

EDITORIAL

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Welcome to the 5th issue of IQJ. Perhaps new journals are like some children – most vulnerable in the first two years. But I am still pleased to have passed birthday number one! The theme for this issue is **'yes, we can make a difference'** – a phrase borrowed from Rosemary Campbell-Stephens' article *London Schools and the Black Child*. 'We' in IQJ terms means disabled people, their families and friends and the people who work in the services that support them. We make a difference because we know what is going on, we care and we see that a better future is possible. We make a difference because we are more or less the only ones who can. This is not to invalidate interested academics. We hope that they will observe what is good, prove its worth with their research methods and give a seal of approval.

Nor is it to invalidate politicians who, in recent years, have responded to calls for help from this long-neglected minority world. But I find very disturbing the contradictory news stories about millions of pounds allocated to this or that disability issue and simultaneous items about this or that facility or service shutting down for want of funds. Writing this on Budget Day, it seems sure as eggs that public services are going to suffer badly in the next few years and, in my view, that services for disabled people might provide the softest target. In the end it comes down to 'us' to fight to keep what we have, to share a brave vision for the future, to struggle to build better services within resources available to us, and to wave our campaign

banners under everyone's nose locally, nationally and internationally.

The better services described or envisioned in this issue are not dependent on massive government funding or high-cost technology but are born more simply out of vision, creativity, commitment, determination and even altruism (a word we can use again now that our greed-based economy is exposed for what it is). Peter Shelton's Opinion piece (*The Listening Game*) does describe the creation of a new building but innovative good practice was established well before the new building was thought of. In *A Chance to be Heard*, Rhian Morgan and colleagues, on the same theme of communication, discuss what motivates people to put their healthcare stories on the *Telling Stories, Real Life Genetics* website.

Rosemary Campbell-Stephens (*London Schools and the Black Child*) urges us to recognise that teacher expectation is a key determiner of Black children's achievement. 15-year-old Josh (*Being an older brother*) gives us a valuable insight into teenager and family life mixing kindness with Karate and keeping a very wise weather eye on his family's welfare. Catherine Thurston (*White Lodge Centre Family Link and Befriending Scheme*) and Andy Morris (*Barnardo's Cygnet – making a difference*) describe successful schemes which offer valued support to families – short breaks in the first instance and support with behaviour management in the second.

Deborah Berkeley (*A Town Like Alice*), in Episode 5 of their continuing story, describes Alice's new skills and services and tells us how important Portage has been. Julie Clark (*Two Left Feet*) has set up an inclusive dancing group at which everyone is welcome – to learn new dances or just to watch. In my two articles (*TAC for the 21st Century* and *E is for Early*) I suggest that children who need multiple interventions offer service providers a timely challenge to radically re-think what 'child-centred' could mean in our brave new future.