

**Yorkshire and Humber Employment and Learning Skills Service User/  
Carer Reference Group**

**York, 29 June 2009**

**Present**

Nev Wheeler, SHSC - Chair  
Stephanie de la Haye  
Jen Clayton, York Faces  
Lynne Parkin, York Faces  
Steve Ellement  
Steven Purdy  
Ally Marshall  
Ron Sweeney  
Sue Rees, MAGIC  
Daniel Brittan  
Allayne Holmes  
Andi Whitehouse  
Sally Seymour  
Jackie Lubbock  
Kay Fearn, Clifton House, York  
Nickie Wright, Clifton House, York  
Samuel Martin  
Ian Fulton

**In attendance**

Patrick Wood, Voluntary Action Sheffield – Notes  
Simon Francis, Department of Health/Cabinet Office  
Steve Ward, Learning and Skills Council, Yorkshire and Humber  
Mark Shea, Sheffield City Council

**Apologies**

David Forster  
Anita Wilson  
Graham Estop  
Andy Bottomley  
Rhiannon Rees  
Joanna Knight  
Dave Shine  
Lindsay Gillies  
Rob Webster  
Heather Raistrick, NHS Yorkshire and the Humber  
Helen Gibson, Government Office Yorks and the Humber  
Gary McCulloch, Sheffield PCT

Ian Hastings, Jobcentre Plus  
Richard Garth, Jobcentre Plus

### **Notes of the last meeting**

p.2, paragraph 3: Jackie pointed out that the group doesn't have access to documents to comment on. We need to work out a process for getting stuff out. **Simon agreed to send out the proposed regional strategy for mental health and employment.**

p.5, paragraph 10: Jackie clarified that the Disability Discrimination Act covers both physical problems and mental illness. The issue she was concerned with related to people with mental health problems who may have physical problems as well.

### **Update from Simon Francis**

Simon outlined 5 pieces of work that were being undertaken at national level:

1. The National Strategy for Mental Health and Employment – this will be published in September. The document stresses the importance of the recovery model. There is very little chance that money will be attached to this initiative.
2. Department of Health – New Horizons. This is the Department's vision for the future of mental health services. It follows on from the National Service Framework. It is about values and principles. Again, there is a strong focus on recovery and social inclusion.
3. Simon is working on a project relating to work recovery and inclusion, which relates to the Public Service Agreement focused on settled accommodation and work. Initially this project will focus on people on CPA. There is some money attached to this work.
4. Rachel Perkins from St. George's in London will be reviewing DWP programmes relating to mental health and employment. Simon's work as mentioned in point 3 above would align with this.
5. NICE is currently working on the evidence base for mental health and employment initiatives.

Simon reported on the following regional developments:

c. £500,000 a year over the next two years will be made available to support mental health and employment initiatives in the region. Discussions are ongoing around how this money is split between regional infrastructure organisations and local authorities. c. £500,000 will also be made available from the Department of Health through the Strategic Health Authority.

Jen Clayton from the Reference Group had attended a Local Authorities meeting with Simon. This group will develop a further options paper for distribution.

The region will be asked to respond to New Horizons and it's important for the Reference Group to consider how we input into the consultation process.

There has been little service user input so far in the development of New Horizons.

c. £80 million will be available in the region as part of the Future Jobs Fund, aimed at 16 – 24 year olds. A paper has been produced promoting peer group mentors in Early Intervention Services and discussions have been held with Sheffield City Council around implementing this idea in the city.

### ***Comments and questions arising from Simon's report***

*Does the remit of the Reference Group include CAMHS transition?*

Patrick replied that the group has identified 'Young people' as one of its main areas of work and that this would include CAMHS transition.

*The Third Sector is important in supporting mental health and employment initiatives. There is a need for capacity building to support Third Sector organisations to provide quality services.*

Simon replied that we have a fantastic voluntary sector in the region. There is a need to address the issue of how the Third Sector is involved in regional decision-making.

*Can you provide some clarification re: New Horizons? It seems to have little shape or structure. Louis Appleby has facilitated discussion/consultation on New Horizons.*

Simon replied that a New Horizons consultation will take place between mid-July and mid-October. Louis Appleby has held a series of meetings to discuss what might be included in the consultation paper.

**It was agreed to include 'Collective response to New Horizons' as an agenda item for the next Reference Group meeting.**

**It was agreed that Nev would write to the Strategic Health Authority to invite a representative to attend Reference Group meetings.**

### **Update from other agencies**

#### ***LSC – Steve Ward, Yorkshire and the Humber Equality and Diversity Manager***

Steve explained that the LSC funds further education. It will shortly be replaced by the Young People's Learning Agency (16 – 19 year olds) and the Skills Funding Agency (for people 19 plus). Changes will also be made to the way education is funded, with money being distributed through clusters of Local Authorities.

In terms of mental health, the LSC in the region supports a number of initiatives. Tricia Clarke, the regional mental health worker, works with

providers and stages training events for them. Work is underway to develop a national mental health training package, which will be trialled in Yorkshire and the Humber (probably next year).

The LSC is also working around disclosure of mental health problems and trying to overcome negative views of disclosure. About 4% of further education students disclose mental health problems, whereas the estimate of students who experience mental health problems is in the region of 20%. Extra support is available for people who disclose.

There is a mini-project focusing on rural issues, which is run by the North Yorkshire Learning Consortium of voluntary and community sector organisations and addresses the issue of education in rural communities.

### ***Comments and questions arising from Steve's report***

*Does funding for additional support for students come out of the existing pot?*

Steve replied that up to £16,000 of additional support is provided out of the money allocated to individual further education establishments and that additional money is available from the LSC if necessary. This system will change so that 60% of the total of additional support will be available from the pot allocated to individual colleges etc and 40% will have to be bid for.

Steve commented that there is a lot of money available in further education as a result of the government's current focus on reskilling.

*What will happen with European funding?*

It's unclear how it will develop. There will be access but the administration process is uncertain.

*I'm not sure how additional support might benefit people with mental health problems in further/higher education.*

Colleges get money from the government to run courses. The LSC provides money for additional support. Colleges should negotiate with individuals to assess needs.

*It would be good to be clearer about possible support, the types of support available.*

Simon commented that he sees why Steve would want to measure progress but he also pointed out that you don't know what you don't know. **Perhaps this group could produce a guide for the system, with the aim of making information clearer and more widely available.**

*There are no specific programmes for people with mental health problems – they're basically adapted dyslexia programmes.*

*It would be a good idea to have proactive funded posts within colleges to identify the mental health needs of students.*

*It can take getting to crisis point before anything is done. People might not realise that they have mental health problems.*

*Service users have a responsibility to demystify issues like mental health problems and sexuality.*

Simon said there was a need for clear action around the points raised by Jen and others re: additional support. He suggested that group members should feed their concerns through Patrick to Simon and that Simon will pass them on.

## **Feedback from sub-groups**

### ***Issues relating to employers***

The group emphasised the need for working together. It would like to see a qualitative research project undertaken to identify the main issues. The group identified risk assessment as a particular concern.

Group members suggested that interested group members should focus on specific geographical areas, identify employers to approach and inform them of relevant materials (e.g. Shift campaign, Time to Change, HSC and Mind materials). The group could produce a signposting document that would provide references to relevant agencies and campaigns.

It would be a good idea to hold a focus group, encouraging employers to take on relevant issues.

This work should focus on larger and perhaps medium size employers and aim to make practical suggestions for implementation.

Simon pointed out that a scoping exercise is currently being undertaken to identify national and regional resources and that an organisation called Eskimo Soup will develop a website to facilitate access to these resources and provide an advice line for employers.

In light of this development, Simon thought it would be a good idea for the group to focus its attention on risk assessment, particularly understanding from employers what they perceive the risks to be.

Simon reflected that the public sector is relatively stable despite these uncertain times and it would be good to consider how to ensure that the public sector leads by example.

### ***Rural issues***

There was a wide-ranging discussion. The group identified sustainable funding for rural transport as an issue of concern. There is very little free transport in the region and inequality of access. The group also discussed community education and the role of CPA in a vast community.

### ***Permitted earnings – consistency of approach***

There was insufficient interest in this subject on the day, so no sub-group meeting took place.

### ***Young people***

The group discussed declaration of mental illness in higher and further education and concluded that there was insufficient support to access information and resources. There needs to be increased communication between education and psychiatric services. As there is a lot of misunderstanding about mental health problems, there might be a role for Mental Health First Aid in education.

The group would like to see the development of an Advance Directive for Individuals in Education, which would specify what your warning signs are and how you'd like to be treated. The Directive would be personal and individualised.

The role of this group would be to look at and agree what the Directive might look like and write to Steve in his capacity as regional LSC Equality and Diversity Manager. Steve has agreed to send out a version of the Directive with a covering letter to appropriate agencies. The group should contact NUS and NIACE amongst others.

Steve mentioned a training package for teachers being developed in Huddersfield.

There was a question about using the term advance directive for this document, as it's a term that's already used in mental health. It was agreed that the proposed Directive relates to the idea of WRAP (= Wellness Recovery Action Planning, which usually leads to the production of a written document known as a Wellness Recovery Action Plan).

### ***Communication***

The group stated that communication is vital across the board, encompassing both statutory services and the VCF sector, but also informal discussion and communication with a range of different communities. It's important to engage with Community Development Workers, youth centres and places of faith (e.g. mosques). The group stressed the value of face-to-face communication but it's also important to use existing networks like local magazines and pirate/community radio to reach out.

In terms of encouraging people from BME communities to become involved in this Reference Group, Patrick has been provided with a list of ideas to follow up.

It's important to acknowledge that people's mental health fluctuates and that this has implications for how you communicate. The group would like to see a feasibility study aimed at developing a long-term communication strategy, which could be disseminated through service user networks.

Simon reported that the **Reference Group has some allocated space on the YHIP website**. So far, our minutes and other papers have been posted here and it might be possible to develop a discussion forum. **Simon asked what people would like to see on this space.**

### **Any other business**

#### ***Proposal from Andi Whitehouse***

Andi reported that he intends to run this event with Our Celebration. He pointed out that his idea related to several of the sub-groups held today, notably communication, employers and young people. He invited comments on his proposal from other group members.

There was general approval for Andi's proposal, although it was felt that it might benefit from greater clarity and focus. Simon suggested making it **a more formal seminar, involving people from the Reference Group and other service user groups and policy and decision makers (rather than employers) in a 50/50 mix. Perhaps the event could focus on the public sector. It could encompass a celebration of service user and public sector achievement and be held under the New Horizons banner. Simon said he would be happy to communicate with Andi to develop this idea.**

#### ***Ian Fulton – Mainstreaming the work of the Reference Group***

Ian had previously discussed this idea with Simon. He thinks that we should look to establish the mainstreaming of our work. We need to stress the importance of wellbeing and the importance of employment and learning skills in terms of regaining and sustaining mental health and wellbeing. It would be a good idea to engage with decision makers to draft employment and learning skills outcomes into the service commissioning framework. Mental health trusts don't give people self-esteem; they give them medication and psychiatry. Services should aim to be more generally supportive, with learning at their heart.

#### ***Simon Francis – opportunities to participate in regional meetings***

Simon reported that a series of meetings of potential interest to Reference Group members are planned across the region. The contribution of Experts by Experience is greatly valued at these meetings. **Simon will circulate details to Patrick on an ad-hoc basis for circulation to group members.**

**Date and venue of next meeting**

Monday 7 September, Leeds. Time and venue to be confirmed.