

Housing and Support Strategy Group for People with a physical disability, sensory disability, acquired brain injury and long term conditions

Tuesday 5th August 2008

Minutes

Present:

LW (Chair)	Torbay Care Trust
SG	Disability Information Service
MH	Westcountry Housing Association
SB	Supporting People
PF	Community Care Worker - Brixham
LS	Service user representative
JH	Affordable Housing Co-ordinator
KH	Sensory team Manager

Apologies:

LM	Affordable Housing Manager
JE	Riviera Care and Support
AH	Service user representative
CM	Senior Occupational therapist Torquay South
KP	Alstrum Syndrome Support Group
TG	Hospital discharge manager
RS	Action For Blind People

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
1. Introductions	Everyone introduced themselves and LW welcomed new members.	
2. Last minutes	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed. All actions were achieved. LW explained that the minutes will be put on the Supporting People website, everyone's names will be changed to initials. If anyone is not happy about this or wants more information please speak to SB.	
	KH said it was good that Folks@home have staff trained in level 1 BSL but for support to be delivered staff really need to have level 2. SB agreed to pass on the managers name to KH so they could discuss training opportunities.	SB
	KH asked about independent living centres. LW said that no progress had been made but that the item was starting to be talked about at more meetings. LW said that the changes to in-house learning disability services may provide opportunities.	
3. Update on BSL units	Following the last meeting there was Closed Meeting which was not open to providers or service users. In the meeting a decision was made about commissioning additional BSL units. A range of options were considered, including procurement, varying existing contracts of providers	
	The meeting agreed to extend the SPLASH service. The	

	contract will be varied by 6 additional units. 25 hours a week must be spent on direct support to the 6 people. 10 hours per week must be spent on raising awareness to the Deaf community about housing and how to access mainstream housing and support services. The worker can also spend time raising awareness to the sensory team about housing and to the housing team about Deafness.	
	MH said the advert was going out on 6 th August. It may be a difficult time of year to recruit. If Westcountry are unsuccessful SB agreed that Supporting People could vary the start date of the contract to ensure flexibility.	
	SB asked if any learning had occurred as a result of KH working with MH to produce job description. MH said there had been learning in respect of accessibility of job descriptions and how it could be difficult for organisations to change their standard templates. MH suggested appropriate guidance was developed to help employers. SG agreed to raise with Employers Forum. KH agreed to raise with Care Trust recruitment. LW agreed to raise with Care Trust management responsible for recruitment. MH agreed to raise at Providers Forum.	SG KH LW MH
4. Housing Link Worker	LW explained that the Chairpersons meeting held on 4 th August agreed to the employment of 3 new workers to be links to health and social care teams to raise knowledge about housing.	
	The meeting looked through the job description and made amendments (attached).	
	Meeting agreed baseline information was required on current costs and trends in relation to inappropriate use of care funded placements so that new workers could monitor if their work was having an impact.	
	LW explained that she had not been able to access some Zones to talk about the strategy.	
	LS said that housing was very important to people's lives and stressed how important it was that people know about their rights and choices.	
5. Update on Choice Based Lettings Update	SB explained that she had attended the Devon Home Choice group for communication and marketing. The following is an update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornwall is not part of Devon Home Choice • Across Devon County there are 36,000 people registered for social housing • In 2007/08 there were 3360 Lets across the county (62 a week) • No decision has been made on cross authority moves yet • There will be 5 bands in the new system • The bands will be named A, B, C, D, E. SB was asked at the meeting if these should be colour coded. • SB requested a standard template was used by landlords to inform advert and ensure consistent information is 	

	<p>provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising, no final decision made on where properties for let will be advertised. Recognition that newspaper can be expensive. It could be possible to have an interactive TV system when every television goes to digital in 2009. • Group are developing a Frequently Asked Question sheet. • People will have unrestricted bidding. • Website is being developed, currently paperwork can be found at www.exeter.gov.uk/homechoice and click on the Devon Home Choice tab on the left hand column. • The website has the draft vulnerable persons strategy and assessment policy. 	
	<p>The meeting were keen to discuss the contents of both draft policies. The meeting agreed that the September meeting would be focused on this and any other paperwork in relation to Devon Home Choice. SB agreed to send both policies with the minutes. Everyone agreed to read paperwork before the next meeting.</p>	<p>SB All</p>
	<p>LS said she had joined the Private Sector group. She is concerned that people should all about the costs involved in renting from the private sector. LS said it can be difficult for people moving from benefits to work to be able to afford rent in private sector. SG said that people could apply for tax credits but the benefits system is very complicated.</p>	
	<p>Meeting recommended that the database held by Housing Services on private accommodation uses the same template as the Choice Based Lettings template.</p>	
	<p>LS told the meeting about a new development in Barton. She raised the question about building family homes that are accessible. The meeting agreed that further needs data was required to ensure the right number and type of accessible housing is built.</p>	
	<p>LW asked if we could find out from landlords who have been accredited how many of their properties are accessible or have adaptations.</p>	
	<p>SG said that Exchequer and Benefits could do a data scan for clients receiving housing benefit and a disability premium. The group could develop a questionnaire to send to these people.</p>	
	<p>Meeting discussed if the move to Devon Home Choice would provide an opportunity to find out better access needs data from people on the waiting list. KH raised concerns that this would not happen for 12 months and that because of building timescales she didn't feel we could wait another 12 months for the information.</p>	
	<p>Meeting agreed that a questionnaire should be sent to people on the Torbay Homefinder list to gather accurate data on access needs. It is important that these people are not asked to fill in the same forms / questions when they are transferred to Devon Home Choice. The questionnaire could ask people if they are happy to be contacted for further information to help us with</p>	

	future planning. Meeting agreed a separate group was required to develop the questionnaire. The group will be led by JH and SB (jointly), KH, LS, Karen Ayling (organisation??).	JH/SB
6. Strategy Action Plan	The meeting agreed the following as priorities for the group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather needs data on access requirements for people on Homefinder list • Complete the strategy and have it printed • Tender ABI service 	
7. Any Other Business	LW explained about a new Extra-care scheme being built. KH said she would like to be involved.	
	SPLASH update: 7 x long term conditions 11 x physical disability 5 x ABI 10 x hearing impairment 2 x visual impairment	
	LW said that Devon were planning to produce a housing strategy for this sector.	
	LW said the paper on Supporting People back-charging the Care Trust for supporting people in residential care is awaiting a slot at a Senior managers Team Meeting for presentation	
	LW and SB visited a current service providing step-down for ABI clients. The service provider has decided to change the registration to a residential home due to a lack of referrals. The group needs to ensure the demand will be there for a step down unit if it is commissioned.	
	SB asked if handyperson services could be discussed in future meeting as a colleague from the Supporting People team is keen to progress service delivery.	
Date of Next Meeting	16 September 2008. 2pm – 4pm in the Cecil Room, Oldway Mansion	
	PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU READ THE DEVON HOME CHOICE PAPERWORK BEFORE THE MEETING AND BRING ISSUES / DISCUSSION POINTS	

Glossary

ABI – Acquired Brain Injury

BSL – British Sign Language

Commissioning – buying services

Non-recurrent spend – this means money that can be spent for one off projects. Non recurrent means that the money will not be needed forever.

Tender – this is the questionnaire that has to be completed by organisations who want to deliver services. The questionnaire is assessed by a ‘tender panel’ (made up of people who will pay for the service or whose work it will affect) who decide which organisation will be best quality.

Procurement – this is the process used by the Council to buy services. The procurement process involves competitive tendering and the Council has to follow strict timescales set by European Guidelines. The procurement process can take up to 9 months.

Service specification – this is the report that says what type of service should be delivered and what targets the organisation will have to meet.

ST&R