

Learning Disability Carers Forum Meeting
19th March 2007
Riverside Centre

PRESENT:

Bill McKenzie, Rose McKenzie, Hilary Hamflett, Barbara Eglinton, Sarah Talbot, Pauline Reader, Chris James, Jenny Wendell, Marie Hodge, Dolores Okello, Elizabeth Sturton, Daron Perkins, Liz Cornwell.

APOLOGIES:

Penny Soley

Minutes of 15th January 2007 approved

MATTERS ARISING:

- None

CHRIS JAMES DAYCARE TRANSPORT OFFICER:

Daron introduced Chris James as the Daycare Transport Officer. Chris explained it had been a struggle controlling and maintaining the transport system for daycare on the IOW and he was employed on a 2 year contract to help sort it out. Daron said a lot of people had tried in the past and a permanent post was great.

Chris' priorities for the year in his role as Daycare Transport Officer are:

- The mapping exercise that needs finishing. To successfully map the IOW's Daycare transport system, highlight any problems and subsequent improvements required to result in a fully integrated transport system beneficial and cost effective to both council taxpayers, service users and parents/carers by 2008.
- Escorts on the buses. Chris said he was looking into this, but due to funding restrictions, this was proving difficult. There may only be 1 escort available for the daycare transport system to go on an undecided route. Parents/carers not happy with this and requested more escorts, preferably on every service. Chris said they should be on all buses and is looking into more escorts or possibly volunteers to fulfil the role.
- Continue to reduce the number of Adult Protection incidents on the buses. Improve the experience for service users by implementing training for the drivers on how to deal with the problems and issues experienced, and to educate them on how to be more supportive and helpful. Parents/carers agreed.
- To reduce the number of taxi journeys, where possible, as it is more cost effective to encourage service users to use the buses, whether it is Wightbus or Southern Vectis. Two bus services are already at full capacity.

- More free bus buddy passes for companions of service users to be distributed where necessary.

Wightbus (823782) can be contacted if parents/carers are worried about drop off delays. Chris said if anyone experiences problems with drivers, or has other daycare transport issues they wish to raise to contact him on 823780 ext 5752 or Chris.James@IOW.gov.uk

Parents/carers asked if the disabled bus pass could be altered to remove the word 'disabled' from it, or a new card be made to highlight a disability without a label, as some service users won't consider using it because they are unhappy being labelled. All agreed that this should be sorted. The word discrimination was used. Everyone agreed that the service users were trying to be integrated and the disabled label on the card did not help. Parents/carers said that more people would be encouraged to use the card if it was changed. Daron asked Chris to look into this. Chris is going to speak to his department. Wightbus and Southern Vectis must agree on this so it may take some time to organise.

Some parents/carers said they wouldn't mind paying extra for service users to go out in the evenings on buses to social functions. Chris said it came down to money and must be cost effective. Daron said that if a service user is able, with a little support and it is safe for them to do so, that they should be encouraged to use public transport given that we want to promote people's independence and integration with the wider community.

LIZ CORNWELL STUDENT SOCIAL WORKER:

Liz is a 3rd year student social worker who is doing her dissertation on transition services from years 14 plus. She asked if the parents/carers would kindly fill out the enclosed questionnaire and return it to her about their experiences, past and present. Parents/carers agreed and questionnaire will be sent out with the meeting minutes.

LENA PATTERSON QUAY ADVOCACY:

Daron introduced Lena, who works for Quay Advocacy. Based at Riverside, it is a supportive service solely for parents/carers and 18 plus adults with sensory and physical disabilities with issues, complaints or who want advice or guidance, completely confidential and independent from Social Services and Riverside. Quay Advocacy can be a voice for parents/carers and can assist people to raise issues. Quay Advocacy's number is 522823.

CARERS CONFERENCE FEEDBACK:

Bill reported back from the Carers Conference and asked parents/carers to break into groups to discuss what they would like to see achieved by the end of this year on IOW. Points for Bill to take to the next Carers Conference as follows;

- Therapy – we need more on the IOW to meet the demand of service users; speech and language, physiotherapists, etc. However there is national shortage of therapists and IOW is not well funded in this department.
- Escorts – further to the discussion earlier, escorts on transport are vital.

- Increased integrated leisure opportunities – more accessible, more frequent and more variety for service users.
- Expanding housing options – more flats in the community; better residential homes specialising in specific conditions, eg dementia; and more support for people in the community.
- Working together in employment agencies – Connexions, Mencap and No Barriers seem to be in competition at the moment. They need to work together.
- Doctor's attitudes – would like doctor's attitudes to change towards people with learning difficulties.
- Specialist dedicated centres – with facilities like a hydro pool etc available to all service users.
- Confidence managing budgets – support required to assist many service users with their finances, so they have confidence to manage budgets on their own.

SUBGROUPS:

Due to time these were not discussed.

FUTURE MEETINGS

May 21st – Employment (Details to be confirmed)

July 16th – Leisure (Jackie Raven who is undertaking a further BILD review on leisure will be asked to report back)

September 17th – (TBA)

All meetings are held at the Riverside at 12 noon