

Gateshead LINK
Transition into Adult Services Working Group
Tuesday 8 June 2010, 10.30 am
GVOC

Present:

David Wallace - Resident
 Maria Hall - Cedars School & Resident
 Rebecca Leary - GVOC Volunteer Centre
 Graeme Turner - Gateshead Council

In attendance:

Richard Jenks - LINK Co-ordinator
 Kim Newton - LINK Communication and Engagement Officer
 Marge Greatbatch - GVOC Administrator

Apologies: Angie Maidment, Mark Thomas, Janet Holliday, Ethel Donnelly, Kay Parker.

Richard Jenks opened the meeting by explaining that the LINK started with 4 working groups one of which covered carers issues. It had become apparent that these issues were being addressed by various other agencies and organisations therefore, it was decided at the planning event to drop carers' issues. The whole membership had been consulted and transition services resulted as the priority focus.

Action

1. Welcome: Dave Wallace **agreed** to take the Chair and asked for a round of introductions. Dave added that Ethel Donnelly had shown particular interest in joining this group but she is unable to attend for approximately 6 weeks following an operation. The members asked that a 'get well' card be sent to Ethel.

AM -
card

2. Aims & Objectives: RJ commented that the Aims, **(3) Terms of Reference** and **(4) Future Plan** were all closely connected and the discussion would probably cross over into each area. The Aims and Objects and the Terms of Reference were to be decided and this would make a future work plan clearer.

RL was asked how the Volunteer Centre would fit in to the group. An initial funding bid has been submitted to the Big Lottery Fund for a Supported Volunteering project. If successful, one of the aims of the project is to train volunteers as mentors to support other volunteers with learning disabilities in volunteering. Publicity material will be produced and distributed covering as wide an age range as possible. The Volunteer Centre would offer a level 1 qualification for mentors and have a recruitment target of 250 mentors in year 1. RL was invited to the Cedars School to discuss links further with the Deputy Head Teacher.

The discussion continued on the importance of recruiting a wide age range of volunteers and on the terminology used to promote the scheme to avoid barriers. RL then handed round a questionnaire and asked members to complete and return it to her. Members shared their experiences of the pathways into adulthood for children and young people with learning and other disabilities and the lack of funding for essential services.

Members then made a start on identifying the main objectives by discussing the following:

- Investigate transition pathways and examine the criteria of 'Fair Access to Care' to identify who qualifies.
- Identify the path of people with learning disabilities to mental health services, mental health problems are apparent in many young people who are in transition to adulthood.
- Raise awareness and increase membership. Invite a professional to join the group
- Achieve a seamless approach to transition through better planning. This is currently being piloted by one school in the borough but should be widely in place. Members discussed the Gateshead statistics on people with learning disabilities and Person Centred Planning and the link between Connexions service and schools. More information is needed through better communication channels as well as a more flexible and personal approach.
- Support is needed for carers on issues such as how to make a referral and guidance on the age range. A resource pack should be made available with information on a website – a one-stop shop to address all queries. It is important to know that support is available and advance planning is imperative.

There was further discussion on current procedures and staffing levels which are not adequate to cope with the amount of referrals.

RJ suggested identifying a specific piece of work to focus on as a start.

- More training is needed for school staff, health providers and other agencies on the approach to Person Centred Plans.
- Raising awareness and involving people was identified as key. Members emphasised the importance of life skills and promoting realistic expectations for an independent existence.
- Maintaining relationships through continuity. The views of young people in transition should be taken into account.
- Housing provision.
- Centralising access to information and services – create a resource. It was suggested that the Our Gateshead website could be utilised as it's a free resource. The Transition Information Network, a national resource, is not being utilised.

The LINK offered support to the Volunteer Centre with the funding bid.

The above information would be collated and draft documents prepared for the next meeting.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 12.05 pm.

5. Next meeting: Tuesday 20 July 2010, 10.30 am-12.30pm