



Speak Out and Listen!

People with learning disabilities working to make services better in Brighton and Hove



By Sarah Watson.

Me, Susan and Ingrid have been doing some fantastic training to Council staff. This includes the Housing and Benefits team, City Clean and Parks, the Planning Team, and the Teams from local libraries.



My job is to do half of the talking and reading and to answer questions. Susan's job is to do half of the talking and reading. She does a brilliant entrance speech and gives out and collects hand outs.

We are training them about understanding learning disabilities.



We tell them how to support learning disabled people when using their service.

We ask them to make an action plan to use when they are in work and in everyday life. We made a person change their view when we did training. The person now says he will give more choices and job roles to people with learning disability.

What difference has training staff made:

- The idea for the Thumbs Up scheme came from training.
- Staff at the museum and in the Buildings Team said they would ask the groups' advice on making things better for people with learning disabilities
- Building control, planning, housing are going to offer a 1:1 meeting for people with learning disabilities
- Housing staff, planning and environmental health said they would make their information simpler
- Staff from lots of departments will join the thumbs up scheme



City Clean and The Level

At our training City Clean and Parks said they will listen to needs of people with learning disabilities. The Wednesday Speaking Up Group met with them...

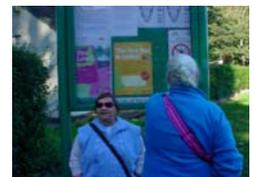
The Level by Susan Street and Peggy Brown

We talked about the Level. It is so disgusting. We saw the pictures when we went to the level of dancing and games. We were looking at the pictures to see what you can do to make it better when you go to The Level.



They should do something with it. Have a bit of life in it. It's a bit dangerous. I think they should do more to it, more safeness. They are going to get things done like flowers. Boards are so high up we couldn't hardly read them. They should be lower with bigger writing on them.

The garden looks not so good. They want to do something to make it safer. They should have more lights when you are walking along there. I hope they come and do something and spend a bit of money on the Level.



City Clean talked to us about complaints to the Council. By Peggy Brown

Big bins. They should make a few of them smaller for little people. How are people in wheelchairs gonna manage. I said about it to those 2 men. If I'm small it's hard for me. I have a helluva job to move it. I can't see it properly. If you got no-one else to help you it's hard.

They are going to look into it. I am happy about it. Especially when someone is disabled they need help now and again.



Working with The Theatre Royal

By Peter Cutts and Debra Hartin



The Wednesday Group invited the Theatre Royal in to meet us. We then went to visit and they asked us questions. They wanted to know if we liked going to the Theatre Royal. They showed us all the way round the stage. They asked us about having a learning disability. We told them 'yes, we have.

We asked them how much ticket prices would be. Some of us thought it was too dear.

I like the big curtain going up because it was colourful. I like the red carpet, the colour of it and the lighting on stage. It is easier for us to go now. The bar lady knows me now and she's nice. It was quite interesting going there. The manager was nice. He asked us lots of questions. He told us they were going to make a coffee shop.



What has changed for people with learning disabilities as a result of this work?



- People can get familiar with the theatre with a visit.
- People can arrive earlier to get settled before crowds arrive.
- People get more help ordering from the bar
- There is a quiet space available before the show and in the interval
- People can look at their seats before they book them



If you want to talk to groups about your services please contact Sarah or Ingrid on 01273 421921

Travel Buddies - by Susan Street.

Some people don't go on the buses because they can't get out. Some people want to go out but they can't.



A Travel buddy helps people go on the bus or go shopping. I was helping Paula. We used to go to college together and I used to take her home. She can't go by herself. A travel buddy helps people. We watch the roads and traffic lights. You go out with somebody and take them home. It's good fun going on the bus yourself.

Travel buddies is good because you make it more easy to go when you can't go by yourself. It's got bigger. More people want to join in with the travel buddy scheme.

Travel buddies was an idea of the Wednesday Speaking Up group. They worked with the Grace Eyre Foundation to set it up.

Giving Feedback to the Bus Company by Susan Street



We went to see the bus company. We talked about putting the step down. They were very good some of the drivers. They put the ramp down now.

We told them to let us sit down before they start, wait for a minute. They always stop now until we get off.

It's good when you've got an orange bus pass. They know what colour it is now. He knows we've got a learning disability when we get on the bus. He helps you .

If anything goes wrong keep your ticket and then you can ring up the bus company. And if they are rude to you, you've got the telephone number on your ticket.

Using libraries

Some people at Speak Out do not use the library. We have been finding out about the library and giving them feedback. People joined the library and took out DVDs for the first time!!!!

I put this on the earphones, listening to music. It was the Sound of Music. I want to go again. **Mandy Kite**



Doris found the signs difficult. She told the Manager.



'It was quite difficult to find the book I wanted, but the staff were friendly and helpful. I was shown that staff wear badges on a card around their necks which makes them easy to spot. I borrowed the book I wanted and got help to renew it over the phone. I will continue to use the library for my knitting books.' Doris Tucker

What are the libraries going to do?...

- The manager told Doris they are going to make clearer signs
- At awareness training run by Speak Out ,staff from different libraries said they would look at the signs, the counter and the seating and start using pictures. They will invite Speak Out groups to help them make things better.



The Speaking Up groups have been working with the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership to talk about what support they want around cooking and growing food. Some of the groups have had cookery sessions.

By the Tuesday Speaking Up Group

‘We wanted to try and cook for ourselves, if you enjoy cooking. We actually did very good food. Mushroom risotto with ham and bacon. I got the recipe still. I think we learnt how to make the mushroom risotto.’



‘I do my own shopping. It’s important I enjoy cooking, eating right food. Sometimes I do it from scratch sometimes in packet.’

‘I like growing food and eating it like my dad did. I like his cabbage in his garden. It tastes really nice.’ Jennifer Troy



‘I go to the allotment, grow potatoes and carrots.’ Mandy Kite.

‘You make your own sandwiches, cereal, we make our own cup of tea. Not allowed to touch the cooker. It’s silly because I can do the cooker because I do it at Feast. I really like catering. Yesterday we made vegetable soup it was very spicy. If you don’t cook, you’re ill.’

More work on Food and healthy lives:

- We are doing some work with the Food Partnership to help managers to think about how they can involve people in cooking more.
- We are finding out what training staff in homes need around cooking and nutrition.



The Brighton Centre

By Adam Godwin and Edwin Borick



The Brighton Centre was built in 1977 and it has been used for party conferences including Labour, Conservative and Lib Dem. I think the Brighton Centre is good...it's an old fashioned building. We went to the main hall where they do concerts. It was very posh. We would like to meet them again because I am hoping to meet some celebrities like Kerry Katona and Kara Tointon who won Strictly Come Dancing last year!!

It was a very nice place. I looked around with a nice tour guide. Blue chairs, lots of space. The tickets are a lot of money. Wheelchair access was good.

What has changed as a result of this work?

- We are going to tell the Brighton Centre what we thought of our visit.
- The Wednesday Group and the centre will stay in touch and talk about issues as they come up.

Hove Station

By Martyn Billings and Dom Green



We visited Hove railway station before Christmas. We wanted to see how easy it was to get around. Some things were really good, but some things need improving, so that people who have disabilities find it easier to use. We contacted the railway company to tell them about what we'd found.



What has changed as a result of this work?

- The people from the railway company are going to meet us at the station, to walk around and talk about how to improve things for everybody.