



Report of the March 3, 2010, meeting of East Lothian Equality Forum in Port Seton Community Centre.

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Who was there:

Ross Carpenter	Service User
Pearl Lane	Prestonpans Resource Centre
Margaret Donaldson	Headway
Elizabeth Barnes	Headway
Alex Donnelly	Service User
Joyce Cattanach	Headway
John Hogg	Headway
Julie Watson	Headway
Tom Brunton	Service user
Margaret Brunton	Service user
Christine McLean	Former manager, Prestonpans Resource Centre
Ray Harris	ELC Planner, Telecare
Nicky Sandford	ELC Planner, Housing
Chris Lewis	ELC Transition team
Anne Browning	ELC Transition team
Carol Jenner	ELC Planner Adult Social Care
Julia White	ELC Planner Adult Social Care
Sheena White	ELCHP Health Manager OT
Carrie Poole	Local Area Coordinator, Community Care
Alan Brown	ELCCF vice-convener
Lesley Aitkenhead	ELCCF Development Manager
Sheila Ross	ELCCF Administrator
George Paterson	ELCCF Information Worker

This was an important meeting for the Forum - the first time carers and service users were able to come face to face with a number of planners to tell their own stories and relate their own life experiences.

Physical Disability Strategy:

East Lothian's Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Strategy is still in its draft form. The meeting allowed the planners to say what progress was being made.

Lesley gave a brief history of its development since work started on it in 2006. Elements in the document were similar to those in the **Older People's Strategy**, mainly plans for the formation of a 24/7 Response and Rehabilitation service.

Importantly, she said, there was to be no new money to be had for the new PD strategy, so plans had to be formed on the basis of redesign of services.

Julia described how the strategy would range over complex needs. It would also include an implementation plan showing how the strategy was to be carried out. Plans are for the strategy to be shown to organisations in summer and put out to consultation for service users in September.

The first readable draft will be presented at a future meeting of the Equality Forum. The current meeting gave everyone a chance to give their first impressions of the general overview and themes of the strategy.

The planners each gave a quick run-down on how their relevant areas of work reflected the pieces, or themes, which made up the completed 'jigsaw' of the strategy.

Response and Rehabilitation Service:

Chris Lewis said the core of her work and that of the transformation team on the PD and other strategies was to bring together government, health and council resources to greater effect.

The current social care Access Team and Complex Care Team service is being reshaped for over and under 65s. Also, a telephone Customer Management Service, or CMS, is being designed to handle inquiries.

Chris explained work would also involve bringing the District Nursing service and Crisis Care service among others, together to work as a whole in the new Response and Rehabilitation service.

Telecare

Ray Harris outlined the **Telecare** system. Sensor equipment in the house are linked to a call centre at Macmerry who are prompted in anything happens in the home, such as falls or fires and can send in the Response and Rehabilitation Service.

Ray gave examples of the range of equipment and said the system was designed people live more independently. Much of the costs are being picked up by the Scottish Government.

Care at Home

Carol Jenner explained progress on **procurement** - the council's tendering process for care services. The council are learning from the snags in the first part of the process of providing care at home and hope to apply lessons for the second phase which will involve the supply of specialist services.

Here, the council is trying to provide better services without tendering and current service users will keep their present service providers. New users may need other providers not currently listed.

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She said the council was looking for more information from service users on specialist needs and was open to meetings with service users in day centres.

Housing

Nikki explained progress on East Lothian proposed new Housing Strategy and Scheme of Assistance - a new way to give information and advice.

Scottish Government moves have meant East Lothian having to revise its local housing strategy for 2011-16. This covers affordable housing, improving council and housing association stock, helping homelessness, fuel poverty, improving private housing and housing support for vulnerable people.

The Scheme of Assistance comes into force in April and is aimed providing grant information, practical help and support for private housing. Included are features which help older and disabled people gain grants and equipment which raise their quality of life.

An information system on housing is also on the cards for everyone in East Lothian.

One problem raised concerned the Care & Repair service, its financing and its inability to serve those under 50 - isolating young people. The service will be reviewed next year. One idea was to start a joint service with Midlothian Council.

Rehabilitation

Sheena White, responsible on the planning group for local health services told of work on the rehabilitation arm of the response and rehabilitation service. This concentrated on improvements in health and life after illness, physical or mental, and now involved

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preventative measures for, for example, falls and fractures which accounted for most hospital admissions.

Comments from the forum:

Forum members had a chance to comment once the Planners wound up.

One Forum member said: "After my operation, when I was discharged I wasn't told I was supposed to be given a discharge OT. I wasn't told anything. I was left alone in my room for 22 months. I didn't have a bath or a shower for 18 months because they didn't get me a chair to put in my bath.

"Even yesterday I burst into tears because I was still getting the runaround. I sat for over a hour yesterday being passed from pillar to post. I wasn't told anything. Nobody's telling me what resources there is.

"The only thing ever done for me was being put into Prestonpans Disability Resource Centre. I never knew that such places like that existed.

"For years I sat and rotted until Christine took me into the centre, otherwise I'd still be looking at my four bedroom walls going crazy."

Another voice said: "None of these strategies will work until there is joint working between health and social care - this has to be cracked

"There is a fantastic job being done in the health board. I can say with years of experience of working with people with physical disabilities that usually they get very good attention when they are in hospital. As soon as they're discharged, that's when issues crop up and sometimes people have little or no support - and I want to underline the 'no'."

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"The other thing people are left with is long term emotional or psychological issue and again there are no services out there which come up with the goods in having the person trying to come to terms with what has happened to them."

"Unless people can talk to their GP they'll get nothing."

"When people need rehabilitation, they don't feel it's person centred and meeting their needs for the time they need it."

"When my second hip replacement went wrong I wasn't given physio when I should have - I had to wait until 22 months after the operation - by that time I'd no muscle left."

"What we do at Prestonpans is try to keep people moving gently - but it would be far better if we had a physio to work with people. They could come and show us what to do and we would do it."

Julia White was asked to come back to the next meeting of the Equality Forum to present the draft PDSI Strategy.

CAR Questionnaire

Lesley outlined the Forum's new questionnaire on day activities for people with physical disabilities and sensory impairment, designed by the Forum's community action research team, and called for by the joint planning group.

The questionnaire was about to be sent out by the council and the results presented in June. Sheila circulated trial questionnaires to the Forum for experiment and comment.

The time and date of the next meeting of the Equality Forum is still to be confirmed.

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