

The Harrington Review Part 2

The second independent review of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) has been published and is available on the mental health notice board section of the MACC website, please visit: www.macc.org.uk.

More than 425 individuals and organisations responded to the call for evidence earlier this year.

Though not supported by our findings, the review concludes, that real progress has been made this year, but that further changes are needed to the WCA and therefore, makes a series of recommendations which build on and complement the recommendations from the year one review.

Professor Harrington has been asked to carry out a third review in 2012 and requests that organisations continue to provide evidence of where further changes to the WCA are needed so its fairness and effectiveness can continue to be improved.

MACC have led on gathering information from advice agencies and G.P's about the impact of the WCA on people with mental health needs and the impact on practitioners and organisations. Findings were fed into the Harrington Review and will also be used to guide local action at these strategic groups. MACC will continue to monitor the impact of the WCA and are now asking all mental health organisations in the VCS to contribute by completing a Survey. If you want to contribute to this work you can access the survey on the mental health notice board section of the MACC website www.macc.org.uk or to find out more please email John Butler at john@macc.org.uk.

MACC have also supported the development of a practitioner's network in Ardwick which aims to strengthen communication between the full range of agencies with an interest in mental health and employment and supporting people through the WCA. The Network will meet again in January 2012 to evaluate progress and refresh its activities. If your organisation does not already receive information about this network please email John Butler at john@macc.org.uk.

MACC sits on the Mental Health and Employment Strategy Group and the Worklessness strand of the Ardwick City region Pilot. These groups have a strategic role in co-ordinating activity:

- to support people back into work where this is seen as a positive choice
- to protect the most vulnerable from the negative consequences of the WCA
- to provide information and training to frontline staff
- to provide information to claimants and
- to influence the Work Programme providers

Welfare Reform a Basic Guide

For a basic guide to welfare reform, the IB reassessment, how to support people and where to signpost people for support in Manchester, visit the mental health notice board section of the MACC website: www.macc.org.uk.

Sign the epetition

Stop and review the cuts to benefits and services which are falling disproportionately on disabled people, their carers and families

“The government were embarking on wholesale reform of the benefit system when the economic crisis struck. These welfare reforms had not been piloted and the plan was to monitor and assess the impact of the new untried approach as it was introduced in a buoyant economy. Unfortunately since then the economy has gone in to crisis and the government has simultaneously embarked on a massive programme of cuts. This has created a perfect storm and left disabled people/those with ill health, and their carers reeling, confused and afraid. We ask the government to stop this massive programme of piecemeal change until they can review the impact of all these changes, taken together, on disabled people and their carers. We ask the government to stand by its duty of care to disabled people and their carers. At the moment the covenant seems to be broken and they do not feel safe. Illness or disability could affect any one of us at any time, while many more of us are potential carers”.

The petition runs till November 2012. So far almost 6,000 people have signed up in support but this really needs a boost as 1,000,000 signatures are required to get a debate on this issue in Parliament. If you agree with the statement please visit: <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/20968> to add your signature and please encourage others to follow suit.