

## **The Rowan Organisation Supporting Independence Through Choice**



The Rowan Organisation has considerable experience of developing services which facilitate choice and control for disabled people including people with a physical or sensory impairment, older people, people with learning difficulties, people with mental ill-health, disabled children and carers. We have provided services to disabled people for over thirty years and we now work with a number of Local Authorities nationally predominantly providing Direct Payments Support Schemes.

The Rowan Organisation is committed to equal opportunities and anti-oppressive practice and would seek ways to ensure that the services we provide are accessible to everyone regardless of their circumstances.

We are also committed to the provision of user led services and the organisation is predominantly managed by its service users. Service users in all the areas in which we work have the opportunity to nominate and elect representatives to our Board of Management.

We offer services that are responsive to the needs of our customers but do not create a dependency upon the support organisation, this promotes greater independence for service users by offering greater choice, control and services which are specific to their requirements. The services include support and information from Independent Living Advisers (ILAs) and information directly from our Helpline. In addition we provide a Payroll Service, Information Service, Recruitment Line, CRB Vetting Service, Managed Accounts, Training Packages and additional administrative support from Account Support Workers (ASW's).

We are committed to supporting service users to use services, particularly Direct Payments, in creative ways to make the best use of resources and maximise their opportunities for choice and control. We are also committed to developing services in line with new initiatives such as "Individualised Budgets" and "In Control".

## **Philosophy**

The Rowan Organisation has a vision statement that reflects our belief that people are disabled by the barriers that society creates. The vision statement guides the work of the organisation which seeks to address the barriers to full inclusion.

### **Vision Statement**

“A society that is fully inclusive in which the barriers, whether environmental, attitudinal or institutional, that prevent disabled people from having equality of opportunity have been removed.”

Our mission statement builds on this by indicating the means by which the organisation would seek to empower disabled people by ensuring that they are aware of the choices available to them and can identify the resources that they need to address the barriers that they encounter.

### **Mission Statement**

“The Rowan Organisation exists to provide disabled people with access to information and support in order that they can make informed choices and be in control of their lives”.

The Rowan Organisation rejects the "Medical" or "Personal Tragedy" model of disability which emphasises the location of the "problem" as lying with the individual and seeks to change the person so that they are better able to cope with their situation. Instead we would advocate the "Social Model" of disability which sees the process of disablement arising from the predominant social attitudes which exist, which perpetuate a dependent stereotypical image of disabled people, and from the inaccessible environments which are created as a result of the lack of awareness of their needs. We use the term "Disabled People" rather than "People with Disabilities" because it is descriptive of this process rather than locating the problem with the person.

The principles on which we operate emphasise our commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and starts with the clear recognition of the abilities of disabled people and their right to make informed choices about their future. We believe that each individual has the right to set their own aims and objectives and to

determine the level of support that is appropriate to enable them to achieve their stated goals. This is reflected throughout the practice of the Organisation which would see its role as that of facilitative rather than prescriptive. We are committed to equal opportunities and anti-oppressive practice and would seek ways to ensure that the services we provide are accessible to all regardless of their circumstances.

We are also committed to the provision of locally based user led services and the organisation is predominantly managed by its service users. Service users from all areas in which we work have the opportunity to elect or be elected to our Board of Management. We work closely with peer support networks within all areas to enable service users to have direct influence on the development of Direct Payments locally.

## **General overview**

In general The Rowan Organisation has been involved in delivering Direct Payment Support since Direct Payments were introduced in 1997. The majority of the schemes that we operate have been made available to all potential user groups as they were made eligible by subsequent legislation. Prior to 1997 we had been providing a Third Party Payment Scheme in Warwickshire since the early 1990s and as such have nearly twenty years experience of supporting people to use funds provided by the Local Authorities.

Information is provided in a wide-range of accessible formats to ensure that it is accessible to as many people as possible. This includes information in Braille, large print, audio cassette, pictorial format, DVD and CD Rom. All information can be translated into a language of choice and is already available in a range of Asian Languages and Welsh. We have produced a sign language video and an Asian language video and are committed to continuous development of accessible information.

Safe recruitment practices are key to ensuring that our customers are not put at undue risk of abuse from the staff that they employ. The Rowan Organisation provides a CRB Vetting Agency to facilitate enhanced disclosure checks for all service users who choose to make use of this facility.

**For further information on the Rowan Organisation and the**



services that we provide, please visit our website at:  
[www.therowan.org](http://www.therowan.org)

