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At this end of 2010 in the UK we are digging ourselves ever deeper into this economic downturn, this recession, this grey Monday morning hangover after the weekend of partying (even though some of us who are suffering were never invited to the party). We have had the broad brush strokes of the October spending review and, day by day, we learn of its consequences and, if we can bear it, we extrapolate what we know into the next few years.

As ever, there is a political veneer with very sensible-sounding phrases about paying off our debts, cutting waste, making better use of public money, preparing for an economic recovery, unifying benefits, etc but, if we are prepared to look closer, we will see, under the veneer, families who are homeless, children who are cold and hungry, young people feeling they are worthless, an army of workers who no longer have any work or pay, and public services and voluntary agencies who are starved of the funds they need to do their jobs properly.

There will be the usual hierarchy of need with disabled people and families of disabled children languishing with other disenfranchised individuals and groups at the bottom. A measure of any society can be its protection of the life, health and wellbeing of its vulnerable minorities, but that assertion loses all meaning when the caring function of society is gradually and relentlessly dismantled. That is what we are seeing now.

This issue of IQJ comes a little late because people who might write for it are under pressure. They are under pressure because there are fewer of them now than there were half a year ago and, in the same trend, there are very many more of them now than there will be this time next year. People in work have more to do and less time for such luxuries as thinking or writing. People in work in the public services live with the deep anxiety that they might soon not be. So my gratitude to the writers of Issue No. 11 is heartfelt.

They have made the time to write, and then more time to revise as their copy came back after editing and proofreading. My sincere thanks go to them all.

In this issue, two articles show how bureaucracy, with or without a recession, can subvert the best intentions of public services; Denise Franks discovers the no-man's land that can swallow young adults between children's services and adult services. Deborah Berkeley, in Episode 11 of her Diary, has to create continuity herself for her daughter's care and education when the family moves from one London borough to another. We learn about the Portage model from Jean Harford and her colleagues and about the Calderdale Parent and Carers Council from Katie Clarke. Ruth Garbutt reports on a project about sex and relationships for people with learning disabilities and Jeanne Carlin describes new guidelines to apply when children and young people who have high support needs are discharged from hospital. The interview with Professor Hilton Davis is concluded and I offer *K for Keyworking* in the Alphabet of Helpful Hints.

I expect my task of assembling articles of this standard will be much harder next year and that IQJ will be significantly affected by pervasive cuts in public money. In comparison with young learning disabled adults who are given no provision when they leave school, disabled people who feel their homes and their benefits are under threat and children with special needs who are not offered appropriate schooling, my concerns for IQJ are very small beer. But what is the longer-term impact on public services and the people who depend on them if those who work in them have no time to reflect on their effectiveness, no time to share their experiences with others and no time to work on improving what they and their service do?