



Report of the

August 12, 2009, meeting of

East Lothian Equality Forum

in the Doughty Centre,
Herdmanflat Hospital, Haddington.

- If you receive this report in PDF format, you'll be able to click on the words highlighted in this colour of **red** to link to the relevant site in your web browser.

Who was there:

Alan Brown	JPG Representative
Val Vincent	JPG Representative
Rikki Richardson	Service User
Alex Donnelly	Service User
Carrie Poole	Local Area Coordinator, Community Care
Lesley Aitkenhead	ELCCF Development Manager
George Paterson	ELCCF Information Worker

Before the meeting started...

Prior to the meeting proper beginning, forum members were involved in hot discussion over care at home: **assessments**, staffing, staff qualifications and training, management and **standards**.

The organisation and provision of social care is undergoing a big revamp in East Lothian and throughout Scotland as local authorities struggle to match the costs of services and suppliers against harsh new economies and limited budgets.

Despite the general feeling amongst everyone concerned that the best of care should be delivered, the reality is that shortcomings in the system are inevitably felt worse by those at the receiving end - carers and service users.

"I'm shocked that care at home standards are not being met.

"If you're coming to assess somebody's needs, it's not just the physical tasks that have to be done, it's how they like them done and fitting in with that person's household routine.

"At the first visit of making an assessment, there should be a written care plan that than gets sent back to the purchaser as well as the person to say 'is this correct?' - and I don't think this is happening."

Voices were raised again in support of there being consistency in the individual care provider matched with service user, to avoid unknown providers turning up on the doorstep and in some cases having to be told what they were there to do.

Forum members were also mindful of the importance of having providers turn up when they were supposed to.

"If you look at the standards for care at home, you're meant to know who's coming in, that you've full confidence in them and that your provider will let you know ahead of time who you're getting at what times unless there's exceptional circumstances like sickness or annual leave - but then they can phone up and tell you."

"Unfortunately if you're not able to voice a complaint, you are stuck."

Although not critical of the individual care providers, forum members believed there could be a great improvement in the quality of service demanded of the providing organisation.

Problems pinpointed were:

- Home care staff not being qualified to SVQ2 standard, not trained up in handling, and in some cases being uncomfortably young for the service user.
- Providers expanding too quickly to have staff cover a far wider geographical area.
- There should be clear guidelines for recipients of complex care packages to change or keep their care provider, however it seems that cases are being dealt with inconsistently.
- It was suggested that care staff with cars, known to service users, are being reassigned to more outlying areas with 'new' service users while newer staff are being referred to already known clients in their local areas.
- There is more turnover in provider staff caused by tensions in transition.
- Appointments are managed with little planning given to travel time by provider staff.
- Local authority rushing to implement changes without due regard to 'quality' control.
- There is confusion over what is governed by generic and specialist care services.
- Policy is lacking on how cases and files on service users are being transferred between old and new provider.

"There are things happening that the council should be aware of.."

Members expressed concerns about change in the procurement of services and whether it was being adequately monitored and supported.

Visit the Equality Forum on the web at www.elccf.org/forumeq.asp

The question arose on Direct Payments, and the service user's ability to choose this as a method of maintaining the same service from their old provider and care workers. Forum members voiced concern that service users were being passively discouraged to take up payments.

The forum agreed to invite the Council's Carol Jenner to a future meeting to discuss the Direct Payments issue.

Respite:

Lesley told the Forum that East Lothian's Respite Services Co-ordination Manager, Vanessa Strong is moving on to a new position within the NHS. This is a setback and leaves the respite in a difficult position.

Vanessa was complimented for her work done and for her input on the Older People's Strategy. Her work on collecting responses on the OPS is being picked up by her colleague Sam McLean, who is also project managing the council's procurement process for specialist services.

Physical Disability Strategy:

The strategy is in its third draft with the council's Julia White as implementation officer. There is no clear source of finance available. The strategy will take in key service redesign developments common to everyone who uses community care services.

For example, similar to the Older People's Strategy, the Community Response and Rehabilitation Service would lie at the core of the physical disability strategy.

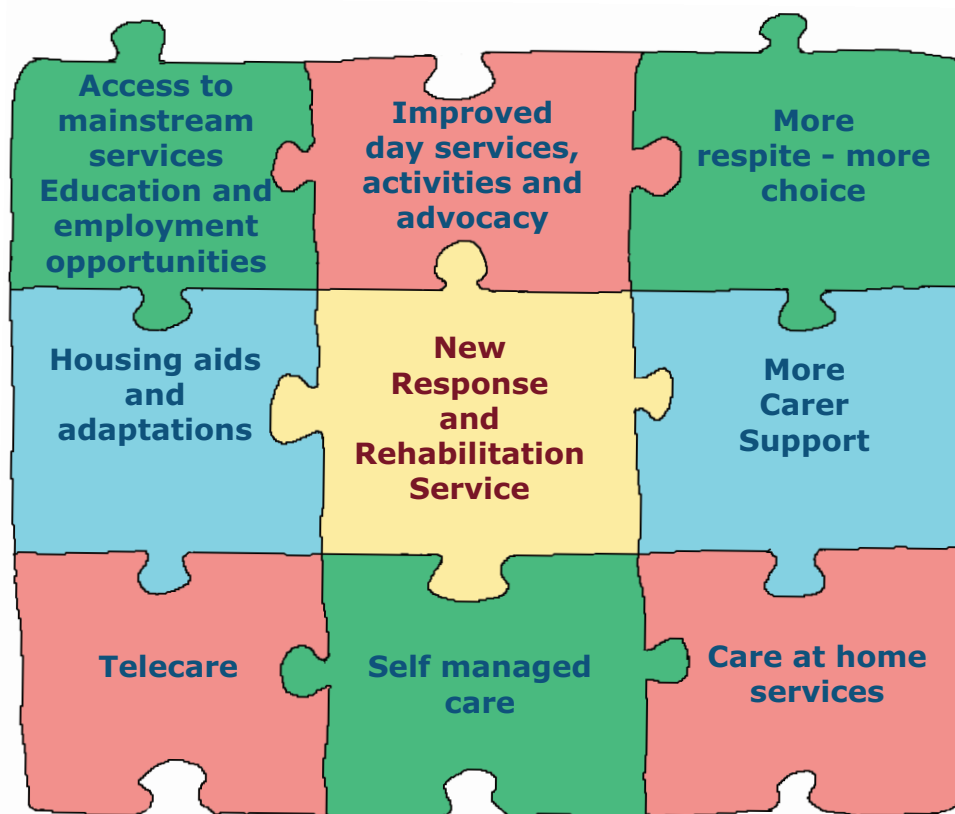
The service will provide rehabilitation in a variety of settings, aiming to improve health, wellbeing and the regaining of function and ability.

Visit the Equality Forum on the web at www.elccf.org/forumeq.asp

The core work of the service will be:

- hospital discharge and support
- crisis management
- falls assessment and management
- admission prevention/ planned admission
- rehabilitation to promote independence
- anticipatory care for those who may be at high risk

These are the themes that will fit in the jigsaw of the physical disability strategy:



One voice on the forum warned:

"Unless you can get care at home services to work properly, nothing else will, because that's the nuts and bolts. If people are having their needs met and are being treated with dignity and respect, then everything will work."

Visit the Equality Forum on the web at www.elccf.org/forumeq.asp

The planning group is due to talk over the strategy in early September, but the consensus of the forum was that unless finance is available any strategy will remain theory. Alan said that like East Lothian's Community Health Team there was a suggestion to make a body similar to the new Midlothian **Physical Rehabilitation Team**, and physio and OT directed.

Alan said it was important people be told of moves on the strategy for them to give input.

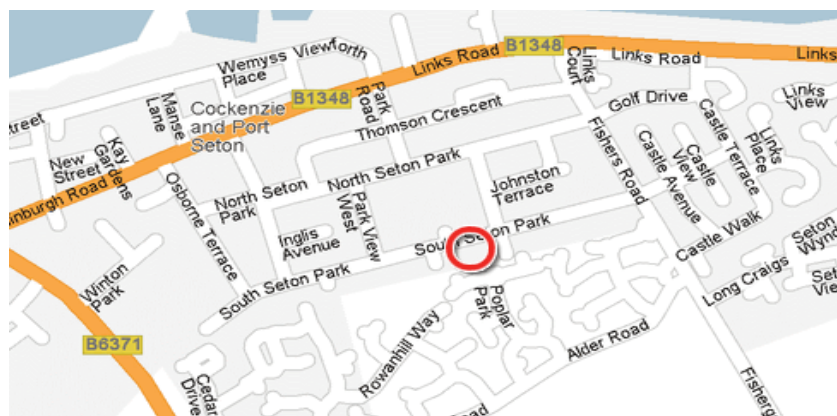
Day Activities:

There was discussion over the services available in the Prestonpans day centre, based on the change in the amount of activities available. The issue was the old one of staff capacity and the lack of choice in activities outside the centre.

Lesley said she would follow up the confusion of use and charges made at the hydrotherapy pool at Prestonpans Leisure Centre.

.....

The next meeting of East Lothian Equality Forum will be on Wednesday, October 14 at 10.30-12.00 noon in Port Seton Resource Centre, South Seton Park EH32 0BQ. Contact ELCCF c/o Tynepark House, Poldrate, Haddington EH41 4DA. Tel: 01620 822212, email info@elccf.org. Visit www.elccf.org.



Visit the Equality Forum on the web at www.elccf.org/forumeq.asp