



CHANGE and Advonet

From Shared values to a Common Future



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After several weeks of discussion, the Boards of CHANGE and Advonet have created an innovative formal partnership based on our shared values and common commitment to Empowerment, Rights and Equality. The model is intended to allow partners to share governance arrangements and infrastructure. This will enable both partners to focus on what we do best: Working within a human rights framework to promote social justice and rights in inclusive innovative and forward thinking ways.

Advonet & CHANGE already work together effectively. We jointly deliver three projects – a Health self-advocacy project for Disabled LGBT people, a project gathering stories and suggestions from people who have experienced restraint, seclusion and isolation and we are developing a platform for people with learning disabilities to train care home staff and peers with learning disabilities to know about, fully understand and use Supported Decision Making.

CHANGE will continue to lead the way in employing staff with learning disabilities to improve the lives and rights of their peers within the wider society, just as we have done for the last twenty five years. CHANGE will also continue to create easy read documents and take commissions to produce quality checked accessible information. Advonet will learn from CHANGE's knowledge, expertise and reputation in its field and CHANGE will learn from Advonet's advocacy know how, business support and strong local presence. Together we will develop our work and reach a wider group of people from marginalized communities and funders to continue our important and ground breaking work.

CHANGE will be led by the CHANGE Committee, members being made up entirely of Disabled People including People with learning disabilities. From September CHANGE will be located within the same building as Advonet. A new CHANGE manager is being recruited whilst Philipa Bragman, CHANGE's Chief Executive will take this opportunity to stand down after 25 years at the helm.

Philipa said 'I am really proud to look back and to have been a part of the things we have achieved at CHANGE since it started 25 years ago, from the easy read concept first adopted by CHANGE to the campaigning on the rights for people with learning disabilities to become parents, to employing people with learning disabilities to co-deliver their own services as well as what we have achieved internationally supporting many countries across the world on deinstitutionalization, developing inclusive communities, services and new ways of working.

Working alongside people with learning disabilities and our talented staff and volunteers has been both an inspiration and an absolute honour. volunteers has been both an inspiration and an absolute honour.

Our new partnership is partly in response to a funding environment that is increasingly hostile to User led Organisations, however we are really excited going forward.

I know that CHANGE will continue the fantastic values led work we do so well and CHANGE will be able to focus on what we have always done best – social justice, inclusion and putting the rights of people with learning disabilities first including continuing to develop and promote easyread.’

Peter Gruen, Chair of Advonet says ‘Advonet is pleased that it will be teamed with a leading organisation that has a long track record of working with organisations and institutions, large and small, to strive for people with learning disabilities to be fully included in society. This complements the work we do with individuals who are marginalised and whose voices are seldom heard and rarely listened to.’

Joanne Kennedy co chair of CHANGE says: ‘We are looking forward to working together and building on our great partnership with Advonet. I love that we at CHANGE stand up for and support people with learning disabilities to have a voice and fight for our rights. I’m really pleased and it feels so important we can continue to do this. I have been the co chair of CHANGE for 3 years. I have power in this role to make decisions and I will take this power forward onto the CHANGE committee where I am excited to work with new Disabled colleagues to guide and lead the work of CHANGE’



