

Our Reference:
Your Reference:

This matter is being dealt with by:
Bill Norman
Valuing People Development Worker
Tel 2849113 or 285 9957 ext 234
The Bungalow
Welford Centre
Jubilee Road
Newcastle Upon Tyne NE 3 3UR
E Mail william.norman@newcastle.gov.uk

Ms Angela Hamilton
Principal Policy & Research officer
Social Inclusion & Equality Team
Assistant Chief Executives Office
Newcastle City Council
Room 242
Civic Centre
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE99 1RD

Wednesday, April 08, 2009

Dear Angela

Newcastle Learning Disability Partnership Board Single Equality Scheme consultation

The following is the Newcastle Learning Disability Partnership Board response to Single Equality Scheme consultation on objectives and priorities. It has been compiled from discussion in the Partnership Board itself on 7 April. There will now be a follow up on 27th April 2009. The discussion at the Board was limited by time and difficulties in making the material easier to understand for all Board members.

The discussion took place in small groups and at times strayed into phase two consultation territory but I shall include here anyway. This will be useful to spark discussion on 27th April and so inform our next feedback.

THE POINTS THAT GROUPS WANTED TO FEEDBACK THAT COVER ALL OBJECTIVES

- Do more to put across positive images of people with learning disabilities e.g. through arts
- Raising awareness about people's abilities rather than disabilities.
- More effort/support/facilities/staff training to involve people in **mainstream** activities.

- We are aware of accessible information work through Information For all. However this was a consistent feedback across all objectives and there were specific suggestion that we would see as priorities for particular directorates to develop namely benefits information (through Welfare Rights) , information on getting jobs Accessible debt counselling information, Accessible and clearer benefits information (maximize benefits)

More specific comments are attached. I hope this helps

Yours sincerely

Bill Norman
Valuing People Development Worker

Make sure everyone has the same chance in getting a job/education

Do we agree this is a credible objective?

Yes we agree it should be an objective

Current proposed priorities

Tackle the things that stop the following people getting jobs

- People who are claiming incapacity benefit
- Lone Parents
- Families where neither parent is working
- Black and minority ethnic people
- People aged 14 to 19 who are Not in Employment Education or Training

Make sure people from disadvantaged backgrounds (like not having much money) and disabled people can get into higher education

Should there be a priority for learning disabilities?

One group said

- People with LD can be in any of the groups listed *inferring so why should we need anything specific?*

Other groups however said

- Learning and Employment is one of our main priorities for the Board. People with learning disabilities should be supported to access all sorts of education (not just higher). We therefore think the last priority needs to be widened
- Do need to have something more specific – we need to include people with LD, as jobs are a priority on Valuing People Now. Make sure people have access to support.

Some groups made suggestions for specific priorities which we hope you will consider

I have summarized these as

- The council should do more to promote itself as a employer of people with disabilities
- The Council needs to do more to promote equality of access to employment for people with disabilities
- People should be able to get qualifications whoever they are. The council should do what it can to make this so

I don't propose to include these as possible priorities these are more general learning and Employment issues that the Council cannot influence directly through its Single Equality Scheme.

If Board members don't agree with this – don't worry you still have a second chance to develop these thoughts – the 27th April Equality Day for the later consultation deadline in early May

The following might be seen as specific actions that we could develop on 27th April to inform the Single Equality Scheme action plan

- The Council's role in promoting Work experience schemes across its services and those of its partners
- The Council's role in getting other partners to give this equal commitment

Learning issues

- Colleges – vocational prospectus
- Need to put money in and fund. LLDD education is a priority
- *National issue* - Problems with funding/training, LSC funding timescales
- People need a second chance to get to college if they missed out the first time round due to people's expectations
- People with LD have very limited choice about what they learn. They don't have equal options.

- Education and training – work more closely with colleges etc. to provide more education
- Accessible advice about impact on benefits – *I have included this as a more general accessible information about everything to do with employment*
- Should someone from Newcastle College be on LDPB? *I can in fact answer this one – they are. We are in the process of changing members from the College and a new representative has been confirmed and I shall be giving a welcome talk to her shortly*

Employment issues

- Make information accessible – Easy read
- Working with other employers and be a model employer
- You shouldn't need to get IB to help get a job
- Ensure there is job seekers support for people with LD, making sure people have other options if they don't want jobs.
- Connexions need to have a better understanding of people with LD
- Barriers – not enough support/buddying for people to get jobs/maintain them
- Targeting young people at school to encourage them to get jobs
- Independent travel (colleges)
- Language barriers
- Cultural differences
- Education needs to start in schools before people come into employment.
- Incentives to employers who employ people with LD
- Let employers know what support they and the person with LD can have to help do the job
- Emphasis on SATs and achieving results/scores affects equality in schools

Benefits

- Review benefits system and work and wages and the effects on it.
- Permitted earnings

Make sure everyone who has a health problem feels equal

Do we agree this is a credible objective

Yes we agree it should be an objective

Current proposed priorities

- Support older people and disabled people to live independently.
- Increase the take-up of services for carers among under-represented groups.
- Reduce health inequalities related to where people live and gender.
- Improve our understanding of the relationship between health inequalities and sexual orientation

Should there be a priority for learning disabilities ?

There was a consensus that there would be merit in having something about learning disability specifically given that it is one of the top national priorities and THE biggest priority for our Board. The following has therefore been put together from a number of group's comments

- The new scheme needs to reflect the Council's commitment to delivering the recommendations made in Healthcare for all. A plan has been made for Adults Services which is being taken forward as part of the Adult Transformation Programme Theme 5 on Learning Disabilities

I don't propose to include these as these are more general health issues that the Council cannot directly make a difference through its Disability /Single Equality Scheme. These need

to be dealt with through other routes – Ill add them to the comments made at the last discussion of Health and ask the GHSG to address

Principles

- Information sharing
- Make sure that people get equal service including people with learning disability, also from other groups
- Abolish postcode lottery

Action needed

- Need to drill down further into community areas and be more specific about who needs support – need evidence. Teams need to search out people who need help to access services.
- Carers – need to understand more about what carers do and to encourage them to plan for the future.
- Acknowledge people (and carers) need supporters when having treatment or going to hospital or GP clinics
- Health buddies – funded through health
- Accessible information, accessible health care services - transport
- Making it easier for people to complain if they get a bad service. *This has already been identified as a priority for the health group to look at*
- More health centres
- More consultation with people with LD
- Mobile surgeries
- Education/training for health care professionals/receptionists/all staff and sectors for working with people with LD

The following might be seen as specific actions that we could develop on 27th April to inform the Single Equality Scheme action plan

- Secondment opportunities for staff who are trained in LD
- Work closely with PCT to identify health problems of people with LD and what needs to happen
- Workshops/forums for Council to share information

Make sure everyone gets the same chances to enjoy libraries, entertainment and leisure

Do we agree this is a credible objective?

Yes we agree it should be an objective

Current proposed priorities

- Increase use of public libraries by young people and men and tackle why male and black and minority ethnic communities' library users don't like libraries as much as other people
- Women, older people, people from BME communities and disabled people getting more involved in sport
- Make it easier for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to use museums and galleries

Should there be a priority for learning disabilities?

The Board has had three consistent ideas for a number of years and these were repeated at the meeting. I therefore feel confident in putting these forward as priorities

- Promote the aims and functions of libraries and how they could benefit people with learning disabilities - even those who cannot read
- Set a target for more changing places – they should be seen as the standard not the exception
- Do more to encourage people with learning disability to encourage mainstream leisure activities (At the moment leisure centres have “specialist” sessions – needs to be more mainstream)

The following might be seen as specific actions that we could develop on 27th April to inform the Single Equality Scheme action plan

Financial barriers to access

- More promotion of leisure cards
- Reduce prices of entry to arts/theatre/leisure
- Media advertising when museums etc have a free day.

Training

- Support staff trained
- Expand work Better Days has done on information and training

Consultation

- More regular involvement and consultation – libraries and museums

Support to access

- What has been designed for support? E.g. Hancock opening
- More support staff so they can take people outside the community - positive risk taking.
- Extra support for people with Learning Disability at libraries
- Dedicated staff in each leisure centre to support in volunteers in **all** activities.
- Need more family changing rooms and trained staff with equipment to help people at swimming baths etc. (practical support)

Other points

Council could encourage **communities** to support people in libraries, museums etc.
“Level playing field” campaign (Mencap). Funding available for children’s play
Opportunities to progress (no longer able to take place in Paralympics)

Tackle the things that make people feel unequal because of their income or surroundings

Do we agree this is a credible objective?

Yes we agree it should be an objective

Current proposed priority

- Tackle fuel poverty, particularly affecting older people and people on the lowest incomes.

Should there be a priority for learning disabilities?

There needs to be something more specific on people with disabilities **as a whole** i.e.

- Tackle fuel poverty in relation to the additional costs of disability. A specific action suggested here was that Newcastle Warmzone should publicize to key people (especially people with learning disability)

And also the following

- Council to look at more reductions (not specified what) for people on benefits.

I don’t propose to include the following as it is a more general issue that the Council cannot directly make a difference through its Disability /Single Equality Scheme.

- Single person’s benefit’s allowance isn’t enough
- People with LD should be included in ordinary household

The following might be seen as specific actions that we could develop on 27th April to inform the Single Equality Scheme action plan

- Support with budgeting

Make sure everybody gets the same chances if they are applying for housing

Do we agree this is a credible objective

Yes we agree it should be an objective

Current proposed priorities

- Provide housing that supports older people who want to live independently.
- Make sure all residents have the same chances of getting good quality housing

Should there be a priority for learning disabilities?

A number of groups pointed out that these priorities

- Should specify people with learning disability as a separate group, as they have different support needs to older people or other vulnerable groups
- Not just older people housing support and choice – everyone else

The Board also thought that the following needed to be seen as an overall priority

- Expand tenancies for disabled people in order to provide more affordable housing and social housing

I don't propose to include the following as a priority as it is a very specific action that we should keep back until the next round of consultation where we can say what we want in the Single Equality Scheme's action plan

- Shared ownership – expand to people with learning disability
- Use "buy to let" apartments in good areas for housing people with LD (repossessions and selling off cheap)
- Need help to stay in their own homes when parents can no longer care
- People with LD have limited choice over accommodation – less affluent areas.
- Telecare
- Priority cards
- Housing providers with better understanding of issues
- Review housing policies/strategies
- Housing number to access

Reduce harassment, hate crime, domestic violence and fear of crime

Do we agree this is a credible objective

Yes we agree it should be an objective

Current proposed priorities

- Reduce the number of people attacked or harmed by hate crime based on race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion or culture.
- Reduce the fear of crime among older people, disabled people, women and BME residents

Should there be a priority for learning disabilities?

Both priorities should specify people with learning and physical disabilities rather than just saying disabled people – those who are socially disadvantaged.

I don't propose to include the following as priorities as they are specific actions that we should keep back until the next round of consultation where we can say what we want in the Single Equality Scheme's action plan

- Promote positive images of disabled people
- ARCH capacity increased (funding and people) to include disability properly
- Expand "safe places" scheme and reporting centres
- More work in primary schools to reduce prejudice
- How going to do this?
- No secrets

- Reassurance about crime – how do we stop? Work on hate crime, scaring people and stopping them from going out.
- More facts and figures
- Explanations of justice system and support for people who go through it.
- More information about who to contact/how to report
- Best evidence police officers/agencies to support victims
- More training for police/CPS
- Make use of local beat officers
- Forums with police

Make access to Council services better and give people a better chance to influence how services should be run

Do we agree this is a credible objective

Yes we agree it should be an objective

Current proposed priorities

- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups and good attitudes towards people who experience prejudice and discrimination.
- Get more people with learning disabilities to take more of a role in public life.

Should there be another priority for learning disabilities?

I don't propose to include the following as priorities as these are specific actions that we should keep back until the next round of consultation where we can say what we want in the Single Equality Scheme's action plan

- Build on work in Council Wards
- Better consultation with people with learning disabilities – see your vote counts, your town, your voice
- Partnership Board
- Should specify learning or physical disabilities – to influence “their” services
- Review eligibility criteria
- Personalisation and individual budgets – access for all
- Providers on board with changes in services
- Information in right formats
- Accessible buildings

Make and help strong relationships between communities and opportunities to take part in public life

Do we agree this is a credible objective

Yes we agree it should be an objective

Current proposed priorities

- Increase opportunities for disabled people and young people to influence services.
- Improve access to Council buildings and the built environment.
- Provide a variety of ways for people to access Council services and information.

Should there be a priority for learning disabilities?

The Board did not seem to have any specific issue to be seen as a priority here except that the discussion of this priority highlighted what became one of our underpinning points across the whole scheme i.e. conveying positive images

I don't propose to include the following as priorities as these are specific actions that we should keep back until the next round of consultation where we can say what we want in the Single Equality Scheme's action plan

Promotion

- Use arts and drama to convey positive images

- City Council organize – activities, Community events, bring all people together

Influencing the media

- TV and the way it portrays people with LD needs to change also what they do needs to be accessible e.g. See Hear is on at 2/3/4 am!
- Advertisement and encouragement/funding to organizations that do things and have good ideas – BSM doing “Try drive”.
- Put “What’s on” back on TV and listings.

Inclusive activities

- Ward committees etc.
- More attention to how to involve people in all cultural, educational and community activities, not just special sessions
- Everyday items being adapted as standard e.g. Blind person playing football with a bell in it. More use of buddying scheme to increase visibility and acceptance of people out and about.

Educating and training

- Training for Community Centres – included in training programme.
- Educating children from young age about diversity

Make sure children and young people feel equal

Do we agree this is a credible objective

Yes we agree it should be an objective

Current proposed priorities

- Reduce gaps in health among children and young people based upon socio-economic background.
- Tackle bullying, harassment and maltreatment associated with race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and culture.
- Reduce inequalities in education particularly in relation to gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity and family status.
- Ensure children and young people have opportunities to influence services and participate in public life.

Should there be a priority for children with learning disabilities?

One group quite clearly said that

- Children with L D should be specific group.

Perhaps we would therefore suggest that one of the existing priorities should be amended to

- Reduce inequalities in education particularly in relation to gender, **disability**, socio-economic background, ethnicity and family status.

I don’t propose to include the following as priorities as these are specific actions that we should keep back until the next round of consultation where we can say what we want in the Single Equality Scheme’s action plan

- What support for children with learning disability to take part in the ideas outlined here.
- More work with schools re bullying etc.
- All we said above re adults
- Make sure that all information from special schools and units is passed on to health and Social Services when children reach Transition stage.
- Consultation with young people to see what they want out of the education system
- Educating parents/carers
- Maximizing income
- Everyone’s responsibility
- Curriculum
- Forum for children and young people to have input to influence services

I would suggest that the discussion at our Board has given us some us lessons for the 27th April session that we shall take forward

- Remind people what Council does – use accessible leaflet
- Remind people what Council can influence through its wider partnerships
- Remind people what was said last time in 2006
- Remind people what has been actioned since then

Thanks