

Dover District Partnership Group Notes of meeting held on 8th April 2011

Update from Complex Needs Group

The DPG has agreed to fund a training workshop with Soundabout for people with complex needs. The workshop would be held at Walmer Centre and would be split into 2 sessions, one morning and one afternoon.



People with complex needs don't often have opportunities to be included. This workshop will focus on involving people with higher support needs



The Soundabout trainer makes music from any sound a person may make and then makes and makes a song out of it. They use rhythm and sing the sound the person made. Everyone is then encouraged to participate in the song.



Raising your Game



This is a Project for young people aged 14—25 with learning disabilities or communication problems who may get into trouble with the police or have been in trouble.

Organisations that know of young people like this can refer them to the Project. The Project will work with them to find out what the problems are, talk with the police and others in the offending system to help these young people better.



When people do get into trouble the police and others involved sometimes don't realise that people have a learning disability or communication problem. The Project will work with organisations to teach people how to talk to people with communication problems.



Young people with learning disabilities and communication problems have made some leaflets about the Project. The Project also asked them about things that affected their lives eg family, things to do, keeping fit.

9 young people across east Kent will be trained as trainers in learning disabilities so they can help train staff and make them aware of learning disabilities and communication difficulties.

The Project will also be working with the Courts to see how magistrates can better understand about people's body language and responses.



Previously in east Kent people have suggested a card be available for people with a learning disability to carry which tells police they have a disability. Lyn is about to start researching this to find out what is available in east Kent and what people would like to carry eg credit card, keyring.



There is no system for having Appropriate Adults for people with learning disabilities over the age of 18.

The police and courts needs to be aware that people with learning disabilities may need extra support to understand questions even if they are over 18.



Any young person in east Kent can be referred to Raining Your Game. They can be referred by an organisation, family, friend, or the person themselves.

What support do people get from police?



Fergus and Dave from Kent Police talked about what support the police can give people.

If police are aware that someone has medication a custody nurse is always available. This information may not always be available for someone with a learning disability.



The Custody sergeant has a duty of care for all people brought into the police station.

If people carried an official registered card it would make possible problems clear.

Mick Cronin has set up a system in east Kent where people can register themselves with the police. If a situation arises in the future there is a record of their additional needs.

It is important to recognised that some people with learning disabilities will commit crimes. It is also important to recognise that those people may need to be treated differently as a result of the crimes.

What other support can people get

Citizens Advice Bureau will give people advice and information to sort your problems out.



There are Citizens Advice Bureau's (CABs) in

Dover in Maison Dieu Gardens and also Dover Gateway Centre
Deal in the Cedars
Sandwich in the Cattle Market

CABs are open 10am—3pm on Mondays to Thursdays.



CAB can give you a list of all solicitors that will give help with court costs.

There is also a website called adviceguide.org.uk where you can get advice on what you could do.

There are some solicitors who specialise in helping people with learning disabilities but many have no experience of working with people with learning disabilities.



Advocates can attend meetings with solicitors and help people to understand what is going on.

Because of the referral system can it can take a long time to get an advocate.

There is a Kent Law clinic at Canterbury University where you can get advice online or on the phone.

Discussion Groups



We talked in groups about the support people may need.

At the Police Station :



- Support should be someone you know well and same person from start to finish.
- Interpreters should be available at police stations if you can't speak English. Someone should also be able to use Makaton signs.
- A card to show that says you have a learning disability would be good and helpful.
- A trained member of staff should be available at police, courts, prisons aware of how to support people who need it.
- Information should be in easy to understand formats with visual aids. A communication book like the hospitals use could help people understand what will happen.
- Identification to say you have a learning disability helps to let people know you need support.
- Have advocates who specialise in law for learning disabilities.
- People need moral support as well as legal support.

- Legal process takes a long time for things to happen. Could there be fast tracking for some people?
- Police need training to recognise support needs at early stage, some people are embarrassed to say they need support.
- Some people may react to police which leads to them getting into trouble. Police need to make it clear why they want to talk to person so people are not afraid and behave strangely.

Steve Kissock spoke to Fergus and Dave about giving some training at the local Police Team Day.

At Court:

- More time should be allowed so people understand what is going on.
- Magistrates and solicitors needs more training
- People with learning disabilities should have allowances made while waiting in Court. The Court should prioritise so they are called first.
- Not knowing what will happen or how you should act is scary. A DVD that people can watch before and know the process of the court would be helpful.
- Giving evidence on camera in court.



In Prisons:

- More training and communication aids are needed.
- Personal development plan, health action plan, person centred plan should all go with person to the prison so officials can understand them and their needs better.
- Support and understanding of the reasons for being in prison to make sure person understands.
- What help is there for people when they come out of prison.
- Easy for prison life to feel secure for some people.
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Local News

Wednesday Word meet each week at DealAbility 1030—1230 for a hot drink and chance to chat to people and meet new people.



Way Out band is organising pub nights at Loui Armstrong. Live Bands, quiz nights, karaoke. If anyone would like to receive emails about forthcoming events please let Liz Clayson know.

