

AT AN EVIDENCE GATHERING
EVENT of the
**MODERNISING SERVICES
WORKING GROUP** held at
the County Hotel, Birmingham Road,
Walsall on **Friday 15th April, 2005** at
11:00 a.m.

PRESENT

Councillor T. Oliver
Councillor C. Ault

John Greensill	Head of Learning
Ian Staples	Joint Commissioning Manager - Learning Disabilities
Glenys Staunton	Social Care & Supported Housing
Ann Draper	Social Care & Supported Housing
Alison Davies	(Royal Mencap)
Vicky Phipps	(Royal Mencap)

Pat Warner	Scrutiny Officer
Stuart Bentley	Scrutiny Support Officer

Service Users

Michelle Law	Independent
Alan Smith	Hawbush College & Croft Street Centre
Matthew Blakeman	Rose Hill Special Care
Roger Hill	Rose Hill Special Care
Yvonne Corbett	Brewer Street Centre
Doreen Saxon	Brewer Street Centre
Shirley Mason	Albion Road Centre
Gillian Sedgewick	Albion Road Centre
Graeme Smith	Links to Work
Steven Beardsmore	Links to Work
Susan Field	Links to Work / Pinfold Centre
Sam Cordes	Northgate Centre
Paul Glover	Northgate Centre
Paul Green	Goscote Centre
Michael Wiggins	Goscote Centre

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Walker

2. Evidence Gathering Re: Modernising Day Care Services from a Users Perspective

Councillor Oliver opened the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to hear the views of the service users on how they rated the day care service they currently received and what they wanted it to look like in the future.

John Greensill, Joint Head of Learning Disabilities, introduced Alison Davies (Royal Mencap) who would be undertaking a presentation concerning the modernising of the day care service and leisure activities for service users

Alison Davies then continued with a presentation of the service users views gathered from over 100 service users from day centres, links to work and independents. The service users assisted in presenting their views. The views presented focused on the following areas, i.e.

“What we think now” – (what’s good and what’s not so good)
“What we want for the future“

During the presentations on Links to Work, Councillor Ault asked what work had been taken away from the users. Graham Smith replied that safety locks had been made at Brewer Street, mainly to give people from the centres the opportunity to work. Councillor Ault asked if the work had been paid and Graham Smith replied that it was. Councillor Ault asked if there was any other work. Graham Smith replied that Links to Work had a number of departments; 2 catering, garden links, packing links and manufacturing links. He further stated this was the first job he had done where he had been paid.

During the presentation from Brewer Street, Councillor Ault asked what the self advocacy meetings were. Yvonne Corbett replied that they had their own group which met monthly, without staff support, in a dedicated room. These meetings are; to ask other service users about issues they might wish to raise; involve outside agencies or to help other service users with their problems.

During the presentation by Michelle Law, an independent user, Councillor Ault asked Michelle what she would like to do. She replied that she wanted to continue to study leather craft but would like to get a job with leather.

Following the presentation, service users were invited to raise any other issues they might have.

Sam Cordes stated that he would be leaving Northgate soon. He missed the old staff but understood they had to move on. He was bored now and was spending a few days at college and a few days at links to work. He was enjoying meeting new people.

Doreen Saxon stated that she had been at Brewer Street since 1967. Things were much better now than they had ever been. More relaxed, less formal with supportive staff.

Graham Smith stated that he used to attend Shepwell Green where it was very strict. He said he should have only been there a month but was there until it closed. He did work there, but was not paid. Later this was taken away. More work was promised but it did not arrive. He was asked to take part in the advocacy work but was reluctant at first, but was one of the few users who could relate to the outside. Since then he has taken part in a number of European projects but has had to sign off and on when taking these small jobs. Following the sudden closure of Shepwell Green he attended Links to Work but was initially concerned about working as it had been so long since he had been employed. Finally he stated that he wished to stay in the same area and still be part of a group that had a voice.

Steve Beardsmore stated that they wanted to be talked to in a way that they could understand. Consultation can be difficult but they still want their say.

Yvonne Corbett stated that she helps the users with special care needs on the self advocacy group so that staff support is not needed during the meetings. She also stated that the Gateway club is run by the services users.

Alison Davies highlighted the case of Shirley Mason, who is an independent traveller and therefore ineligible for community transport, she has problems with time keeping leading to her spending considerable time outside the centre in the early mornings, often in bad weather conditions.

Graham Smith asked if the majority of day centres would be run by social services or by private partnership. John Greensill stated that there would be more work with partners such as Men cap and Care First, which would offer more choice, but social services would still play a role.

Councillor Oliver agreed that the main points raised by service users as set out below would be summarised and taken on board towards modernising the day care services.

POSITIVES	CONCERNS	FUTURE NEEDS
<p>General Improvement in services with staff helpful and supportive</p> <p>'Care First' Services</p> <p>Services at Rosehill</p> <p>The size of Albion Road facilities (small secure unit)</p> <p>Haden Road Services</p>	<p>Younger users of WALCAT preferred to stay at college and not attend day centres due to lack of knowledge about day centres</p>	<p>More:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure activities • Work with ability to earn • Facilities for learning • Transport • Staff • Contact with friends from other day care centres, <p>A quiet room</p>

		<p>To be involved in discussions regarding our future.</p> <p>A base to work from</p> <p>Change at day care users pace</p> <p>To have a sense of safety</p> <p>To be treated as an individual.</p>
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Councillor Oliver thanked everyone for their input and closed the meeting for lunch at 12:50 pm.

3. Future Work Programme

It was agreed that, officers would draft a report for discussion at the next full meeting of the working group on the 3rd of May 2005.

The meeting ended at 2:00 pm.