

# Learning Disability Development Fund (LDDF) Progress report



**Name of project:** The LINK project

**Project Lead:** Sarah Pickard

## **Project Targets from bid:**

- 3-5 people supported to be part of Link Group
- Link group attend 6 Partnership Board meetings and 6 Big Meetings
- Link Group give feedback on Partnership Board work in Network News.
- Link Group meet all sub group chairs to produce accessible information so that the Advocacy Groups Network can understand what they do.
- Speak Out staff will contribute to work of up to 3 sub groups and draft policies or strategies.
- Speak Out staff to attend most Partnership Board meetings.

## **How the bid says the project will do this work:**

- **'LINK Group'**:- a group of people with mild learning difficulties will continue to learn skills in understanding and speaking up in the Partnership Board meetings. They will check that sub groups have talked to people with learning difficulties to find out how to improve services. They will check to see if they have talked to people afterwards to see if changes are really happening and making things better.
- **Partnership Board sub groups:** The LINK Group will encourage the sub groups to find out what a wide number of people with learning difficulties think. They will remind them to ask the 100 plus people in the Speaking Up Network for their views and to talk to other user groups as well. The Link project will help sub groups to ask for views in a way that people can understand and respond to.
- **Making the Partnership Board easier to understand:** this project will continue to help everyone say things simply and clearly and make sure people with learning difficulties can take part at every stage. The link group will visit other Partnership Boards to find better ways of doing things.

**Speak Out Staff:** will work with the Partnership Board and sub groups on plans and strategies. Staff will take part in Partnership Board meetings and other working group meetings such as Individual Budgets, Person Centred

# Learning Disability Development Fund (LDDF) Progress report



Approaches & Service Providers Forum. Staff will represent the overview of Speak Out from all the stories and the hundred's of people we have worked with over the years. They will share useful tools and ideas with support staff and on the Partnership Board Web site so that everyone can benefit.

**How much LDDF money the project gets in 2008/9:** £14,961

**Name of person completing this report:**

**Sarah Pickard**

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**What the project has done in April through July 2008:**

- 2 extra people recruited into Link Group. Total membership now 7. New member also voted as Regional Rep on the National Forum for people with learning difficulties. Views of advocacy groups/Big Meeting to be fed to National/Regional Forum via Link Group members.
- 2 Partnership Boards and Big Meetings attended. Feedback given to all Partnership Board meetings on how well they went. Matthew from Link Group voted as new co chair of the PB at Big Meeting. Feedback given to Partnership Board on labels, person centred planning in the city as seen by people with learning difficulties.
- Speak Out representatives have attended Partnership Board meetings in May and July.
- Article written by group members for July Network news.
- Link Group written and sent out questionnaires for all subgroups to find out what work they do. Link



# Learning Disability Development Fund (LDDF) Progress report



Group to plan their next steps to let Advocacy Groups know more about subgroups when they get all the replies. Link Group asked for opinions about day service changes by Better Lives. Work directed to Big Meeting which ran a workshop in July to find out people's opinions. Work to be continued by Advocacy Groups Network. Request received for Link Group to give views on Commissioning Strategy. Request forwarded to Advocacy Groups Network

- Link project questionnaire from Speak Out staff sent to all Partnership Board members to see if Link Project work is making a difference.
- Speak Out staff attended Providers Forum, Person Centred Planning group and Shaping the Future event. Report submitted to person centred planning group about what Speak Out has learnt about PCP's in the city.



## What the project has done in August through November 2008:

- 1 person has left leaving 6 people in Link Group. With his leaving there is no longer a direct link with National Forum.
- Groups members attended and participated in September and November Partnership Boards. Feedback given to Partnership Board about what people feel about the meeting. Work has started on how best to support the Link Group members when Partnership Board meetings get difficult and when issues raised personally affect Link Group members. Views and issues of the Big Meeting presented to the Partnership Board.
- Link Group attended 1 Big Meeting and feedback



# Learning Disability Development Fund (LDDF) Progress report



what happened at the Partnership Board.

- Link Group prepared their views for how the Learning Disability Development Money should be allocated and voted at the September Partnership Board.
- 1 group member attended Better Lives subgroup to tell them the views of people with learning disabilities on day service changes.
- Link Group gave advice to Providers Forum on the accessibility of it's job description.
- Link Group met commissioner about Commissioning Strategy and gave ideas about how to make it more accessible.
- Work continues to understand the role of the subgroups. Link Group found questionnaires from subgroups difficult to understand so are now working with Partnership Board Development Worker in increasing their understanding.
- Network News article written for the January edition.
- One Link Group member has facilitated learning disability awareness training for general council staff.
- One member taken part in interviewing for speech and language therapist job.



## What has the project done December – March 09

- One new member joined making membership of 7 people.
- Link Group attended January and March's Partnership Board. Feedback given about the choices people get at home and how able they

## Learning Disability Development Fund (LDDF) Progress report



are to complain about the service they get. They attended the health information sessions after January's Partnership Board.

- Link Group gave a presentation to February Big Meeting about the work they do at the Partnership Board as Big meeting evaluation in December revealed that people still unclear about both the Partnership Board and the Link group roles. Link Group took part in Big Meeting evaluation in December. Feedback given to the Big Meeting from the Partnership Board.
- Link Group plans to start visiting advocacy groups so they can signpost them onto the relevant people.
- Two group members visited the West Sussex Partnership Board. They made links with other West Sussex advocacy groups that attend and plan to meet with them in the future.
- Members wrote articles for 2 editions of network news.
- Members talked at the Speak out AGM about the work of the Link group.
- Link Group were involved in the consultation about the proposed housing development at Wellington Road.
- 3 members have been involved in doing a video about Good Staff Support for Speak out training.

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