

Name of Project:

Advocacy Groups Network

Name and contact details of person leading the project:

Sarah Pickard

Which Partnership Board Sub Group is leading this area of work?

Advocacy and Rights – Chairs Planning group

How much LDDF money does your project want in 2009-2010?

£39,000

What is the budget (how will you spend the money) for the project and is any other money also going to be used for this project?

Advocacy is a priority for LDDF funding in Valuing People Now. We expect the Advocacy Groups network to continue for at least the next 3 years.

It will cost about £61,000 each year to support all the work the advocacy groups network does. It need 73 staff hrs p week. We are asking the following people for money :

Chairs planning Group	39,000
Lloyds TSB	20,000
Brighton & Hove Council (confirmed)	2,000
<u>Total</u>	<u>£61,000</u>

LDDF money will pay for:

Wages and payroll (42 of the 73 hrs needed):	33760
Rent, stationary, Internet etc	3240
Travel & refreshment costs for group members	2000

Total	£39,000
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Tell us about the Project, how it will work, what it will do, who will do it and things like that:

What is the Advocacy Groups Network?

People with learning disabilities need lots of support over many years to feel confident about expressing views about their lives. They need help to speak up to the people who can change things for them.

There are always lots of things to talk about in every group meetings. The people in each group decide the most important things to them. Sometimes they have to decide between doing their own work or speaking to managers who want to visit their group. In each of Speak Out's 4 self advocacy groups people do all the following things:

- **Self Advocacy:** people bring their own experiences and problems to their group. They help each other find the best way to make changes and solve these problems. Some issues have been not having their own front door key; not being allowed to take hot drinks to their own room; feeling that staff are rude to them; working out how to choose between different activities happening on the same day.
- **Group advocacy:** Often, when people talk about their own problems, they find that others in the group have the same issue. They work together to solve it. This might be a problem on buses, or at a day centre. The group write letters, make phone calls, and invite managers to their meetings to explain that they want something changed.
- **Consultation on services:** People in the groups want to be asked about plans for Learning Disability services. They think people who use services are the best people to know if they are good services or not. They want to help make services better.
- **Acting together as a Network (130 people represented) :** All 4 groups come together at 6 Big Meetings each year. People from around 7 service user groups also take part in the Big Meetings. The Link Group also go to the Big Meetings.

Some issues are really big and people in all the groups want to work on them. At the Big Meetings, all the groups decide together what they want to do about it. They may decide to do more work talking to service managers. They may think managers aren't listening and they need the help of a Councillor, or the Partnership Board to make change happen.

- **Telling others:** The Groups Network help the Partnership Board understand what is important for people with learning disabilities. They make a film or report about each Big Meeting to show them. The Link Group present this report at each

Partnership Board. Speak Out staff also write reports to help the sub groups understand what people on the Groups Network think about an issue. The Groups Network help everyone who gets Learning Disability services get involved by writing and sending out Network News.

Speak Out encourages the Partnership Board sub groups to talk to the Advocacy Groups Network. We want the sub groups to hear and act on lots of people's views about services, not just listen to a few people.

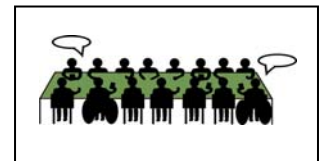
These are the things Speak Out will do with LDDF money:

- **3 advocacy groups:** supported regular sessions. A 4th group will (hopefully) be paid for by another funder.



- **Consultation:** Groups give views on plans for changes to learning disability services.

- **6 Big Meeting each year** (130 people represented): reps from all the groups plus 7 services user group take part.



- **Feedback for each Partnership Board:** film or report after each Big Meeting telling Partnership Board what everyone thinks.



- **Election of Partnership Board co-chair:** helping candidates understand the job, and prepare an election presentation.



- **Network News:** Support people from the Groups Network to produce 3 each year.



- **Make sure everyone is included:**
People with complex needs, autism, and from different cultures.



What outcomes, targets or goals would your project achieve?

- 30-40 people taking part in 3-4 Speak Out advocacy groups.
- 100 advocacy actions by network groups to give views to sub groups, service managers and other public representatives.
- 6 Big Meeting representing over 130 people.
- Co-chair elections as needed
- 6 to 8 service user groups supported to take part in Big Meetings
- Big Meeting to give views to Partnership Board and/or sub groups in film or report.
- 3 Network News produced by Network participants each year.
- People with complex needs represented at Big Meeting.

Is there anything else you want us to know?

The advocacy groups choose the issues they discuss, and decide what action to take to make things better for everyone. They take issues to the Partnership Board and sub groups. They also talk to general service managers, Community groups, Councillors or MP's to tell them their views and experiences. They do a lot of work to make it easier for people with learning disabilities to use ordinary public service and take part in City life.

A new 4th advocacy group will investigate and compile a 'What's to Do?' directory of services and community activities for people with LD to use. We hope Lloyds will fund this initial work. Everyone will be able to use the directory which will be on our web site and on paper (4000 people).

We cannot predict absolutely what issues will be raised in the future. These are a few of the issues and outcomes from the last 6 months.

- Talked to Library services & got them to change their policy about charging people with LD to borrow CD's.
- Given views about Person Centred plans, how many people have them, and if they are useful.
- Given views about changes to day services
- Given views about the Commissioning strategy, and Housing strategy.
- Given views to the workforce development team
- Taken part in Shaping the Future event and International Day of Disabled people.
- Elected representative from Groups Network on Voluntary Sector Equalities Forum.
- Talked with Theatre Royal about accessibility for people with LD.
- Talked about hate crime and tried to contact Community Safety team.
- Talked to Pals about experiences of being in hospital
- Group members produced video and 2 were trainers for wide range

of service managers and Councillors at 3 training events.

- Contacted bus company about: buses failing to stop; drivers being rude
- Letter to all the groups who use Emmaus about blocking the wheelchair ramp with their cars.