

Name of project: Learning Disability Together Network



Project Lead: Neil Holmes

Sub Group overseeing project:

Taking Part in the City / Work & Skills

Project Targets from original bid:

- Support the network with Valuing People Now and person centred approaches
- Improve access to services for people with a learning disability
- Improve the standards of services and help people to be more included
- Assist the network to identify funding for additional services
- Assist organisations to secure more jobs, volunteering, sports and leisure opportunities for people with a learning disability

How the project will do this work:

1. Creating a network of organisations involved in ensuring that people with learning disabilities are enabled to live valued lives as part of their mainstream community
 - I. Mapping Exercise to identify relevant local networks and mainstream providers
 - II. Establish an advisory group for people with learning disabilities, ensuring ongoing network representation
 - III. Initial consultation and workshops with potential members to identify need and decide format of the network, focussing on 'Valuing People' empowerment and employment objectives
 - IV. Marketing activity to engage relevant organisations not represented

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on local groups

- V. Launch event to encourage representation from local networks and organisations

2. Developing an effective model of information and support for network members to streamline referrals between services and develop clear pathways towards learning, training and employment for people with learning disabilities

- I. Create a directory of network members and services
- II. Embed service-user views into every aspect of the delivery model
- III. Provide regular information, advice and support for members to develop clear pathways for people with learning disabilities (For example, via e-forum, literature, meetings, workshops and events)
- IV. Streamline referral between services for people with learning disabilities
- V. Create and maintain an effective evaluation process to capture, monitor and review the network's activities and gather Good Practice from member organisations
- VI. Develop a robust reporting system for the network's members, steering group and other key stakeholders

3. Influencing public policy and spending to enable progression for people with learning disabilities towards learning, training and employment

- I. Provide accurate, informative quarterly reports and evaluation documents for the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board
- II. Provide hard evidence to public sector bodies on the benefits of develop clear pathways towards learning, training and employment for people with learning disabilities
- III. Develop a dialogue with public sector procurers and commissioners on behalf of the network
- IV. Act as a collective voice for network members to influence the local policy agenda e.g. Local Area Agreement, City Employment and Skills Plan, Local Equalities and Diversity Agenda

4. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the network and its member organisations

- I. Fine tune the model of Good Practice in relation to the network and its activities

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- II. Identify and secure funding to add value to the network's activities, in particular user involvement
- III. Identify and secure ongoing funding to continue the network's activities
- IV. Encourage partnership working and resource sharing between network members
- V. Identify and promote capacity building opportunities for network organisations
- VI. Work in collaboration with network members and key stakeholders to produce an analysis of new and existing funding for learning disability services
- VII. Develop long-term effective relationships with public sector bodies, procurers and commissioners on behalf of the network to ensure that learning disabilities remains high on the agenda

How much 2009/10 LDDF money the project gets: £28,907

Name of person completing this report:

Karen Barford

What the project has done in April 2009 to March 2010

Objective 1. Creating a network of organisations involved in ensuring that people with learning disabilities are enabled to live valued lives as part of their mainstream community.

1. We came up with a name and logo for the network:

The Learning Disability Together Network



2. We decided what the goal for the Learning Disability Together Network would be:

‘to bring together organisations, people, communities and stakeholders from all sectors and backgrounds to share best practice, ideas and information in order to develop and support greater choice, access, control and opportunities for people with learning disabilities living in Brighton and Hove’.

3. We set up a steering group to oversee this project.

This includes people from Care Co-ops and Impetus who are managing the project and the Chair of the Work and Skills sub-group and the Chair of the Taking Part in the City sub-group.

We also want to enable people with learning disabilities to sit on the Steering Group and we are planning for this for Year Two.

4. We did some research to find out which organisations would be interested in the network and we asked people to invite other organisations that would benefit from the network.
5. We made sure our invitations were in an accessible format.
6. We carried out two consultation events at Brighton Town Hall in September and December 2009 to find out what type of network organisations wanted and what their priorities were.
 - They wanted regular meetings and events to meet with other providers, find out about what is already going on and improve the lives and pathways towards employment for people with learning disabilities.
 - Their priorities were – Active Lives, Pathways and Employment.

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- 32 people came to the first consultation event; 10 people from the public sector, 2 people from the private sector and 20 people from the third sector.
 - 33 people came to the second consultation event; most people mentioned that 'networking' was one of the most useful parts of the event.
7. We set up a focus group for people with learning disabilities to make sure we planned the network with their views in mind.
 8. We had the first Learning Disability Together Network meeting in March 2010 at Grace Eyre.
- 24 people came to the first meeting. 100% of people thought the event was good to excellent.

We invited Jim Simpson, who is a networking trainer, to the first Learning Disability Together Network meeting.

He shared his knowledge and experience of good networking and then supported everyone to network effectively with each other.

Members found this very useful and we hope to have a 'theme' for each future meeting based on the priorities of the network.

Objective 2. Developing an effective model of information and support for network members to streamline referrals between services and develop clear pathways towards learning, training and employment for people with learning disabilities.

1. We now have about 50 organisations registered as members for the Learning Disability Together Network.
2. Initial work has taken place to create a directory of network members and services.
3. We are promoting the network and hope to get even more members next year.
4. We aim to hold meetings every other month and also send out information to members via e-mail. We may also send out newsletters to the Learning Disability Together Network.
5. The network is being developed to act as a central information and knowledge transfer point.

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6. We ask for feedback at every stage of the project and this has helped us plan for the second year of the Learning Disability Together Network.

Objective 3. Influencing public policy and spending to enable progression for people with learning disabilities towards learning, training and employment.

1. We have provided accurate and informative quarterly reports and evaluation documents for the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board.
2. The Learning Disability Together Network can now act as a collective voice for network members and we hope to influence the local policy agenda.
3. We are developing better ways to speak to the public sector about the benefits of develop clear pathways towards learning, training and employment for people with learning disabilities.
4. We can give an example of how one public sector organisation has been able to provide opportunities to people with learning disabilities through the Learning Disability Together Network:

A Sussex police officer, Neil Honnor, came along to the Learning Disability Together Network and spoke to the organisers about the police providing opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

Jan and Claire from the Learning Disability Together Network met with the police to discuss this further and it was decided that Tanya MacLeod from Grace Eyre would meet with them too.

The Chief Inspector from Brighton and Hove, Laurence Taylor, is fully behind this project and hopes to offer volunteering opportunities within their local Neighbourhood Policing Teams. These range from car valeting to administration roles.

Grace Eyre is now looking at developing this idea into a pilot scheme in partnership with the Police and there is every hope that it can be rolled out across Sussex!

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Objective 4. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the network and its member organisations

1. We have won some funding to continue the Learning Disability Together Network for another year but we still need to secure more funding to make it work really well.
2. We have been given funding to train people with learning disabilities to make sure that they are represented in the decision making process for the Learning Disability Together Network.
3. We encourage partnership working in the Learning Disability Together Network as we know that it helps build successful pathways towards employment for people with learning disabilities.
4. We try to make sure that the network knows about new things happening that improve the lives of people with learning disabilities.

We had a presentation from Tim Wilson from Brighton and Hove City Council's Workforce Development Team at the second consultation event.

He talked to the members about the 'Thumbs Up' scheme which shows organisations how to offer good support to people with learning disabilities.

This scheme will be open to all local organisations and includes local shops, transport, leisure services. They sign up to 'Thumbs Up' and display a sticker to show they are part of the scheme.