

- INSIDE LA -

Leeds
Advocacy

A NEWSLETTER FROM LEEDS ADVOCACY FOR ADVOCATES AND VOLUNTEERS
AUGUST 2011

"Speaking out for people with learning disabilities ..."

Pizza Collation to digest

In July Leeds Advocacy had a strategic planning event. It was open to members, service users, volunteers and workers and was a chance for the whole organisation to look at the future; it's called Pizza Day traditionally as that is what we have for lunch.



Paul Seccombe presented a look at the big changes that are happening for advocacy services in Leeds. Commissioners for advocacy want seven of the local services to work more closely with each other - to make a 15% saving in financial terms, a common referral point, with improvements in quality. In Paul's presentation there were a number of things to think about, including working with other organisations in a Coalition.

Participants worked in small groups to mull over and digest the key questions they would like answered; if not now then through the talks that will happen in the future with our Coalition partners. Some of the questions people had were: how would this affect our service users, our waiting lists and the quality of services? Will the amount of money to each advocacy service be on the same ratio as now? How will this affect our volunteers?

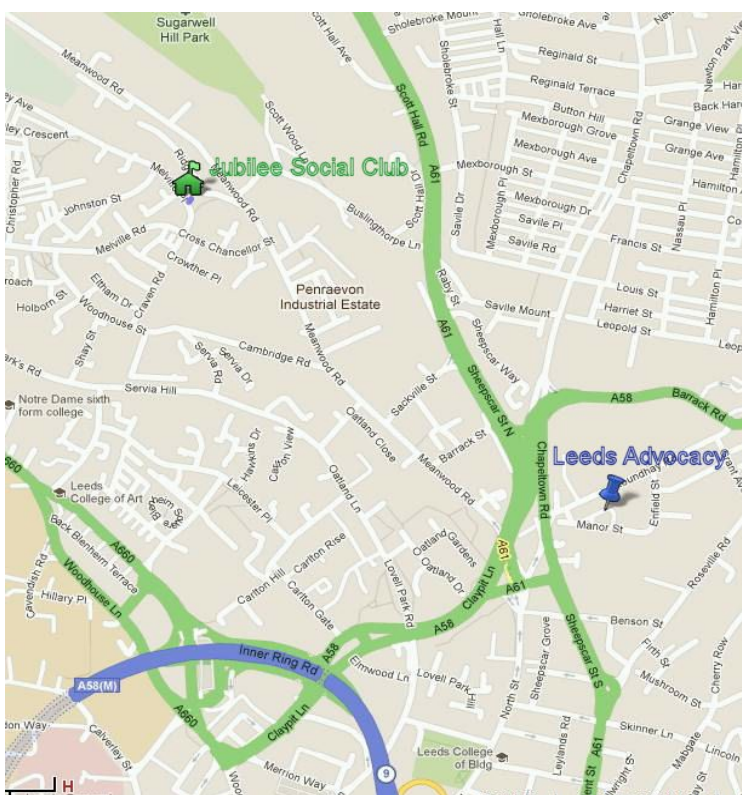


In giving answers to some of the questions Paul said "our belief in service users being part of the organisation is important and helps us stay focused on the essentials and motivated to take the right action".

Although this was a hard meeting with some difficult things to think about, people finished the meeting wanting to deal with the challenges. People had come up with very some good ideas and wanted to see the changes through to form the Advocacy Coalition in Leeds with Leeds Advocacy as a strong player within it. Chair, Ralph Porter, said "we felt that it was a positive day which will help us deal well with the future."

Notice of the Annual General Meeting

Leeds Advocacy will be holding their Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 21st September 2011. This will be an evening event held at **Jubilee Social Club, Melville Place, Leeds LS6 2LZ**. Arrival and food will be from 7pm and business will start at 7.45pm. People are then welcome to stay to socialise afterwards. Bring your money as the bar will be selling alcohol and soft drinks throughout and there will also be a raffle. There will be presentations from all the project areas in Leeds Advocacy as well as the usual elections to the Board of Directors and Management Committee.



There will also be a presentation from the Bradford Independent Review Team (BIRT) who are part of Articulate Advocacy and have been in place since April 2011. We will also be launching our brand new website as well as announcing the winner of the Christmas Card competition.

Everyone is welcome and papers will be sent out to members nearer the time. Please let Katie know if you are going to come. Ring 2440606 or email katie@leedsadvocacy.org.uk

Life as an IMHA

What is an IMHA? This is short for Independent Mental Health Advocate and was introduced in the Mental Health Act 2007. The role is to be an independent advocate in the life of anyone on, or about to be put on, a mental health section.

We are the advocacy service for people with a learning disability and a mental health problem in Leeds.

We spend time getting to know the person and some of the matches last for quite a long time. We make sure the person's rights under the Mental Health Act are respected.

We help a person understand the language that Dr's and other professionals use.

John lived in his own flat but had a long history of drug addiction which had lead him to become isolated and committing crimes. He had been admitted to a Mental Health Unit after being transferred from jail - he was not taking part in the planning of his treatment and would not meet with the mental health team. The manager of the Mental Health Unit referred John for an IMHA. The IMHA met with John regularly and found out that he was terrified of big meetings. The IMHA and John came to an agreement that John would come into the meeting and leave if he became stressed - the IMCA would then take over and say things from a prepared list of things that John wanted to talk about. This was successful, so much so that after some weeks John was relaxed enough to stay in the meetings and say things that he wanted himself. John is now off the Mental Health Section and is being supported to live on his own again in the community.

Philip Newton—IMHA Lead

Out and about?

Do you have your own car and would you be willing to take our stall out to local events? There are lots of local fairs, galas and other events going on throughout Leeds all through the year that we could attend if we had more helpers who can take the stall out.

These events are an excellent way for us to publicise our services, recruit more volunteers and for helping us to fundraise for money to provide our services. If you think you can help then please get in touch with Karen for more details.

Fun Run Total

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the great Leeds Advocacy Fun Run, Walk, Wheel event on 12th June.

We have now received all the sponsorship money back and have raised a grand total of just over £300!



A great time was had by all, despite the rain, wind and lack of sunshine, and if you missed out then be sure to join us next year! Karen promised it will be sunnier then!

IIV awarded

In July it was confirmed that we have been awarded the Investors in Volunteers standard, recognising the good practice that we have with our work with volunteers. This award lasts for 3 years.



A big thank you to all the volunteers for your valuable contribution towards achieving this and for all your hard work and commitment to Leeds Advocacy.

Artists wanted!

Christmas Card Competition

You have probably already received your entry form for the Christmas Card competition and some people have sent their entries back. If you haven't yet got round to getting your pens and pencils out then you have until Monday 12th September to return your entry to the office. If you don't have an official entry form you can just draw your picture on a piece of A4 paper and send it in with your name and address.

The competition is open to everyone, except employees of Leeds Advocacy or Articulate Advocacy or relatives of employees.

The winner will be announced at the AGM on 21st September.

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