

Disability Forum for Basingstoke

Group 1

What are the local issues?

- Need to be proactive in understanding local needs. Needs to be a focal point for information; advice and guidance; knowledge and resources (bank); forms of information; mutual support; advertising; website and involving businesses
- Point of contact – each way
- Collective voice
- Place for stakeholders to contribute
- Joint partnership
- Personal involvement

Would a structure like Portsmouth answer the needs identified during our Workshop?

- Who will fund this?
- Structure needs to be responsive to local need,
- Charitable status
- Lottery funded
- Portsmouth model (starting point)
- Influencing body (central and local government). E.g. H&S in DDA, influencing transport, out of hours facilities, removing or changing rules in BDBC, HCC, PCT. Address policies in place
- Look at whole cost/picture
- Consider Urban v Rural issues
- Training on public awareness for learning disabilities

Group 2

What are the local issues?

- Housing – location; details like changing light bulbs; more adapted houses built
- Grants don't cover everything
- How do you get a bus to stop when you are visually impaired?
- Buses - need map of stops that are accessible
- Drop kerbs – not enough of them and lack of them can make a journey longer, (or only available one side)
- Visual impairment left out – look at design of crossings
- “Hidden disability”; learning disability; deaf; visual
- Shops – lack of space
- Lack of facilities at swimming pool for hoist and personal care
- Who do we tell?

Would a structure like Portsmouth answer the needs identified during our Workshop?

- Very positive, do something similar, we're a bit behind.
- Include “hidden disabilities” learning disability, mental health, visual, hearing

- Need to include villages and transport problems
- Service providers would welcome it for consultation
- Educate the community

Group 3

What are the local issues?

- Leisure services – ten Pin bowling OK during the week but very discriminating at weekends (no assistance)
- Sports Centre is excellent - free of charge, lots of help
- JJ's soft play
- Shopping Centre
 - easy to get lost; quite dark, busy environment easily get knocked over. Disabled toilets very cramped, not enough for 2 staff to help; M&S very good. Glass doors into Centre are difficult to see if they are closed or open. "A" frames outside shops
 - Shopmobility /electric scooters too fast – can't hear them coming. Limit speed/ noise to hear them coming
 - Escalators – no white strip on edge of step (difficult to see where you are on the step, loose footing)
 - Parking OK – need a few more in the Alders car park
- Leisure Park OK for disabled parking
- Disabled Parking – for everyone after 6pm. Almost as if disabled people don't go out after 7pm
- Hospital Car Parking – still pay even if disabled. Often machines out of order. Difficult to find car-parking staff. Should be free!
- Buses – don't always stop when you ring the bell. Invite Stagecoach and BR to Disability Forum. Drivers need more training to ensure enough time to sit down before they move off

Would a structure like Portsmouth answer the needs identified during our Workshop?

- Good for exchange of all views
- Portsmouth model good. Add education/training; barriers to work/ further education, skills, jobs. Also try to change attitude/ ignorance of staff (e.g. train drivers)
- Leisure skills – entertainment, fun
- Education of employers
- BCOT poor attitude to people with disabilities. Special equipment very slow in coming. Lack of equipment e.g. speech on PC – unable to provide it – had to go to another college. Marketing of courses – newspaper, e-mail, talking newspapers, Anvil bulletin

Group 4

What are the local issues?

- Provision of facilities for disabled youth/young people (physical and learning disabilities)

- Changing attitudes
- Specific/ local contacts (paper and internet based – accessible)
- Forum = Umbrella organisation of individuals and professionals (include Equalities Officers from Councils)
- Sub-groups to send representatives to main group (2-way communication needed)
- Shared knowledge and awareness of other similar organisations
- Need to de-institutionalise” – get out into the wider world.
- Get past ignorance
- Continuity beyond time-limited funding
- Collective/pooled resources to lever change
- Need to change organisations blinkered views
- If parent of disabled child, it does not follow that parent should be the full-time carer
- Problems not wholly age related/dependent
- Centralised current information at point of diagnosis
- Forum provides a wider community view
- Benefits system! Access difficulties (Broadsheet table) Passport of details for claims

Would a structure like Portsmouth answer the needs identified during our Workshop?

- Yes, if set up right – right input/ representation; needs to be fully inclusive; support needed for attendance and input; forum needs to be listened to (louder voice by working collectively)
- Speed of creation?
- Will PDF model be the only/right model? Need to analyse and not repeat their research
- Core experts to move forward
- Way forward?
 - Real progress?
 - Quick feedback?
 - Opportunity to progress but who will lead/ direct?
 - What next? How? Who are key people to drive this project?
 - All represented? Community balance?
 - Not a new problem – but needs commitment to make it work
 - Quick route to independence?

Group 5

Local issues

- Organisations often deny views of carers. Forum should take into account carers views as user (mental health service user and people with Learning disability) cannot always communicate their views
- Advocacy is paramount. Funding is the issue
- Transport – getting from A – B and location of services. E.g. ShopMobility is not near the bus station. Transport services should be more co-ordinated. Transport needs to meet needs. E.g. Kango bus only operates from bus-stop to

bus-stop. People need more assistance from front door to ShopMobility. One transport organisation would be more effective. Pool resources. HCC v BDBC roles in planning and co-ordinating transport.

- Respite care – not enough for LD. Possible closure of service can lead to loss of friendships/ social activities.
- The idea of inclusion can be taken too far with access to specialist services becoming difficult.
- Partnership working with HCC and BDBC re-Education. A forum can bring people together, giving people access to strategic plans
- Forum will break down barriers between organisations/ users/ carers to create efficient working and provision of services.
- Forum=larger voice, more ideas, trustees need to be understanding of the need

Would a structure like Portsmouth answer the needs identified during our Workshop?

- Would be good as it has weight behind it to influence change
- General views could allow public bodies to explore deeper into issues
- Must ensure that all groups are equally represented
- Should consider peoples time and expenses (and carers)
- Organisational issues (times of meetings, locations)
- Don't allow the forum to become too professionalized
- Political awareness is necessary due to its external influence. However we should aim not to let it be too influential - must be put in correct context
- Ensure steps are taken to reach out to BME and other groups i.e. gay/lesbian/religious groups
- Foundations of Forum are paramount in the setting up of the Forum
- This has to be for the people

Group 6

What are the Local Issues?

Services

- Mental Health Issues not covered
- Lots of help for children but not much for adults
- Lack of cohesion – keep being passed around in a circle
- Feel Social Services cause obstructions as cannot contact them to discover what services are available
- One lady felt that Social Services deliberately obstructed contact to avoid paying for services
- Care for the elderly is difficult to obtain – one person explained that they had to contact Agencies to complain to Social Services in order to obtain services for a 90 year old neighbour

- Problem with paid carers organised by Social Services not arriving at times specified and dissatisfaction with the work done – one carer apparently read a book instead of carrying out the duties specified
- Private care is better than Social Services cover but Direct Payments are not high enough to cover the cost
- Different quality of care dependant on where you live – why don't the NeighbourCare Groups all have the same policy?
- Lowering of pavements in elderly population areas
- Access to College/education that is suitable to the disabled person
- Rumours that Ashwood Way is closing – this is causing anxiety as parents are not being told what is happening or where their children will go – Parents want to know
- Lack of knowledge or understanding of dementia by Agencies or Carers
- Not many social activities for people with learning difficulties
- Perhaps word disabled is wrong as people have different perceptions on what disabled means

Information

- Difficult to obtain information – would be really useful to have information in one place
 - BVS is already working on a Disability Directory of voluntary and community organisations working in Basingstoke and Deane
- Information should be in different accessible formats

Housing

- Need to be involved in planning of new homes – one person thought that BDBC used to have their own Life Style Standards several years ago but seem to have taken a backward step
- 2 bedroom bungalows are the most sort after housing but are not being built
- Current policies do not help people to move to another area where care is available or to be near a loved one moved into a home

Transport

- There is a lack of, and inequality, of transport in rural areas
- Lack of hospital transport
- Transport is provided for the disabled person but not the Carer so how can the person needs be considered
- Blue Badge scheme is physical disability biased – not helpful to other disabilities
 - Brian Raines joined the group and said that requirements vary but children over 2 with special needs should get help
- Parking generally difficult – not many disabled places

Attitudes

- It is not what is said but how it is said – just because someone has learning difficulties this does not mean they do not have feelings
- At Brook House you have to do what you are told otherwise you receive warnings and can be thrown out and have no where else to go

- The group felt that people do not take account of a disabled person's feelings and that they can be bullied because they do not understand
- Need to promote awareness of meeting people with dementia as their issues very different

Carers

- Carers often worn out and elderly
- Carer's ability to pay is assessed not on the person being cared for ability to pay
- Need more access to Respite and Day Care
- Day Care mainly for the elderly – there is a gap for those aged between 40 and 70 with dementia as the current facilities do not meet their needs

Positive Issues that have helped

- Private school
- Dealing with Agencies once contact made
- Genuine willingness to work together
- Provision of drop kerbs in some areas for visually impaired
- Two larger Housing Associations have become more pro-active in allocating disabled access and adaptations
- When Benefits and Services are provided together then the system works well
- There are some social activities for people with Learning Difficulties but not enough
- Social Services can be helpful but could do a lot more
- Businesses became aware of dementia during Alzheimer's Awareness Week

Would a structure like Portsmouth answer the needs identified during our Workshop?

- Unanimous Yes to the Forum
- Model seems good but needs to meet **OUR** needs
- We must be analytical of the model

Group 7

What are the local issues?

- There is a need to look at services provided enable people with disabilities to get about freely
- Local shops in Basingstoke need to consider the needs of people with disabilities.
- Educating shop staff about disability awareness
- Health and safety issues in shops and homes to be addressed at the time rather than later
- A Shopability survey was suggested as a way forward
- A need for train companies to help people with disabilities to be able to get bicycles and wheelchairs on trains.

- Better communication is required between public transport services and people with disabilities
- Taxi services and their accessibility are a problem for people with disabilities.
- More dropped curbs and user friendly roads
- Do we provide adequate sports and leisure facilities for people with disabilities?
- More risk assessments to be carried out on houses by the local authorities and upgraded to suit the specific disability.
- Keeping age and disability separate. There is a different level of need for someone who is old and someone who has a disability.
- Addressing attitudes in the local area with regards to the rights of people with disabilities. (e.g., parking bays being used by people who do not have a disability)

Would a structure like Portsmouth answer the needs identified during our Workshop?

- Very impressed with what has been achieved in Portsmouth
- Where is the funding going to come from for the forum in Basingstoke?
- Good for signposting
- Liked the idea of the books supplied as a good means of communication
- The Portsmouth forum came across as being 'for ' and 'of' people with disabilities.
- More focus on transport problem for the Basingstoke forum
- Did not hear much about the influence of forum on national structures

Group 8

What are the local issues?

- Where disabled persons are
- Real needs not perceived. Who decides what they are?
- Concern that compromise satisfies no one
- How to get a common agenda from small groups? Larger towns/cities and groups find it easier. Bigger goals are more attractive
- Forum to be all encompassing. Learning Difficulties get missed.
- Common ground leaves a lot of people on the fringes
- Forum needs to go into industry to educate
- Forum needs to be a positive group, not a place for moans and groans.
- Forum needs to feed local issues through to local groups to improve knowledge (and therefore performance). Put a name to it, give it an identity or anonymity if appropriate.
- Needs credibility through issues dealt with.
- Groups and organisations must talk together. Rural communities feel left out (Basingstoke and Deane not just Basingstoke)
- Transport not always available to get people to event, services etc.
- Increase strength of forum by linking with others
- General access when taking out a group
- Audit is a priority
- Forum provide trainers?
- Hierarchy with disabled people needs breaking down

- Give a value to individuals
- Where do older people fit in?
- Don't reinvent the wheel
- Communication between groups and public is 2-way
- Forum is needed
- Good starting point

Group 9

What are the issues?

- Hidden disability – links from SL tutor often slow to diagnose (Dyslexia) – waiting for assessments takes such a long time.
- Attitudes – how do we overcome negative attitudes?
- Forum to work closely with the business community
- Professionals afraid to communicate with the deaf. All policies should be accessible. Authorities should be aware of the need (especially if they hold the records). They should know if an interpreter is needed.
- Lack of knowledge, awareness, education and communications within organisations
- Hampshire libraries good with people print disabled
- Not enough BSL interpreters at the appropriate level
- A need to be more forceful in what we expect or demand of developers.
- More pressure on local councils
- Housing Associations very reticent in having necessary equipment installed. Much promised but not delivered.
- Particular needs group exists in Basingstoke Churches
- Basic access issues not addressed
- Set up a website to be dyslexia friendly (take advice)
- Seek expert advice at beginning (set up of forum)
- When consulted we get no feedback
- Expenses not taken into consideration. Our views are not valued

Would a structure like Portsmouth answer the needs identified during our Workshop?

- Portsmouth is a good model
- Maybe looking at other examples?
- How would we get funding?

Group 10

What are the local issues?

- Physical disability and housing – how many?
- Normalising –attitudes/adaptations
- Forum is a conduit for sharing best practice and promoting it. Platform for people to have their say and be listened to
- What is the percentage in BDBC?
- Forum can and should include all agencies – more effective funding
- Mobilise the help of VCS groups

- Forum promotes connectivity
- Forum can advise on changes in the law – one stop shop for who? What? Where?
- Marketing services and the forum
- Looking forward- preparing for future changes (BDBC statistics)
- Database of support and services
- Every home with a broadband connection
- Structure of the forum is important to cover all issues in sub-structures
- Change attitudes of service users – help them realise their value in society. The wrong attitudes are promoted by division!

Would a structure like Portsmouth answer the needs identified during our Workshop?

- Set-up funding for the Forum?
- Look at other fora (Newtowns?)
- We feel that a forum for Basingstoke would be a really positive move forward