

LEARNING DISABILITIES ADVOCACY GROUP

Notes of the meeting held on 14 February 2007 at the Community Zone Building, Platt Bridge

Present: Peter Field, Les (support worker), Beth Blamires, Sue Seager, Alison Perry, Simon Fleming, Susan Bannister, Liz Elston, Rebecca Hargreaves, Angela Seddon, Nathan Robinson, John Kay, Stuart Parsons, Bridget Whittell

Apologies: Anita Wheldon, Ian Winstanley

2 NOTES OF MEETING

Notes of the meeting held on 17 January were passed as a correct record.

3 FEEDBACK FROM REGIONAL ADVOCACY CONFERENCE

Peter and Nathan attended the Regional Advocacy Conference held in Blackpool 31 January – 2 February. They talked about the conference, showed some photographs, and gave a Powerpoint presentation showing some of the highlights from the conference. Important themes discussed at the conference were transport, money, housing and advocacy.

Following on from the conference, nominations had been invited from people who would like to stay on the steering group to help organise next year's regional advocacy conference. This would involve a commitment to attending meetings held once a month in Accrington. Peter said he would be interested.

4 'STEP OUT' AND 'STEP UP' PROJECTS

Liz Elston and Rebecca Hargreaves had been invited along to this meeting to talk about two new projects starting in Wigan run by Nugent Care, an organisation based in Liverpool. The projects are called 'Step Out' and 'Step Up' and both are aimed at supporting people with learning disabilities.

The 'Step Out' Project helps people to become more active. If someone is interested they will be paired up with a volunteer who will help them to try out new leisure or sporting activities.

The 'Step Up' Project helps people to become volunteers and involves being paired up with a buddy volunteer who will help a person to become a work volunteer in a work place of their choice.

Both projects are new and they are just starting to train the volunteers who will help people. The projects are targeted at people aged over 50 and at those

living in certain areas in the Wigan borough. However, as the projects are just starting up they are keen to get people interested and there may be some flexibility. Both projects are being funded for 18 months by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

Liz and Rebecca left some leaflets about the projects, with contact details, and invited people to get in touch to find out more.

5 BANK ACCOUNT / FINANCE ISSUES

The old Free Speech bank account has now been closed and Bridget had a cheque for £39,008 to pay into the new Wigan & Leigh People First bank account. Bridget had also written a letter to the Co-operative Bank about the old Kitt Green Action Group telling them we wanted the money left in that bank account to be transferred to the new Wigan & Leigh People First bank account. Susan is a signatory for the old Kitt Green Action Group account and she signed a letter to say she is happy for the transfer to take place.

We need to find a volunteer willing to be a Treasurer for the Wigan & Leigh People First group and to look after the group's money. The Treasurer could also help to support a group member learn about this role and what is involved. Peter said he would be interested. A volunteer who took on the role of Treasurer would need to know about financial issues and what is involved in being a Treasurer.

6 RECRUITMENT OF ADVOCACY CO-ORDINATOR

Stuart said there had been a good response to the advert. A total of 90 application packs have been sent out so far. The closing date is the end of February. Shortlisting will take place in the first week of March and interview dates are planned for the end of March.

7 SUPPORT FOR SELF ADVOCATES

The three self advocate members of the LDPB had been supported by the three support workers named at last meeting and this had worked well. Unfortunately, there was still an issue around support for Nathan as Wigan Link had not confirmed whether support at LDPB meetings would be available. Ian Winstanley from Mencap had supported Nathan at the January LDPB meeting as a one-off only.

It was agreed to arrange a separate meeting to discuss support for self-advocates as there was not enough time to do it at this meeting. (Meeting arranged for Wednesday 21 February.)

8 WORKFORCE PLANNING ADVOCACY ACTION PLAN

Andrea Greally, the Learning Disability Workforce Planning and Development Co-ordinator, has been putting together workforce plans for all the LDPB sub groups, including the advocacy group. These reflect each sub group's key priorities. Bridget has helped Andrea to put together the workforce plan for the advocacy group, making sure it links closely to our updated Advocacy PATH. If anyone would like to see a copy of the Workforce Planning Advocacy Action Plan, please get in touch with Bridget or Andrea.

9 ADVOCACY AUDIT

Angela has received an email from Georgie Lawson (from Infopoint, who we have commissioned to help us with our advocacy audit). Georgie has been on sick leave but has now returned and we are hoping to arrange a meeting to talk about the audit.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Bridget mentioned a seminar being organised by RiPfA (Research in Practice for Adults) which is taking place in Manchester on 22 February called 'Delivering Outcomes: Learning Disabilities'. Bridget, Angela and Alison will be attending.

11 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday, 14 March

Venue: Wigan Family Welfare (St Nathaniel's Vicarage, Ridyard Street, Platt Bridge, Wigan)

Time: 2.0-4.0pm

The meeting on 14 March will not involve self-advocates. As previously agreed, meetings with self-advocate members will take place bi-monthly.