



# VALUES INTO ACTION SCOTLAND

## NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2014

### Everything looking rosy in the garden?

**N**ORMALLY when I set out to pull together our newsletter, I have so many bad news stories to choose from and struggle to find anything good happening in the world.

I am very heartened that we have been so busy at VIAS over the last six months that we have lots of positive things to tell you. The My Life, My Way team have been all over the country delivering training and planning exciting projects for 2014. Diversity Works 4 U has developed some great employer partnerships and will be stepping up our programme of training in 2014.

Our new quality, learning and development programme via Glasgow's The Life I Want has started with a bang

and you will hear more about this later in the newsletter. We are also managing to slot in two Young Scotland's Got Talent events before 31 March 2014. As you will know, we deliver Young Scotland's Got Talent in partnership with Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability and many other local partners. Scottish Government has given us a grant to hold these events, the aim being to build the capacity of local partners to run Young Scotland's Got Talent events as a rolling annual programme.

We are working to full capacity to make a difference but it is within a difficult context. In the wake of the most recent UK budget, the Organisation of Economic and Social Development has

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warned that austerity measures are likely to hurt society's poorest.

Closer to home, Learning Disability Alliance Scotland reported recently on the hidden effects of social care cuts in Scotland. Over 20,000 older people, people with learning disabilities and others are no longer getting vital social support since the start of the 2007 economic recession.

It is within these challenging and worrying times that we operate, striving to do our best for the people we

represent. All is not rosy in the garden but we will continue to play our part in planting seeds of hope for the future of people with learning difficulties and individuals on the autistic spectrum living in Scotland.

We thank you for travelling with us on this journey.

*Norma Curran Editor*



## Alex's Life, Alex's Way

**M**Y NAME is Alex Grant. I attend Cantraybridge College. In September 2013, I secured a work placement at McRae and Dick.

I love this and apart from giving me valuable work experience, it has allowed me to work on the employability part of my SVQ in the area that will be relevant for my future goal.

The garage have been impressed by my attendance, timekeeping and motivation as well as my ability to follow instruction.

They will have an apprentice position coming available next August, which

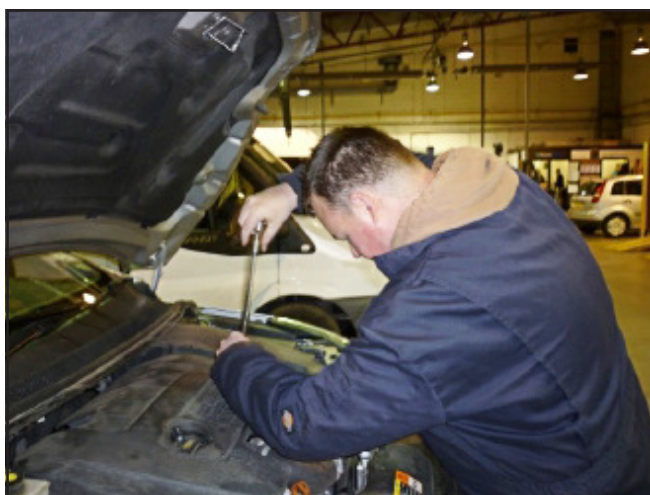
provided everything continues to go well I hope to go for.

I attended a training course in November run by Catherine Hurrell of VIAS. It was on Employment Planning and it was held at the Smithton Church in Inverness.

I found the course to be very interesting and informative and it helped me to think about planning my future and how to progress with my work experience and take steps towards my goal of doing an apprenticeship and becoming a mechanic.



*With my certificate from VIAS*



*Getting In some practice*

# UK austerity measures

**A**USTERITY MEASURES are likely to hurt society's poorest, the Organisation of Economic and Social Development warns.

The organisation says that the pace of cuts likely to intensify over next year and urges government to do more to tackle inequality

*The OECD said capping benefit levels could 'entrench poverty for families who depend on income support'.*

*Poverty will become ever more entrenched in Britain if the government does not maintain social spending to protect the most vulnerable, the Organisation of Economic and Social Development has warned.*

The Paris-based organisation said austerity measures and benefits cuts were more likely to hurt the poor in the UK than in most other OECD countries because its

benefits system is more strongly targeted at low income groups. The pace of cuts will intensify between now and 2015, the OECD noted in its "society at a glance 2014" report.

A rise in youth unemployment and poverty in recent years also suggested the government needed to do more to help young people leaving education, the organisation said.

"The government has already implemented certain strategies for youth not in employment, education or training (NEET). Such programmes will need to be maintained and developed for the foreseeable future as high NEET rates persist."

All member countries were urged to take action to tackle rising inequality and social divisions. Angel Gurría, OECD Secretary General, said: "The economic recovery alone will not be enough to heal the social divisions and

help the hardest-hit bounce back. Governments need to put in place more effective social policies to help their citizens deal with future crises. They also need to avoid complacency and persevere in their reform efforts as the recovery takes hold."

There are 48 million people looking for work in OECD countries, 15 million more than in September 2007.



Photograph: Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

The number of people living in households without any income from work has doubled in Greece, Ireland and Spain since the onset of the crisis, and risen by 20% or more in Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Slovenia and the United States. Poorer households have lost greater shares of their incomes than the better-off .

The OECD warned there was risk that as the UK government rolls out its Universal Credit scheme and efforts to “make work pay”, policies to stabilise incomes, such as child and working tax credits, should be considered.

It added: “Experience from earlier recessions suggests that there is a risk that many families could remain partly or fully dependent on benefits for extended periods of time.

“Freezing or capping benefit levels and changing the way benefits are adjusted over time means that living



standards of people more dependent on benefits will fall relative to the rest of the population. This might entrench poverty for families who depend on income support.”

While overall unemployment rates in Britain have been lower in recent years compared with other crisis hit countries, Britain recorded the fourth biggest rise among OECD countries in the proportion of people forced to take part-time work when they would prefer to work more, and wages have fallen faster than in other countries, the OECD said.

Average annual household disposable incomes fell to £19,900 in the UK last year from a pre-crisis level of £20,400. Over the same period average disposable incomes were flat in both the European Union and OECD at \$22,900 and \$23,100 respectively.

Relative poverty rates have fallen in the UK however to 10% from 11.3%, but rose slightly in the EU and OECD.

This article was written by Angela Monaghan and first appeared in The Guardian online on Tuesday 18 March 2014.



# Scotland's Inclusion Institute

Scotland's 3<sup>rd</sup> Inclusion Institute, Ayrshire, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>  
September 2014

## Building a stronger more inclusive Scotland

**A** PARTNERSHIP of organisations is planning a third 'Inclusion Institute' for Scotland in early September 2014.

The purpose of the Inclusion Institute is that:

- people will join together, excite and inspire each other to identify the deeper hidden resources in individuals and communities and so strengthen our connections one to another
- we will learn about creative ways and means to realise the gifts and contributions of all
- we can explore how we all live together, actively connecting and then discovering new ways to make things happen

We aim to share best practice in inclusion from around the world in a learning environment conducive to sharing and to inspire and motivate delegates to develop and use what they have learned and the connections they have made in their own communities and lives.

There have already been two Inclusion Institutes held in Scotland – in 2009

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and 2011. With the implementation of the Social Care (Self-Directed Support) (Scotland) Act in 2014, it feels like the right time to run another Institute and we have planned that it will take place in Ayrshire over three days in early September 2014. The



overarching theme of the event will be about 'building more inclusive communities' with a focus in particular at this Institute of how self-directed support and asset based community development can be at the heart of this.

Overall, there will be a total of 240 places at the Institute and based on previous levels of interest we expect

that the event will be fully subscribed. Delegates will come from a wide spectrum of backgrounds and with a diversity of roles and interests and we actively promote this diversity in attendance, though all will have a passion for inclusion. People have variously described the Institute as an 'oasis' and 'safe haven' in which to explore ideas and practice that can

lead to a more inclusive society for all and many of the connections made at previous Institutes have resulted in local action and/or sustained change.

You can follow our planning progress and register an interest on our Facebook page. Just key in **Scotland's Inclusion Institute** and like/ follow us.



# 20,000 lose out because of tightening eligibility criteria



**I**N A NEW REPORT, Learning Disability Alliance Scotland has uncovered the hidden effects of social care cuts in Scotland. Over 20,000 older people, people with learning disabilities and others are no longer getting vital social support since the start of the 2007 economic recession.

By examining Scottish Government statistics and comparing them to the growth in the elderly population we have found that many people who might previously been eligible for



social care services are no longer getting help.

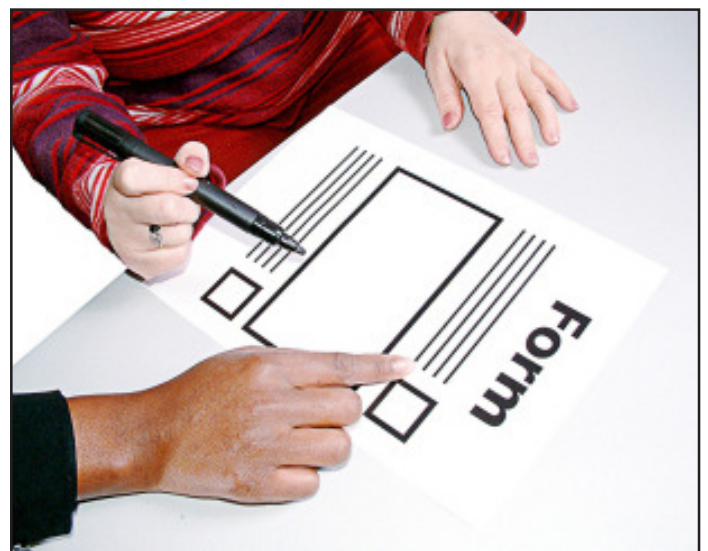
In the last 6 years the numbers getting home care in Scotland have fallen by 11,000 and the numbers in residential care have fallen by 2,000. But at the same time the number of people over 65 has continued to grow. If the same proportion of people were still getting help in 2013

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as were in 2007, a total of 20,000 more people would be getting care at home or residential care.

Learning Disability Alliance Scotland has long argued that the cuts in public spending would not focus on large scale closure of services such as that proposed by Quarriers last month at Seafield School in Ayrshire but would be about smaller changes in the individual's packages of care. These new numbers back this up.

The biggest fall has been in people who would previously have got 4 or less hours of support a week. The Scottish Campaign For A Fair Society carried out a Freedom of Information request into changes in Eligibility Criteria. These are rules which



determines who gets support and who doesn't. We have analysed the replies and it appears that most councils in Scotland have now adopted the new 2009 national criteria.

These new rules are being used to screen out people who need small levels of support to manage their lives. Further, little thought seems to have been given to how councils can support these people to engage with preventative services. If people are not eligible then they are simply signposted to the voluntary sector but few checks are being carried out to make sure people get some help.

We also found that rising care charges are helping to push people into making alternative or no arrangements. Over the last 4 years councils have raised the amount that they get from social care clients in charges by 21% - 3 times the rate of inflation. More people are paying charges and they are now paying more than ever.

Even vital preventative services like Telecare and Community Alarms have

seen the numbers using them decline in the last couple of years as more and more councils start to charge a weekly non means tested amount.

People on benefits or relying on pensions are being increasingly squeezed. People who are offered small amounts of care can often make other arrangements themselves more cheaply or get the help of friends and family to save their money to meet essentials like fuel, food and clothing.

As a result many of the people no longer getting a service will have made their own choice not to engage with formal local authority provision. Others will have been told that they will simply not get a service. This reality remains hidden with many people unable to access support in the community, living quiet, hidden and isolated lives within the community.

This article first appeared in the Learning Disability Alliance Scotland newsletter March 2014.





# Quality Jobs at VIAS!

**W**E ARE DELIGHTED to introduce a new project to you. As part of The Life I Want in Glasgow, we have additional team members. Liz Callaghan joins us as our Quality & Training Coordinator. David Ross and Robbie Robertson are our new Quality Checkers.

The aim of our strand of the partnership is to build the capacity of providers in Glasgow to support people with learning difficulties and individuals on the autistic spectrum to achieve their dreams and goals.

Our strand has two main threads

- providing training according to partner needs
- checking the quality of the services that people with learning difficulties and individuals receive by interviewing people and asking them about their support

The project has got off to a flying start with a range of courses being provided in February and March including outcome focused planning, asset based community development and an introduction to being self-employed.

Our Quality Checkers have been busy too and will, by the end of March, have carried out a full service evaluation.

Liz and Robbie will introduce themselves in our summer newsletter but for now, here is a little bit about David in his own words.

My name is David Ross.

I work with Values Into Action Scotland as a Quality Checker. As part of my role

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I will be interviewing people with learning difficulties and individuals who are on the autism spectrum. I want to make sure that people are getting the help and services they want and need, to try and better themselves and gain the confidence to believe that they can do the things that other people can do. I am very new in this field of employment, although I have been, and still am working in the catering industry. I applied for the position with VIAS, as I feel it is something I really want and have the need to do. I have learning difficulties and I know the hardship that people face on a daily basis. I also have a younger cousin on the autism spectrum, which gave me some more motivation to go for the job help people with learning difficulties and individuals who are on the autistic spectrum. I enjoy swimming, walking, cycling, dog walking, socialising and also being with family. I am also outgoing.



**Students: Emma, Ria, Alexander, Darren, Emma, John, Lewis and Alasdair with their Transition Worker Alison and Catherine from VIAS.**

## My Video App training in Inverness

**O**N THURSDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> of January a team of students and staff from Cantraybridge College attended a Digital C.V. training session, hosted by Catherine Hurrell from Values Into Action Scotland.

We began with introductions and we all had to say what our ideal paid job would be. Some of us were very sure of what we wanted to do; like John who is currently on placement at HMV and enjoys it so much he would like to work there full time; while some of us just had a vague idea.

On flip chart paper we recorded the skills we knew we had first, then the opportunity was given to others to add to the list of skills they had seen in us. We found the positive things that others said about us very encouraging!

We went on to look at how beneficial these skills would be for the careers that we were exploring and then we looked at the main things that employers would be looking for like: reliability, honesty, etc.

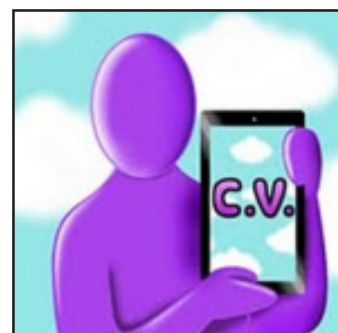
Catherine went on to tell us about the My Video App, showed us how to download the app and how it all worked.

We all had the opportunity to plan what we would say, then make our own recording of our CV.

What we found most helpful about this course was that Catherine demonstrated how to work it, which made it a lot easier for us to understand. We found the app simple to use and felt it would help lots of people, not just those with learning difficulties. We felt that it would improve our chances of getting a job and it is the way forward for the future.



We would recommend this course to others as we found the video CV much easier than trying to do it on paper.



# My Life My Way – Moving Into Year Three



**A**NOTHER VERY successful year on the My Life My Way project (MLMW) is coming to a close. For those of you who are new to our newsletter, the project is funded through the Scottish Government Self Directed Support Strategy Funding for Capacity Building. Since April 2012 we have been delivering training to people who direct their support, families, Personal Assistants and others who support people. The areas we have been working in are Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, Greater Glasgow and Highland.

In year one, we ran courses on core skills for supporting people, such as Health and Safety, Values of Supporting People, Recognising and Preventing Harm and Managing Risk Effectively. Year two saw us begin the delivery of employment related courses.

This year is going to be busier than ever in the MLMW project. We really want to help people make a difference in peoples' lives and give their supporters the skills to help them achieve their maximum level of independence, whether this is at home, in the community or at home.

In order to help us achieve this we are doing things a little differently this year. Instead of delivering a full set

of open courses, we are doing concentrated pockets of work with different people and their supporters.

For example, in Inverness we are working very closely with Cantraybridge College and our training has been slotted into the curriculum for both students and staff. The students are also planning to adopt My Career Plan and each of them will develop these as the college year progresses. We are also working with the students on the development of their very own My Video CV via our app.

In Aberdeen we are working towards a partnership with the Aberdeen Foyer which will allow us to provide training for people with learning difficulties and individuals on the autistic spectrum who want to find work in the care sector.

In Inverurie we have developed a very strong partnership with Grampian Opportunities and are in the early stages of what we hope is a very exciting development which will help to create jobs. Watch this space! We are also connected to the Aberdeenshire IDEA which has just recently had a major review of services. Through this we are hoping to be able to develop relationships with people who use those services,



their families and staff as well as develop relationships with local employers.

In Glasgow we are working closely with the Local Area Coordinators and will continue to deliver training for them and those they are supporting, building connections to Milton and Linburn schools.

If that isn't enough, we are also delivering a SQA Higher National Unit in Systematic Support Strategies - Support for Everyday Living. Our first cohort is full and we are now opening a waiting list for a second cohort to start around late May/ early June of 2014



We are particularly keen this year to work with young people who are in transition from school to adult services and their families and who might be interested in working. If you think there is something we could offer in your area please contact our office. We will be happy to explore ideas with you.

For those of you who have already attended training through the MLMW programme, please remember that we offer aftercare. You can use this to help you develop your work after the training. If you think that you would benefit from some aftercare please don't hesitate to call.

And finally, thank you to all who have supported us in the first two years of the project. We couldn't have done it without you. To local authorities, partner organisations, venue providers, caterers and trainers through to, and most importantly, **all** course participants, we thank you. Your support means more to us than you will ever know.

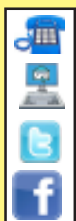
*Catherine Hurrell*

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