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Supporting People Positive Engagement event

14 April 2008

Feedback report



Contents

Background	3
Aim of the event	3
Approach used	4
Summary of findings	4
Existing positive practice	4
'Ideal service'	5
Suggestions for improvement	5
Recommended next steps	6
Appendix 1	7
Feedback from the Positive Engagement Session held on 15 April 2008	7
What delegates valued about SP-funded services in Bradford	7
Practical suggestions to take forward	15
Appendix 2	20
Poems and other creative writing produced on the day	20
Service user in floating support with Rothera	20
Poem (anonymous)	20
Poem (anonymous)	20
Poem by Dickie	20

Background

Kate McAllister Consultancy was commissioned to facilitate a Positive Engagement event for service users, providers, commissioners and other key stakeholders, on Monday 14 April 2008. The event was attended by a total of 105 delegates.

<i>Client Group</i>	<i>Service Users</i>	<i>Provider or Support Worker</i>
<i>Domestic Violence</i>	9	8
<i>Learning Difficulties</i>	7	6
<i>Mental Health Problems</i>	14	9
<i>Offenders</i>	2	2
<i>Older People</i>	7	10
<i>Single Homeless</i>	6	5
<i>Young People</i>	4	4
<i>Refugees</i>		1
Total	49	45
Others	11	

Figure 1 proves a breakdown of the client groups in attendance. Others include commissioners and other policy officers. Event staff, facilitators and organisers have not been included in this summary.

Aim of the event

The aim was to bring together a cross-section of service users, providers, service commissioners and other key stakeholders from across the city and encourage them to discuss:

- a) What service users and other key stakeholders really value about existing SP-funded services and what their ideal services would be like.
- b) Creative ways of improving existing service delivery and service provision, filling gaps and moving closer to the ideal.

A secondary aim was to enable the service users who attended to feel that they were able to make a practical and positive contribution – so that a percentage would be motivated to take up a range of emerging opportunities for ongoing involvement in Bradford's Supporting People programme. This aim was achieved in that 21 service

users indicated that they would be interested in staying involved with the programme in a variety of ways.

Approach used

We used an approach known as Appreciative Inquiry to facilitate this event. This encourages delegates to focus on existing positive practice and to envision their ideal future service provision. Service users worked across user groups and alongside SP officers, providers and service commissioners to collectively agree what would make a real difference to existing Supporting People services in Bradford. This led to a wide range of practical suggestions about how to improve current provision, at both a strategic level (including highlighted unmet needs) and at service level, with suggestions for providers about improving the quality of existing services.



Some suggestions cover areas outside the remit of Supporting People, but all have been captured at Appendix 1.

Summary of findings

Existing positive practice

During the first stage of this event, delegates were encouraged to share positive practice in terms of existing service and to say what they really valued. A wealth of rich data was uncovered. We have batched some of the more generic feedback under key headings, in a format which could translate easily into some form of 'support charter' for Supporting People (and possibly other social care services) if you wished. We have also demonstrated how existing positive practice is helping to contribute to CLG's Supporting People outcomes.

'Ideal service'

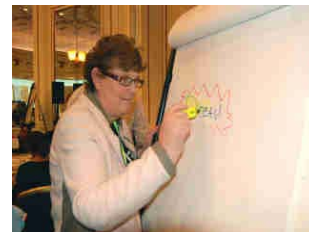


Working in groups, delegates were encouraged to jointly produce a vision (or series of visions) about how services could be developed and improved to best achieve significant improvement. They were encouraged to think of possibilities for simple innovation and change (quick wins) and also for longer-term possibilities which would make a real difference to people in receipt of the service. At this stage, delegates were encouraged to be as creative as possible.

Suggestions for improvement

The same groups were then invited to come up with some practical suggestions about how to make the changes or improvements necessary to produce the ideal service. Again a very wide range of suggestions were provided. These are also summarised at Appendix 1, under the following headings:

- Better quality services
- Improved safety
- Improved access to services
- Better experience of moving on
- Better information for service users
- Better leisure, education and social opportunities for service users



Some suggestions have considerable resource requirements for Supporting People, particularly if brand new services are suggested. Others however are relatively resource-free, and could enable some 'quick wins' to improve the overall quality and efficiency of existing service provision. There was also a considerable emphasis from many quarters on the need for better access to leisure facilities, particularly for socially excluded groups. This, along with some of the other more over-arching ideas, may provide an opportunity for wider joint working with other stakeholders.

Recommended next steps

A huge amount of energy and enthusiasm was generated by the event on 14 April. People very much appreciated the opportunity to make their views known and to work together to share and develop ideas to improve current service provision.



The ideal will be to use this event as a 'spring-board' for further work. There may not be sufficient time or resources to take forward all the ideas and suggestions generated at the Positive Engagement event – but it would be helpful to consider as many as possible and to progress those which you feel will make the biggest difference. Wherever possible, we suggest that you involve service users and providers in this work, and build on the spirit of goodwill and co-operation generated by the event.

Appendix 1**Feedback from the Positive Engagement
Session held on 15 April 2008****What delegates valued about SP-funded services in
Bradford****Services which:****Are responsive:**

- Being able to access services and getting help and support quickly
- Good rapid referrals
- Good communication
- Building a bridge
- True 'direct access' – if there's a space we'll take you!
- It's good to have the support when I need it
- I really valued being able to rely on the strength of the staff team
- I feel appreciated when I secure an appropriate tenancy for a homeless family
- Commitment – advocacy/advising
- Someone who listens when needed
- Guidance on location of external services and information on benefits
- Can approach staff at any time – don't have to wait specifically for key worker
- Helpful – given all necessary info on 1st moving in even bus time tables
- Got to move in straight away- day after interview
- Good communication.
- Committed staff team with experience.
- Staff committed and v enthusiastic about job even though low paid.

Work with service users identifying needs through support plan

- Helpful committed professional staff
- Needs assessment and follow up in a clear manner
- Individual support tailored to peoples needs
- Flexible person-centred approach for service users
- Weekly support
- Ongoing support
- Good standard of services for ex-offenders
- 1:1 support - knowing there is someone who knows your situation.
- We have one-to-one support
- Quest that is successful
- Allowed to develop in my own time
- Support level changes depending on service users requirement on the day
- Excellent staff who motivate, set goals and listen to me
- Help me work out things that are important to me and help me to achieve them
- 24 hour support
- Willing to let clients learn by their mistakes

Treat people with respect

- Giving service users more than one chance
- Not being judged about what's happened to you in the past
- Chance to move on from bad experiences
- Support workers being non-judgemental of service users
- Respect and honesty
- Time and empathy linked to professional support
- Being treated with respect
- Friendly staff
- Staff take the time to listen and talk to me in the right way
- Being honest with me
- Putting me 1st
- Someone you get on well with and trust
- The person really listened and sympathised with me, going out of their way to do this.
- Being listened to
- Feeling valued

- Being allowed to make mistakes
- Given space to make choices- good and bad
- Very approachable caring attitude
- Support provider taking time to know the service user
- Helping people to make choices

Tackle loneliness and isolation

- Provide a befriending service
- Motivation – when feeling down staff keep me going
- Being able to ‘let go’
- Support helps me through difficult times
- Emotional support
- Practical support – court, solicitors, supporting me to overcome my loneliness
- Every 2 weeks I meet with my support worker and have a chance to off-load problems, issues,
- Anything I need to talk about. I feel there is someone out there for me.
- Don’t ever feel embarrassed to ask for help.
- Staff take notice of service user’s behaviour and quickly pick up if someone is upset/low mood and deal with it/assist.

Help people feel part of a community

- Breaking the institutionalised approach
 - We do charity events
 - Days out – e.g. Bowling
- A sense of community
- Cheerful staff
- Good company with others
- Feels like a family atmosphere
- Family support
- TLC Groups parties are well organised
- Activities- fun!
 - Bingo
 - Got a big media centre
- We got Easter eggs off support staff which was nice
- Loving and caring (nice Xmas presents which make us feel special and needed and loved.
- We love the family feel of our support workers
- Communication
- Contact with others

- Personal relationship between support workers and service users
- Organising activities for service users children
- Great support for children - hardly any family support so I enjoyed going on outings and day trips – really helped my two younger boys.

Help people regain their independence

- Support in looking for move-on accommodation
- Accessing services to keep independent
- Outreach and resettlement workers still involved (5 months on)
- Support workers being able to make a difference to peoples lives
- Focus on individual that develops confidence and rebuilds self-esteem

Keep people well informed

- Information
- Guidance and information e.g. Benefits and GP etc
- Places to go to get information
- Managers are important. It's a good and pleasant day when we see the owner come and chat to service users.

Meet diverse needs

- Promote cultural diversity
- Language support
- Culturally sensitive
- Having a choice of BME-specific services in the district
- BME-specific services for women without children- otherwise would stay in violent situation –put themselves at risk)
- Wide range of DV services (widest range in country)
- Disability awareness
- Good support to BME families and understanding issues and dangers involved.
- Having the vicar 1st Monday in the month to give holy communion

- Meeting diverse needs through diverse and flexible services.
- Used pictures to explain things (not pictures that misled or confused me)
- Seeing me not my disability
- Friendly support from staff helping us with any and all our problems
- Equality- everyone respected
- Language support – able to communicate

Provide holistic support where appropriate:

- Lighthouse project provides immediate and full support in all aspects including accommodation
- Nice place, good accommodation
- Wide range of accommodation
- Good housing
- Kitchen facilities good. Can cook and clean by self.
- TV rota – fair.
- Make sure we have everything we need in terms of food and clothing.
- Good facilities e.g. gym

Part of a wider support network

- Networking between providers
- Access to other services
- Enabling engagement with other housing providers

What delegates valued about the Supporting People Programme in Bradford

- SP promotes cultural diversity
- SP provides for and engages with new ideas.
- Breadth and range of services we have in Bradford
- Contact with the SP team
- Making funding available to develop new services
- Supporting People helping us to deliver a good service financially + information and involving us in making decisions
- Excellent voluntary sector make Supporting People work

How current services are contributing to Supporting People outcomes:

1. Achieve economic wellbeing

- Get work experience – build confidence
- Providing basic education courses + links to continue when leave the service
- Back to work
- Getting back to work with support

2. Enjoy and achieve

- Building confidence in general (helps when moving to independent living)
- Development of skills
- Access to leisure
- Support in gaining independence
- Making a difference to the quality of life and enabling people to live independently with support when needed.
- More active social life
- In 12 months at service moved on a long way – confidence and security
- Independence – skills, moving on to more independent living, making plans, goals.
- Meeting new friends
- Helps me to do the things I want to do
- Helping me get a job
- Build on my confidence
- Making my own choices
- Respected as a person
- Choose own staff
- I learn new skills
- Including me in my decisions
- Free use of computers
- Helps us with education
- Teach us how to be more independent
- Workshops for skills English, maths and computers

- Safe accommodation and help with our living skills
- Help teach us skills for life
- Independence
- Confidence
- Confidence building – training sessions and outings
- Encourage independent living
- Being treated as an individual
- Piecing things together as a team
- Help to understand things
- Points you in the right direction
- Fulfilling a destiny
- A good environment to develop social skills
- Given confidence to turn things round
- Empowerment of service users to take control of their own lives
- Group work helped me to gain confidence and relax
- Moving on to independent living
- I feel stronger, more empowered, and motivated to deal with everyday problems (life)
- Offering people more independence and control over their lives
- Service users being able to start education/training and also being able to make links to continue after left service.
- Education -sort out training e.g. Northern College

3. Be healthy

- Access to health advice
- Healthy eating
- Cooking lessons
- Breakfast club

4. Stay Safe

- Security and safety – both at home and in wider community
- Living in sheltered housing gives me a feeling of security
- Family feel reassured
- Knowing it's a 'home for life'
- Somewhere safe, secure, warm and friendly to live and rebuild my life
- Safe environment
- Security
- Safety

- We (the children) are happy because we know our mum is being supported and that she is safe
- Helped to come to terms with fragile situation
- Space, support and safety
- Information on health and safety
- Personal safety – safe house
- Cleanliness important

5. Make a positive contribution

- Human rights
- Service users consulted at all possible stages (anytime and also during regular residents meetings)
- Chance to fit in (again) with society
- Opportunity to participate
- Asian women like myself find it hard to integrate back in the community. My support worker has helped me realise my worth and be a positive role model for other people.

Practical suggestions to take forward

Better quality services

- Encourage providers to share good practice re service user consultation, including examples of service users organising things for themselves – e.g. social activities. Publish findings in the newsletter?
- Work with providers to try to lighten the burden of bureaucracy.
 - Share good practice (maybe from other authorities where providers work across several) share details of how long the admin takes in varying providers and think about ways of streamlining. This would free up staff to spend more time on direct support.
 - Work with providers to come up with an estimate of how long the admin should take – and take this into account when agreeing overall contract hours.
- Consider ways of short-cutting the paper trail for people contacting 'Anchor Staying Put.' At present it can take 4 months to get a repair agreed, even if it's an emergency!
- Developing 'champions' within client group organisations so they can share expertise with other organisations – be a named point of contact.
- Providers to involve service users in staff appraisals
- Develop support plans and services that work with people as individuals
 - Good quality staff – well trained
 - Ex service users as staff
 - Staff provided across funding stream (housing related support too narrow)
- Choices about how I spend my money. I might not need help cleaning – might want to spend the money on something else. (Individual budgets)

- SP team and commissioners ensuring current provision is of good quality
- SP team to talk to service users and listen to what is required.
- Additional funding to existing services to allow support workers to spend more time with service users.
- Service user life choices fully supported
- Provide range of opportunities - CLG outcomes for service users
- Joined up care and support with generic workers

Improved safety

- More police at night – girls don't feel safe. Maybe CCTV
- Help service users learn how to stay safe when they move on.

Improved access to services

- Be more flexible with criteria – especially for young people
- Make it easier for people who have previous debts to access Bradford day shelter. At present – people are not allowed in without ID. Simple solution – get the referral agencies to take their picture, which can then count as ID.
- Providers to remove red tape around service users history with support
- Common assessment framework to prevent service users having to go from pillar to post.

Better experience of 'moving on'

- Increase 'move-on' accommodation.
- Specific people to help those who move into their new accommodation, to decorate, paint etc, providing practical support.
- Maybe volunteers? Network of volunteer joiners, joiners, gardeners, electricians, decorators and other skilled people who can be called upon.
- This could link with one-stop shop, service user directory.

- Moving-in package for those moving into new accommodation.
- Move-on package – to include bedding, pots, pans, crockery, and grocery starter pack.
- Pre-tenancy work with users when they move out of hostels
- Low-cost furniture of reasonable quality
- Period from tenancy start up to moving in can be as short as 3 days. People need longer or they will build up rent arrears.
- Stop some RSLs requiring 2 weeks rent in advance from tenants on benefits
- When you're rehoused it can be lonely- mentors -somebody who's had similar experiences and moved on. Who won't judge you.
- Sometimes you need people who are more than staff who will give you time and emotional support.

Needs met

- More dispersed units for families with 15-16 year-old sons – currently not able to stay in womens refuge, so what do you do? Leave him behind with father?
- More outreach re-settlement services for the BME community.
- A service for families with no recourse to public funds
- Generic support for vulnerable people with no formal diagnosis

Better information for service users

- More info about what other agencies do to help clients.
- Improve information sharing and training between service providers and with clients.
- Quality legal advice for clients speedily available if appropriate
- More constructive feedback from SP as to whether and how services are being improved.
- More education/training
 - Benefits – interesting leaflets + face-to-face advice

- Access education courses and physical exercise classes
- Accommodation –choice of location and 'estate agent' type trial stay.
- Be aware of what other services do to help give clients best advice
- Pre-assessment by senior well informed support worker who knows what's available
- Expedite and raise awareness of SP service directories – amongst professionals and service users.
- Information that is accessible, easy to read plus a web site that's easy to use.
- When you're in your own home-information booklet about police, health , training etc.
- Information needs to be easy to understand and there need to be ways of making sure people get it:
 - Make an accessible DVD
 - Have an accessible website like the Learning Disability Partnership Board.
 - Write to people NOT the house.
- SP information shop/bus

More leisure, education and social opportunities for service users

- Leisure/young people
 - Floating leisure co-coordinator
 - Leisure entertainment, careers. Activities, events and opportunities.
 - ? Money to create post. ? Charitable funding?
- Maybe concessions for those who can't afford leisure facilities.
- Local mental health agencies to club together to lease/purchase mini-bus/people carrier for trips.
- Providers could arrange access to internet for service users at schemes.
- Social and leisure opportunities – services could help signpost and get people involved.
- Funding to build social networks for both current and former service users.
- Someone to help me go to new places and make new friends -not just office hours. Evenings and weekends.
- Specific transport service

Appendix 2

Poems and other creative writing produced on the day

Service user in floating support with Rothera

Rothera has helped me and my family (family in the way my parents have their daughter back and my children have their mother back and my grandchildren have their grandma back). I don't know where I'd be if it wasn't for Rothera – probably dead.

I have had and am still getting positive feedback on the help I need, such as my addiction, I'm also a rape victim. Rothera has helped me get all the counselling that I need. With all the help that I am getting, I'm now in a floating support service, in which for the 1st time in 12/13 years I'm stable, facing all issues that I have. Rothera project can fight the future crime rate.

Poem (anonymous)

Please don't tell me what to do
It's up to me not down to you
You tell me when I get support
So in a tangled web I'm caught
It's not the way it's meant to be
It's not about you is it? It's all about me!
So please please please just stop and think
I want support that floats not sinks.

Poem (anonymous)

We want to dream about:
The opposite of 'exclude'
The opposite of 'later'
The opposite of 'signposting'
The opposite of 'stranger'
The opposite of 'frustration'.

We want *more* than dreams.

Poem by Dickie

We are gathered in this hallowed hall
To discuss our plans about a better care
We share our ideas for a better future
Let's hope our plans will come true
And we achieve our goals.
We are different teams but our dreams are the same.
So this is my little prayer
For a world of better care.