



“It is vital that family carers are recognised and valued as key partners”

Valuing People Now, Jan 2009



Welcome to the fourth issue of the Involving People Newsletter for carers of adults with learning disabilities.

So we now have a new government, with new leaders eager to put their ideas into action. The main aim of this newsletter is to give you, as a carer, the opportunity to be involved in the development of services, if you chose to be and to put your ideas into practice. Any comments on how this could be done more effectively would be welcomed.

I would also be interested to hear of people's experiences working with services – particularly where things have worked out well so that good practice can be carried out in more places.

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Or you could come and visit – but worth phoning first!
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Carer Representation Opportunities!

What is a Learning Disability Partnership Board?



It is a group of people who meet to decide what needs to happen to make the lives of people with learning disabilities better. The Board is made up of different members: ⇒ people with learning disabilities

- ⇒ family carers
- ⇒ people who work in health, social care, education, employment support and housing
- ⇒ people who decide how to spend the money for learning disability services.

What does the Learning Disability Partnership Board do?

- ★ agrees the overall plans (strategy)
- ★ decides on what is most important (priorities) to make Valuing People Now happen in Hertfordshire.
- ★ checks how things are going and receives regular reports on developments in different areas
- ★ makes sure service users, carers, local voluntary sector and independent providers are fully involved and represented in developments
- ★ links into Regional Boards and Forums to share good practice

The Learning Disability Partnership Board has a number of working groups that report to it and, after a recent review, additional ones have been identified. All the working groups welcome and encourage carer participation, but at the moment there are some groups that do not have that representation.

The suggested Working Groups are:

Existing:	Health	New:	Hate Crime
	Housing		Quality
	Transition		Personalisation
	Transport		Workforce & Employment

Most of these groups meet once every two months for about 1½ to 2 hours so the commitment is not excessive. Venues vary but are often in Stevenage or Hemel at the County Council offices and transport expenses are covered. Currently there are carers on Health (another person could possibly join this group), Housing and Transition, and a volunteer has indicated interest in the Personalisation Group. There will also be vacancies coming up on the Partnership Board itself in the future (this meets every month, in Stevenage).

I would be very interested to hear from any carers who would like to know more about becoming a carer representative on any of the above groups. Just expressions of interest at the moment and there would be training available to help carers think about what a carer representative should do. If there is an inundation of volunteers (!), priority will be given to those who also contribute to the Carers Forum – but it would be great to spread the load (a very light one) amongst different people. Contact Jo for more details.



Involvement possibilities with HPFT – Introducing Sophie Taylor



I work for the Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. I have been in post since March and my role is to develop and support the involvement of clients with learning disabilities; both those who receive specialist learning disability services and those with learning disabilities who access mainstream mental health services.

The services the Trust runs in Hertfordshire for people with learning disabilities include:

- ★ Community Support Units at Watford and Hailey providing both inpatient assessment and services for those living in the community
- ★ Intensive Support Teams for community based clients across Hertfordshire.
- ★ Assessment and Treatment Services and Specialist Residential Services at Harperbury
- ★ Treatment, Assessment and Rehabilitation Services at the Eric Shepherd Unit
- ★ Treatment and Rehabilitation Services at the Kestrels Residential Unit

My role has been developed as part of the Trust's Involvement Strategy, which includes a commitment to make the involvement of Service Users *and* Carers central to all our work. There are various forums through which this is encouraged – the Service User Council for users of Mental Health Services, the Carer Council, the Involvement Network (Older Peoples Services), the Black Minority Ethnic Service User Forum. The Carer Council is currently supported by Jo Burnham, Patient and Public Involvement Lead and meets every two months at Hatfield. We recently held a consultation to find out how people would like to be involved, and most people felt they would like to continue with the development of separate forums to suit the needs of different groups of Service Users and Carers, so I am currently engaged in developing a forum for people with Learning Disabilities.



In addition to the forums listed above we are also always looking at new ways of encouraging and facilitating the involvement of service users and carers, and welcome any questions or ideas you may have. My contact number is 01727 804065 or e-mail sophie.taylor@hertspartsft.nhs.uk. Once forum meetings are established, I will be investigating ways of including the voice of those who cannot or do not wish to attend meetings. I will also be looking into ways of including the perspective of those with communication challenges – the input and involvement of carers will be an important part of this work.



Supporting Family Carers of People with Learning Disabilities



There are lots of other organisations – local and national - who are there to support carers of people with Learning Disabilities, as well as Carers In Hertfordshire. Sometimes it is confusing which might be the best contact to make, so two national organisations (Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Crossroads Care) have produced a comprehensive list of information covering specific disabilities and general disability issues (eg Transition or Housing), which may be helpful. The resource list is 64 pages long and can be accessed using this link:


<http://static.carers.org/files/policy-and-resources-pack-final-low-res-4604.pdf>


For those of you without access to the internet, contact Jo with any particular area of interest and it can be printed off for you and sent by post. Sadly, it would be prohibitively expensive to print the whole document for everyone.




Have your say - A guide to making comments, compliments and complaints about services provided and arranged by Adult Care Services

Your views about the services that ACS provide and arrange for you are welcomed, to find out if you are satisfied with their services. This includes what they are doing well, what could be done better and what needs to be changed.

 **Comments** - You may have a comment or a suggestion to make about a service you have received that you would like ACS to think about when planning future services. Your comment will be registered and passed to the relevant manager.

 **Compliments** - ACS welcome your comments praising a member of staff or a particular service. Compliments will be recorded and shared to help spread good practice.

 **Complaints** - Please tell ACS if you are unhappy with
a service you have received
a service that the person you care for receives
a service you have received as a carer
the length of time it has taken ACS to do something they have promised

How to tell ACS what you think:

Talk to a member of staff from Adult Care Services with whom you have contact.
Send a letter to the ACS Client Relations Manager at Hertfordshire County Council, 2nd Floor, Farnham House, Six Hills Way, Stevenage, SG1 2FQ
Call 01438 843404 or Email acs.crelations@hertscc.gov.uk
Contact through the website www.hertsdirect.org/haveyoursay

Have Your Say about Carers In Hertfordshire's Services

We would also be interested in hearing comments, compliments and complaints about Carers In Hertfordshire's services, as this is very helpful in developing our service to meet carers' needs. So if you have anything that you would like to feedback to us, whether it is about the development of services for learning disability adults and families, or about one of our other services, please contact us by e-mail, post or phone – details on the front cover. One comment has been is that this newsletter is too wordy for some people and should be made more accessible. This will certainly be looked at for next time.



Feedback on Learning Disability Strategy for Hertfordshire

In the last newsletter, your comments were requested for the new strategy that was being written for LD services in Herts. To keep you updated, the new strategy is now nearly ready for publication and all comments as far as possible have been included. The new strategy will be in an accessible format but there will also be a detailed action plan that will accompany the strategy, and it is in this plan that many of the comments and thoughts will be incorporated. The next newsletter will include details of where to read the strategy and action plan.

So your comments have not been ignored, but have been read and acted upon, so thank you for taking the time to contribute to the Strategy.

Workforce Development training Courses

Did you know that Herts County Council provide training courses for staff and external workers about working with people with learning disabilities? These can also be attended by carers, free of charge, and are held on both sides of the county (Stevenage and Watford mainly). They can also be accessed by staff employed by an individual budget as personal assistants. If you are interested in any of those listed below, contact Jo for dates and information on how to book. (01992 586969)

How to bring PCP (Person Centred Planning) & the CPA together
How to Implement the Health Action Plan
Introduction to Autistic Spectrum Disorders
Introduction to Learning Disabilities
Learning Disabilities & Dementia
Learning Disabilities & Mental Health: Supporting People in Crisis
Living with Risk; Risk Assessment and Risk Management within Learning Disabilities services
Mental Health Issues for People with Learning Disabilities
Person Centred Approach to Planning
Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults



FUTURE DATES - 2010

Call Jo for further details of any of the following events:

LD Carers Forum

9 June Topic – Further Education
5 August Topic - Personalisation

All Meetings 10 until 12.30 at
Birchwood Leisure Centre,
Hatfield, AL10 0AN

Local Forum Dates:

These forums are open to anyone who would like to attend. It is a good chance for carers and those who use services to meet with people who provide the services that are in your area to share information about what is happening and to raise any issues that may arise. The mix of people attending is different in all the groups – why not go along and see if you find it interesting? It's another good opportunity to raise carer issues to a wide range of people.

E Herts	to be advised
Stevenage / North Herts	22 July 7pm to 9pm in Stevenage
St Albans	16 July 2010 – Homewood Rd URC Church 1.30pm to 3.30pm
Watford / 3 Rivers	to be advised
Hertsmere	8 June 2010 Borehamwood Community Centre 10.30am. More details at www.HertsmereLDforum.org
Welwyn / Hatfield	1 July 2010 10am at Woodhall Community Centre, WGC
Dacorum	16 July 2010 – 10.30am to 12.30pm at Social Centre for the Blind, Boxmoor



views. For further copies please contact Carers in Hertfordshire on 01992 586969 or by email contact@carersinherts.org.uk