

Learning Disability Development Fund (LDDF) Progress report



Name of project: Advocacy Groups Network

Project Lead: Sarah Pickard

Project Targets from bid:

- 30- 40 people taking part in Speak Out advocacy groups.
- 100 advocacy actions p.a by network groups to give views to sub groups, service managers and other public representatives.
- 6 Big Meeting pa representing over 100 people.
- 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
- Groups Network Elections and regular support for the co-chair
- 3 Network News produced by Network participants each year.
- People with complex needs represented at Big Meeting.

How the bid says the project will do this work:

- **4 Advocacy Groups:** Speak Out will support people to meet regularly in 4 advocacy groups. Each group will decide the things they explore together, and how they do it (by talking, making posters, making a video or making visits).
- Each group will be supported to think about any shared issues that come out of the sessions, and decide if something could be done to make it better for everyone with a learning difficulty.
- Each group will be supported to share their views with the service managers and Partnership Board sub groups who can change things.
- Each group will be supported to share information and their experiences of services by giving presentations, and taking part in events.
- **Big Meeting:** Speak Out will host a bi-monthly Big Meeting. Representatives from each of the 4 groups will go to this. Representatives from other service user groups in the City will also be invited. People who get 1:1 advocacy will also be included. Over 100 people with learning

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difficulties will be represented at each Big Meeting.

- People will decide if they want to speak up for everyone on an issue, and will be supported to make contact with the sub groups or other service managers to do this.
- People will develop contact with the National Advocacy Forum.
- **Partnership Board co-chair:** we will organise elections and support the co-chair of the Partnership Board.
- **People with complex needs:** experiences of people will be included in all aspects of the project.
- **Network News:** people from the Groups Network will be supported to produce a newsletter 3 times each year. The Network News will contain issues and views from people in the Groups Network as well as information about the Partnership Board and sub group work.
- **Including everyone:** We will continue to find ways to include the experiences of all sorts of different people in every part of this project: People who do not communicate using speech, people who come from different cultures and have different languages and people who have a wide range of difficulties including autism.

How much LDDF money the project got in 2008/9: £38,800

Name of person completing this report:

Sarah Pickard

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What the project has done in April through July 2008:

34 people are attending advocacy groups. We are talking to more people at the moment about joining groups.

Group actions. Total actions are more than 35

Groups members have:

- written letters, phoned and spoken to library services about charging for CD's.
- taken part in consultations and feedback with Workforce Development Sub group and Supporting People
- attended the Regional Forum for People with Learning Disabilities and Shaping the Future Events
- handed in Roving Reporters film to Transitions Forum and pilot team about how young people experience moving to adult services. Done 2 films from the Big Meeting for the Partnership Board
- Written 12 items for July's Network news

2 Big Meetings happened. 10 groups in total attended (including Speak Out Groups). Workshop themes include day services, labels that services use and elections for the Partnership Board co chair. Film made of each meeting to show at the Partnership Board.

3 advocacy group members put themselves up for election as co chair of Partnership Board. Candidates did a speech and Big Meeting voted. Matthew Hellett elected as co chair.

More people than ever involved in production of Network News. (12 people)

Work has started to link in with complex needs services across the city so more people get represented. People with complex needs and their Speak Out advocates as well as complex needs reps from day services now attending the Big Meeting.



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What the project has done in August through November 2008:

30 people have attended groups.

Group actions: actions for this period exceed 40. Total actions for current year over 75.

Groups have:

- Taken part in 3 separate consultations for the council. These include: giving advice to new housing options officer on leaflets; giving opinions for the commissioning strategy which were fed back in a report; Loud and Clear Group advised Workforce Development sub group about charter scheme.
- Invited visitors to their groups. Visitors include the Food Partnership regarding healthy eating and health awareness, a representative from the new catering course for people with learning disabilities and council staff regarding consultations.
- Written letters and made phone calls about issues including poor street lighting, offensive remarks made by radio DJ's and road safety issues in Portslade.
- The Wednesday Group has become advisors to the Theatre Royal on their Access Committee. Work has started on doing a film to record their views for the theatre.
- Had a stall at the Travel Buddies Event.
- Contacted City College about new charges for college courses.
- Written 9 articles (so far) for Network News to be published in January 09.
- 1 group member facilitated learning disability awareness training for general council staff.

1 Big Meeting happened. Representatives from 11 groups in total attended. We had a workshop on staying safe. Opinions to be fed into Partnership Board workshop in 2009 and group ideas written in the next Network News. No film made as Speak Out camera broke!

SPEAK OUT



Advocacy Project



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What the project has done December 2008 - March 2009

33 people have attended groups. 37 people have attended advocacy groups in total throughout the year.

Current actions for this period exceed 40. Total actions for year exceed 115.

Groups actions include:

- 4 people writing their own articles in Network News
- Group members spoke about their lives at Speak Out AGM. Another group member hosted the evening.
- Did more consultation work on accessible Housing Tenancy Agreements for Housing Options Officer
- Representatives from 3 groups were involved in making a film about Good Staff Support for future training.
- Two groups have done groundwork on finding out more about a dating agency for people with learning disabilities. Groups are making links with a local service who are proposing to set up a dating agency.
- The Tuesday group invited and hosted a visit from the local police and Community Safety team about staying safe.
- 2 group members attended the Regional forum in London where they talked about Valuing People Now. Group members made links with the South east rep.
- The Big Meeting met twice, in December and again in February. 20 different people attended from 5 different groups. We held a Big meeting evaluation in December and in February talked about the choice and control people have in their homes. Some people revealed that they are not allowed to have a drink when they want one. They also do not feel able to question the staff or complain. Their findings were taken to the Partnership Board who agreed to make a plan of how to make this better for people.
- Members arranged for future visits to their groups from outside agencies including the Brighton and Hove Food



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Partnership, People First training on Campaigning, further visits to Theatre Royal to give more thoughts about accessibility of the venue.

- Members continue to support each other to find ways of changing things they are not happy with in their lives. Individuals often talk through their own issues and the groups offer suggestions and ongoing support to effect change.

The Future: this project got LDDF funding in 2009/10 to continue the work