

Appendix 3

EIT Review of Learning Disability Services

An approach to consultation and communication

Background

1. Consultation and appropriate communication are key to any review process. It is our intention with this EIT Review to involve as many stakeholders as possible and this paper sets out how we intend to do this.

The Task

2. Evidence from Carefirst shows that there are in the order of 515 people in Stockton Borough in receipt of services from Stockton on Tees Borough Council relating to learning disability needs, they are pre-eminent in our thinking and approach to this review. We intend to engage with:-
 - The clients themselves
 - The clients' carers
 - Elected members
 - The Council staff employed to provide services
 - The providers of services (some are commissioned)
 - The Trade Unions with members serving the clients.
 - The wider public

Partnership Working

3. We recognise the value of working in Partnership to conduct this review and as such have enlisted the help of Stockton Helps All (SHA) and the George Hardwick Foundation (GHF).
4. Stockton Helps All is the trading name of the advocacy service provided by Stockton District Advice and Information Service. Stockton Helps All work to support disabled people throughout the Borough to find and articulate their voice to challenge and hold service providers to account.
5. The George Hardwick Foundation is the Borough's principal organisation providing help and support to carers.
6. Partnership working with these established and well regarded organisations is key to achieving credibility amongst our target audience of carers and clients.
7. We are also aware of the work being undertaken by the PCT to review their LD service provision and are corresponding with lead officers for that work.

Phase 1 Consultation with Clients

8. Stockton Helps All (SHA) has begun, one to one and face to face, the consultation with clients in day care, supported living and are soon to

approach those in residential care within the Borough. During August the SHA staff will be working with clients at the following:-

- Rievaulx on August 1st
 - Stockton Day Services on August 8th
 - The Shaw Trust (Grangefield Project) on August 11th
 - Allensway and clients in the STEPS Service – 15th – 17th August
 - Home visits and re-visits – 22nd to 25th August.
9. Stockton Helps All are aiming to raise awareness of the review through these efforts and work already completed with up to 300 clients. The work is conducted in small groups or individually as appropriate to the client's individual needs.
10. This initial conversation with clients is concerning:-
- What is good about the service you use?
 - What is bad about the service you use?
 - What would you like to change?
11. The SHA staff are dealing with our target customers on a daily basis and as such are experts in the best means of engaging the wide spectrum of different needs people with a recognised learning difficulty may have.
12. SHA are also working with Inclusion North to facilitate a workshop in early September where it is proposed to bring clients together with officers and members on the Health Select Committee in order to hear the views of users first hand.

Phase 1 Consultation with Carers

13. Letters have been sent to the registered carers of the 500+ clients in receipt of services. Carers are invited to attend the Phase 1 consultation sessions where the same questions as those put to customers will be posed, what's good, bad or missing. The six sessions in the principal townships are as follows:-
- 18.00 til 19.30 on Tuesday 9 August – South Thornaby Community Centre
 - 18.00 til 19.30 on Tuesday 16 August – The Lady Chapel at St Aidan's Church, Billingham
 - 13.30 til 15.00 on Thursday 18 August - The George Hardwick Foundation, Stockton
 - 18.00 til 19.30 on Thursday 18 August - The George Hardwick Foundation, Stockton
 - 13.30 til 15.00 on Monday 22 August – Billingham Community Centre, Billingham
 - 13.30 til 15.00 on Tuesday 23 August – South Thornaby Community Centre, Thornaby
14. Staff from the Diversity Team will attend all six sessions which will be led by Julie Nixon and Sean McEneaney.

15. A specific email address LDConsultation@stockton.gov.uk has been set up for anyone who cannot attend any of these six initial sessions to post their opinions or raise questions.
16. In addition to the carer events, it is proposed to send a questionnaire to all carers known to the Council in order to ensure that those not able or willing to attend the events have the opportunity to provide their views at this stage. The same questionnaire will be available online and for anyone else who may express an interest in Phase 1 of the consultation work.
17. This will also be made available online, together with an Easy Read version. The George Hardwick Foundation will be informed of the availability of the survey so that any carers not known to the Council have the opportunity to feed in.

Initial Consultations with Staff, Providers and Union Reps

18. More work is required to ensure staff [commissioners, LD care managers, in-house provider staff] are as informed as possible concerning the progress of the review, especially the potential service changes as they begin to be formulated, and to ensure that they have the opportunity to feed in their views.
19. It is anticipated that there will be a regular staff newsletter as has become established practice with EIT Reviews and a programme of update sessions at key venues need to be planned and booked.
20. Commissioned providers have been informed that specific update sessions will take place.

Health Select Committee

21. Members of the Health Select Committee have been invited to attend the carers consultation sessions planned for August. Key messages from Phase 1 (opinion gathering on existing services) will be outlined at the September 7th meeting and in full on October 17th.
22. The Phase 2 consultation on proposed changes to services which must begin after the 17th October Health Select Committee will be reporting key messages at the 28th November meeting and in full by January 9th.
23. Work is underway to offer members of the Health Select Committee the opportunity to visit existing services and examples of good practice from within and outside Stockton Borough as soon as possible.

Stockton-on-Tees Local Involvement Network (LINK)

24. A sub-group of Stockton-on-Tees LINK has been briefed on the scope and purpose of the review. The LINK has also increased its efforts recently to engage with people with learning disabilities. The LINK will be asked to comment on the consultation plan, and who they would wish to be involved in the review.
25. In addition, the Chair of the LINK regularly attends meetings of the Health Select Committee.

Transitions

26. Colleagues in Transitions have organised in partnership with Abbey Hill School and Stockton Helps All two workshop events to take place at Abbey Hill. On September 13th Year 12 pupils will attend a facilitated workshop to share with staff their aspirations about their own futures and what might be required to help them realise these ambitions. The event will be repeated on the 15th September for Year 13 pupils.
27. The parents/carers of the 80 children taking part have been invited to attend separate sessions which will run in parallel to discern their opinions about their children's/ward's needs as they approach the age where they leave education to come within the remit of Adult Services.

The Consultation and Communications Group

28. A broad group of Council Staff have been enlisted to support the consultation and communication efforts associated with this review. The remit of this group is to ensure that the consultation approach is appropriate, meaningful, robust to both scrutiny and challenge.
29. The review will need to meet the Council's obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty, and ensure that a robust Equality Impact Assessment is developed as part of the process. In order to ensure that these issues are covered from the outset the group is made up as follows:-

Julie Nixon; Johanne Parker; Elizabeth Kipling-Vasey; Liz Hanley; Sean McEneaney; Sheila Pearson; Geoff Mears; Ian Ramshaw; reps from Stockton Helps All and The George Hardwick Foundation; Laurayne Featherstone; Emma Chesworth; Victoria Welsh; Lynn Wightman (STEPS); Mehnaz Rashid, Peter Mennear.
30. A representative from HR will be invited to join the group as the consultation with staff gets underway in earnest.
31. A press release promoting the Carers' consultation is to be issued during the week commencing 1st August. The review has previously been featured in Stockton News.
32. Support has also been requested from colleagues within the Web Development Team to exploit all the opportunities such as a link to the Council's "Home Page" in an attempt to make the engagement on this EIT review as meaningful as possible.

Phase 2 Consultation

33. The approach outlined here is concerned primarily with Phase 1 of consultation aimed at gathering opinion on existing services. This phase needs to be completed and the key messages reported to the planned Health Select Committee on October 17th. A second phase of consultation will subsequently be planned.