://www.frameworks4change.co.uk)

# It Takes More than Training

Rhian Jones on what it takes to sustain Active Support in your organisation.

I first came across Active Support in the mid 1990's as part of a research project run by the Welsh Centre for Learning Disabilities. I was working as a support services director, providing a supported living service to more than 60 adults with a learning disability. I was impressed by the way in which Active Support provided a structure that really helped to achieve some of our existing aims. Although we had been working hard before Active Support was introduced, we struggled to translate our aims into outcomes for our service users. Active Support gave us a set of clear working methods to promote participation and enable people to become more independent and have a better quality of life. It worked because it helped staff to understand how to interact positively and organise themselves so that they provided well thought out, person centred support.

Research has continued to evidence the increase in participation and control over day-to-day living that implementing Active Support can achieve; and the benefits of Active Support have been well documented on an international level. Indeed,

Active Support is one of the few evidence-based approaches available to us – in short we know it works if it is done properly.\* However, the way in which Active Support is established and maintained within an organisation has been less well investigated or reported on. Many commentators seem to agree that Active Support can be difficult to maintain, but to date no research has been done to clearly identify why.

**“Active Support can be difficult to maintain. Simply training front-line staff and their managers is not enough to sustain it”.**

For the last few years I've undertaken a consultancy role, training teams and managers from different organisations, and providing advice and support to ARC. During this time I have found myself and many

others asking the same question – why are services finding long term implementation so difficult? In response, several themes have emerged that may help us to focus on what is needed for effective implementation and maintenance. Talking and listening to the experiences of managers and teams has high-lighted ideas and good practice, all of which point to the fact that simply training front-line staff and their managers in Active Support is not enough to sustain it. I'll try to summarise some of these:

## **Developing a strategic approach**

For it to work long term, a strategic approach is needed to embed Active Support into the culture of an organisation, and sign-post it as 'the way we do things around here.' Incorporating clear aims and objectives regarding Active Support implementation into Business Plans and Operational Work Plans are essential. Strategic monitoring and review processes increase the likelihood of successful implementation. At the end of the day, you can't solve all management



problems through training; a more informed whole organisational approach is essential.

### Strong leadership

In organisations that are making good progress, Active Support is understood and recognised as the key to achieving the valued based outcomes for service users at all organisation levels from the Chief Executive, to the Human Resources Department, to all managers and staff. The process of implementing Active Support requires all staff, including those at senior levels, to be knowledgeable about the model in enough detail to reward good practice, maintain correct incentives, and create policies and systems that help managers to maintain it. Chief executives, directors, and operational managers need to recognise when their organisations fail to achieve a good quality of life for service users and understand what to do to improve it.

### Inclusion in workforce development programs

Those organisations who have been successful in maintaining Active Support have adopted a strategic approach that included changing workforce development plans and recruitment processes to make Active Support central to all job roles. Job descriptions and induction programmes were changed to prioritise Active Support as the first thing that new staff learn about.

### Development of Supervision and Feedback systems

At the heart of Active Support is the practice of 'on the job' role modelling

and observation by managers with staff working with the people that they support. Managers are trained to think about the level of support needed, and how effectively staff are providing that support. Time and time again we hear that this element has not been undertaken, either due to the assumption of senior managers that 'they do that anyway', or because the managers themselves feel they do not have the time, and possibly the skills or confidence, to provide feedback effectively.

**"Active Support may have its critics, but considering the positive impact... it is well worth the effort to get it right".**

Organisations need to provide training and supervision structures that encourage and develop managers' skills in practice as well as on paper. In short, managers need to be practice leaders, who can spend time with staff and the people they support in the house and community, showing staff what to do, rather than being administrators, trapped in offices wading through piles of paper.

### Relevant Quality Assurance Processes

Staff need to remain motivated and keep focussed on the effectiveness of their support. The development of quality assurance processes that identify good practice and reward it can really help this to happen. Regular feedback from more senior



### About... Rhian Jones

Rhian Jones has worked for people with a learning disability for almost 20 years.

She spent a decade as a key member of the Director's team for one of the largest providers of supported accommodation in Wales. She led the implementation of person centred approaches, and was responsible for audit and evaluation, the protection of vulnerable adults, and training and innovation.

Rhian is now working as a freelance consultant and trainer in Health and Social Care, advising organisations on policy, procedures, management and workforce development.

She has designed bespoke training for Providers' and Local Authorities, and has a special interest in Person Centred Planning, Active Support, Values for Inclusion, Safeguarding Adults, Quality Assurance and Inspection.

managers, recognition of problem areas, and the support to improve them are required elements for quality assurance processes that mean something to staff because they help them focus on and improve their practice.

And finally, managers have stressed the importance of ongoing advice and support through regular internal surgeries and forums designed to share good practice, problem solve, provide practical examples of effective paperwork, and provide them with moral support and motivation.

Active Support may have its difficulties and its critics, but considering the proven positive impact for people with a learning disability, it is well worth the effort to get it right. I'm looking forward to continuing working on these issues in the future and would be delighted to hear the views of other people on the best ways of managing Active Support and person centred approaches in general.

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\*eg., Bradshaw et al. (2004); Jones et al. (2001a, 2001b); Mansell, Felce, Jenkins, de Kock & Toogood (1987); McGill & Toogood (1994); Stancliffe,

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Stancliffe, R., Jones, E., Mansell, J. & Lowe, K. (2008) Active Support: A Critical Review and Commentary. *Journal of Intellectual Developmental Disabilities, 33(3)*, 196-214e.

## Coming soon...

# the ARC Active Support Service

In August ARC will be launching its UK-wide Active Support service, offering:

- Active Support interactive training for staff and managers
- work-based coaching and mentoring,
- implementation planning and troubleshooting
- and much more.

To find out more about ARC's Active Support Services and/or request a costed proposal tailored to your organisation's needs, contact:

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For further information about Active Support and ARC Cymru, or to feedback about the newsletter please contact:

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