

Newcastle Learning Disabilities Partnership Board



Notes of the meeting held 5 August 2008

Who was at the meeting?

Councillor Brenda Hindmarsh	Councillor , Chair
Bill Norman	Learning Disabilities Partnership Board
Lesley Mountain	Better Days
Graham Newton	Self Advocate, User Forum
Barbara Chapman	Self Advocate, User Forum, Deputy Co Chair
Dave Norman	Skills For People, User Forum support
Karen Inglis	Adult Social Services
Colin Douglas	Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Trust
Trevor Moon	Parent/Carer
Louise Moon	Guest
Hazel Allen and Sally Young	Edward Lloyd Trust
Peter Miller	Self Advocate, User Forum
Allison Ferris	FANE
Cath Williams	Adult Social Services
James Todd	Self Advocate, User Forum
Rachel Archbold	Accessible Services Consultant, Newcastle City Council
Liz Langfield	City Councillor
Paul Bagnell	Interactive Development



Who could not make the meeting?

These were members who gave their apologies

Jacqui Jobson	Newcastle Advocacy Centre
Doreen McCarthy	Adult Education
Chris Anderson	Self advocate, Co Chair
Tim Keilty	Person Centred Planning Co-ordinator
Rod Ferguson	Connexions
Les Pickering	Primary Care Trust
Hamish Hamilton	Newcastle College
Joanne Burke	Better Days
Annie Carden	Northeast Special Needs Network
Helen Milner	Newcastle Special Needs Network
Barbara Taylor	Mencap
Janis White	Coquet Trust – Supported Living Forum representative
Van Brunning	Parent/Carer
Christine Walker	Jobcentre Plus
Liz Wright	Skills for People
Lynne Gray	Parent/Carer
Dr Rick Brannen	Learning and Skills Council
Nichola Hilson	Deputy Chief Exec Skills for People

Guests:

Vince Hills and Irene Storey from Nexus

Ian Marr, Darren Ward, Philip Reid from New Prospects

Ann Davison, Jack Marrows from Community Links Team

Venue

Disability North, The Dene Centre, Castle Farm Road,
Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 1PH



Rules

Graham read through the rules



Message from Deputy Co Chair

Barbara gave her message to the board.

Brenda welcomed everyone to the meeting.



User Forum – The report for the day was around today’s theme “Voices and Choices”.

The group said they wanted to talk about that was to do with Having a voice and choices but which wasn’t in the theme report.

Lots of people have to wait a long time for a Community Care assessment and this is a big issue. Some have waited over two years. The forum would like the Board to agree to a report covering the last three years and showing

- numbers of people who have had an assessment,
- how long they waited and
- The outcome of the assessment.

It was suggested that the REM group should look at the report first then the Board could talk about it at a later meeting this year.



Cath replied by saying she would ask for the Management Information and see what could be produced. She would let us know at the next meeting if the information was available or when it would be.

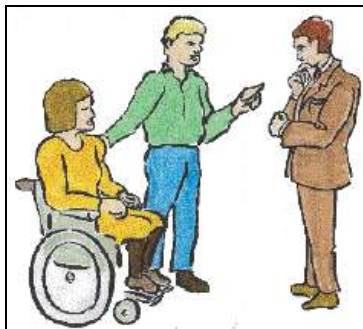
ACTION : CATH

Brenda thanked the forum for their report.

What Barbara wants to say about making choices.



- Barbara has chosen to leave the Welford Centre after many years but she will be going to Chevyside to do new courses and hopes to still see old friends there.



- Barbara has had an advocate to help her on her journeys and this was really important to her.
- Barbara would like to vote but isn't registered.
- Barbara has opened a bank account for her direct payment with help from her supporters at Azure

Bill Norman and Peter Miller then presented on today's main theme "Voices and Choices"

The REM – Rights Equality Money sub group leads on the

voices and choices theme. Peter has been the chair of that sub group since it began.



It is a very wide theme so we can only cover some areas today – these are mainly areas where

- We want people to hear about progress so they can build on it
- We want the Board's help with

Parents with Learning Disabilities

There are 2,757 parents with a learning disability with a child under 5 years old living in Newcastle. However, as Cath pointed out, the majority of these people have a mild learning disability and would not be Adult Services users.



Good Things

- Parents with learning disabilities are mentioned in Valuing People and Valuing People Now. The Joint Committee on Human Rights Committee said it didn't think parents had enough priority in Valuing People Now and that not enough had been made of the guidance that came out in July 2007
- This National Good Practice Guide lists 5 key features of working with parents with learning disabilities -

- Easy to understand information and communication
- Clear and co-ordinated referral and assessment procedures and processes, eligibility criteria and care pathways
- Support designed to meet the needs of parents and children based on assessments of their needs and strengths
- Long term support where necessary
- Access to independent strategy
- Locally we have a family law protocol at court, that sets some standards for how parents with a learning disability can be supported to give evidence and so forth in a non threaten way
- Sue English, Community Nurse is leading from the Community Team Learning Disabilities in this area.



Things which are not so good and need looking at.

- Ownership is needed about who takes lead responsibility. A meeting is to take place between Ewen Weir, Head of Adult Services and Catherine Fitt, Head of Children's Services to get agreement.
- Court processes are not user friendly and parents often have no support , tend not to see reports before meetings take place and lack confidence.
- There was an advocacy service provided by Mencap which everybody thought was really useful this has now been withdrawn because of funding and no alternatives are in place. We need to get a system in place to support parents at child Protection Conferences, beforehand with paperwork and during the conference if they want it.



- The Community Team Learning Disability has material for training but this needs to be taken up and owned by all agencies.

Cath said

- Other services not only Social Services can help support parents with learning disabilities.
- Very few parents would meet Adult Services rules to qualify for a service
- there is a Council wide project called “**Think of Families**” is looking at families and problems they have in a variety of areas – finance, housing, alcohol, substance misuse. It is possible that some families with parents with a learning disability might come within the scope of this project. Cath will keep the REM Group updated about this

ACTION: CATH

As a starting point the Board agreed that

- parents with learning disabilities ‘ needs should be addressed in ordinary services wherever possible
- this can only happen effectively if these services are geared up to deal with people with learning disabilities ‘ needs
- specialist services should only be needed where mainstream services could not meet their needs

What it would take to help ordinary services give an effective service needs to be part of the discussion between Ewen Weir and Catherine Fitt

Sue English arrived later in the meeting , confirmed her role and said how

A change in public funding outline (PFO) will mean that

families could be without any support from solicitors at child protection cases
This coupled with the loss of the Mencap service means that many more parents could be without any support at all
This is a major issue that needs to be include as part of the feedback to Ewen Weir and Catherine Fitt as this seems to need a multi agency approach to the Courts



Changing Places

There is currently a national changing places campaign organised through Mencap. A local campaign (Bill had sent an electronic version of the leaflet round) has also been started in Tyneside . Barabra Taylor from mencap is on the group alongside Helen Milner and Neil Swinney , Access Officer for the Council

Bill took members through the report that had been done by Barabra who could not be here today

There were various comments and suggestions made about what is being done and needs to be done. The things we need to think about are

Wher best to target publicity

All members agreed they need to have another think about this and feed back to Barbara directly

ACTION : EVERYONE!

Getting changing palces to be part of all new planning applicatyoions

- Councillor Hindmarsh and Ewen Weir to take planning conditions issue on board with their selling of Citizens First to the council.
- Some places in Newcastle are better than others and we need to target those which need improvements. E.g. Discovery Museum
- Some local authorities are better than others.

Sunderland is very good, Newcastle has an ongoing commitment to look at including changing places facilities in leisure centres.

- Rachel Archbold stressed it is much easier with new build facilities.

What is the PCT doing

The Good Health sub group asked Les in the Primary Care Trust (PCT) to ask what they are doing to build in Changing places as part of developments they might be planning .Bill will take this up with Les again as he was poorly and could not come to the meeting today

ACTION: BILL/LES

However there is a need to take this up at highest level also with ALL NHS agencies in Newcastle

ACTION: BRENDA

What are other partnership Boards doing

Bill said he would talk to other Boards

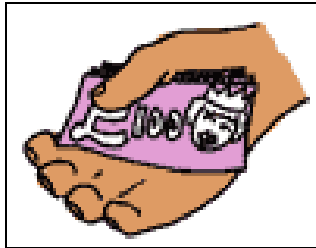
ACTION : BILL

Personal Finance

A few areas covered here

- Welfare Rights Leaflet – this is a booklet covering what impact work opportunities have on benefits. This should be available soon.
- Independent Living Fund – This is a complex payment and is very individual to people. Cath said a lot of work had been done by officers who were freed up to look at how more people could get Independent Living Fund
- Direct Payments and Individual Budgets – The report on the pilot scheme for individual budgets is with Ewen Weir and Colin Williams and there is to be a meeting next week to look at the outcomes and recommendations. The point of this is to promote Direct payments and Individual budgets TOGETHER so people can see there is a choice – what are the pros and cons for each and then make a decision as to the best route for them . So Roadshows will be

planned to get the message across. This will be supported by work that Skills For people have been commissioned to do on brokerage.

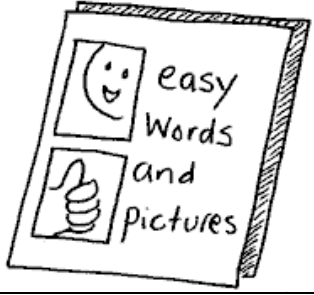


- Banking – Bill and Petrer said this was very important to people feeling like a full citizen anyway – but even more so with the introduction of individual budgets. Barabraas's example earlier in the meeting of how important it was to have a bank account to deal with her direct payment illustrated that people with learning disabilities with lots of different living circumstances had completed a questionnaire about banking with very positive results.
- We also sent a letter to the banks' Head Offices about the service offered to people with learning disabilities but as yet we have had no replies. This was written on behalf of all the Partnership Boards in the region. We will contact again and let them know the positive outcomes from our questionnaires.

ACTION: BILL /BRENDA



Promotion of Rights – Developing easy to understand information :



Some good things

- Some standards have been put together to make things easy to understand. These will be sent round but we need some volunteers to help test them. Barbara, Peter and Darren our guest from New Prospects said they would help.
- Lots of people, agencies and groups willing to come on board.

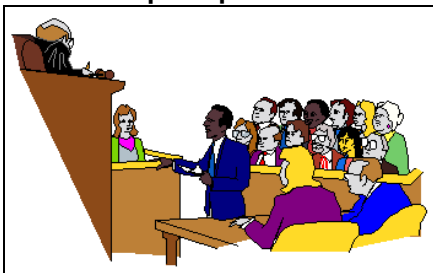
However

We need to make more progress because it's very important.

ACTION: BILL

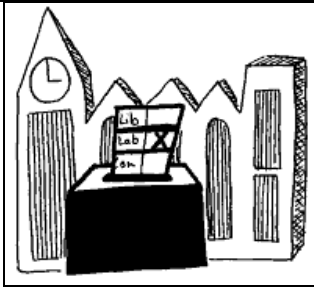
Promotion of Rights – Courts

- We have talked to courts, they want us to help them with accessibility to building, protocol for criminal law, making paperwork accessible and making staff aware of people with learning disabilities' needs



Promotion of Rights – Voting

- Everyone has a right to vote and can do so if they register. Parents/carers can help with registration



- Postal voting is easier.
- Peter's group at Welford have been working with Debbie Frost Electoral Services officer at the council.
- We need political parties to provide easy read information. Brenda can raise this with hers.
- Some concern about if being registered might lead to jury service – though Peter stressed people with learning disabilities can be exempt from this.
- Need to check how accessible polling stations are.

The REM group have a plan to take things forward, looking at

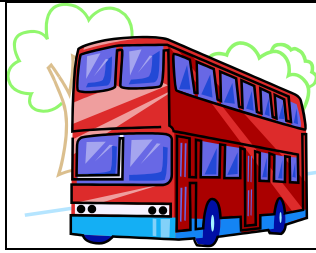
- Court Work – making more accessible and more support
- Ward committees – making more accessible
- Disabled Go - look at how accessible places are
- Revisit the banks for their questionnaires.



The Board can help with

- Positive action for parents
- Changing Places action
- Support to help people to vote
- Easy read for political parties.

Transport



Today we had guests from Nexus (Vince Hills and Irene Storey) bringing us up to date about some areas of transport.

Taxi Link Scheme

5,000 members

Some changes ahead here. **Old scheme** was that you had to call 24 hours in advance and it was often difficult to get through, you had to pay £1 for each journey. Based on data, the average cost for a journey was £4 and around 3-4 miles. (The cost was worked out before the recent increases in fuel charges).

New scheme comes into effect 29th September

Member pays flat rate of £1.50 then has a card with a £100 budget allocated to it which is swiped every time and £2.50 deducted towards the fare. This total of £4 was based on the previously mentioned data. Therefore if the journey cost £4 the member paid 50p more than previously. However any costs over and above the £4 total have to be met by the traveller. This could be quite an additional expense.

The card would be topped up to £100 every 6 months. E.g after 6 months card has no money on it then £100 added, if the card had £25 left on then £75 added.

More taxis are now available for use than previously and can be booked well in advance.



Many questions and comments were then made about this change and additional cost to travellers in the scheme.

- Why can't the £2.50 be deducted before the £1.50 is paid this would save on shorter journeys?
- People in outlying areas will be penalised.
- Could members have vouchers?
- Scheme seems complicated – how will members know how much money they have left?
- How do you become a member?
- I will not be able to go out as much as I used to.
- Did local taxi firms tender?
- Would the new data be checked? And comments listened to?

Vince replied

- He did not make the decision to change but would pass comments on
- All journeys will be monitored from 29th September through to end of January.
- Vouchers had been tried in the past and did not work
- Taxi driver will be able to tell member how much money they have left on card.
- Application form to join although closed till 29th September
- Local taxis firms did tender
- People can share taxis and only have one charge between them – share costs
- All comments and any letters received will also be considered during the evaluation of data.
- There are also other means of transport – buses are now more accessible and will all be low floor by 2016. Community Transport is available, Link Up service and there is no charge to members, Access to Work has accessible taxis. A companion card is available allowing a companion to travel free on public transport.

Scooters on Metros

Vince explained that due to three recent accidents, scooters could only be used on the Metro if the traveller was accompanied by someone.

The matter was now in the hands of Health & Safety and could not be changed until the final report was received.

The restrictions apply only to scooters not wheelchairs.

Many people not happy about this as independence being taken away but nothing can be changed at present. It was also suggested that volunteers could be used to assist.

Vince said all ideas would be considered.



Buddy Scheme – to help with independent travel.

Irene explained that the scheme is going from strength to strength and her job is now permanent, she gave an example of a Stagecoach driver who offered to work as a volunteer. Irene is getting around all transport authorities. The Bridge Card helps drivers to identify travellers who need help.

Overall the scheme is very positive.



Learning Disabilities Development Fund

Not enough voting members at extra meeting to make final decision. Executive group sorting out – their meeting was very long in order to make correct considerations.

- 4 bids got a yes
- Other bids need some work to help decide

We will report back at next meeting.

What we will talk about next time

A Community life theme will be talked about at the next meeting

This will include

- Community Life opportunities- daytime, weekends , evenings
- Community links , connections and development
- Making the most of Newcastle Partnership opportunities especially re Regeneration
- Small Sparks

Brenda thanked everyone for attending



Date, time and venue of next meeting

Tuesday 7th October 2008 10am start, 9.40 for coffee,
At Disability North, The Dene Centre, Castle Farm Road,
Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 1PH