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## **EDITORIAL**

### **Getting on with it**

**Peter McGill, Tizard Centre**

While at times (like now, past the deadline for the publisher!) editing TLDR can be stressful, it is continually illuminating to read the accounts of the work of a wide range of researchers and practitioners. The theme that struck me particularly when reading the articles in the current issue was the way in which many people (professionals, carers, family members) just “get on with it”, not just in terms of the nitty gritty of everyday business but also in developing and supporting innovative practice. The older family carers that Carol Walker and Cally Ward discuss have got on with it, with and (unfortunately, quite often) without any support and, in so doing, have been responsible for helping their relative not just remain in the “community” but stay (physically and/or emotionally) at the heart of their family. If these families hadn’t got on with it, we would be spending a lot more money than we are on social care and many people with learning disabilities would have much worse, more isolated lives.

Similarly, Tess Redington and Jan Fitzsimons present a really rather inspiring description of a range of individuals and organisations getting on with it to find themselves or others something useful to do during the day. With no great effect, we have advocated for more employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities for decades. So it is great to hear accounts of some people who have got fed up waiting and have decided to have a go on their own or have supported someone they know or love to have a go on their own. Research tells us very clearly that getting employment is about ... getting employment, not about training, preparation, experience etc. All those things are important but they provide no royal road to employment and often lead to simply churning round the system. Here, practitioners, people with learning disabilities are not just getting on with it, they are doing something new and exciting.

There is, however, a reason why “getting on with it” is no cure all. Left to their own devices, some carers (both family and paid) may survive without support but they will certainly not thrive and, to the extent that they innovate, the innovations may not be desirable. It is well known from the organisational literature that groups left to their own devices may well develop cultures at odds with the wider world. It depends what the “it” is that you’re getting on with. Alix Lewer and Celia Harding’s Open Communication Tool is potentially very useful in such situations as a way of clarifying and challenging what is going on and supporting more collaborative practice. We all need to get on with it but getting on with it together is even better.