

**COMMUNITY SERVICES  
SPOKESPERSON'S REPORT – SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

**LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICE USERS CONFERENCE  
Three Villages Hall, Arrochar**

On Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> March, I attended this Service User Conference held in Arrochar. Service Users and staff from all the Locality Forums across Argyll and Bute attended the event which was a great success.

The event had its beginnings in a visit to Helensburgh during the consultation period for the Learning Disability Service Review. Those who attended that had suggested it would be useful to repeat the process but this time to have a structured programme to aid the sharing of ideas and experiences.

Around ninety delegates from all over Argyll and Bute participated to make an interesting and enjoyable day. The conference, aptly titled “Realising Our Potential Together” followed the themes of Successful Lives and Employment Support. Presenters shared stories of achievements in their own lives, successes in employment and involvement in their local communities, whilst staff shared updates on current developments within the Learning Disability Service.

The Learning Disability Adult Protection campaign was launched by Adult Protection Area Manager Ronnie McIlquham and Speech and Language Therapist Carole-Anne Burnett, to highlight to people what they can do to “Stay Safe”. The campaign prompts people to “Stay Safe, Say No and Tell Someone” and will roll out across Argyll and Bute with training events in each area.

Volunteer service users came forward who are keen to help deliver the Adult Protection training programme and on being “Secret Shoppers” to feedback on Council services.

There were lots of opportunities to participate by either presenting to the conference, speaking in the open mic session or in the “Big Brother” style diary room. Topics covered ranged from voluntary working, paid employment to support to learn work skills and support to live ordinary lives in extraordinary circumstances. The whole day was recorded on video, photographs and graphics and a DVD will be produced and issued to each locality for those who were unable to attend.

All in all this was a really inspirational day with services users sharing their experiences and feeding back what they would like the Council to do to help them make a success of their lives. There was a lot of positivity, summed up by one contributor – “We can do it”

Yes we can and we should certainly look to make this an annual event.

**Councillor Andrew Nisbet  
Spokesperson for Social Affairs  
April 2012**