



Report of the May 21, 2009, meeting of East Lothian Equality Forum in the Doughty Centre, Herdmanflat Hospital, Haddington.

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Who was there:

Linda Young	ELC Social Work Services Manager
Rod Mackenzie	ELC Community Services Manager
Alan Brown	JPG Representative
Julia White	ELC Community Services, Coordinator
Anne Smith	Service User
Carrie Poole	Local Area Coordinator, Community Care
Phyllis Wilson	Convener, ELCCF
Lesley Aitkenhead	ELCCF Development Manager
George Paterson	ELCCF Information Worker

Presentation: Linda Young

Lesley welcomed Linda to the Forum meeting. At previous Forums, members had voiced concerns over the quality and scope of care services. Linda explained the Social Work Service was experiencing a redesign.

Although SW remodelling was done only three years ago, because of having to work within budgets, and using the computer and telephony systems already in place, the revamp was not as successful as hoped. With the high workload, and competing resources, standards are not as high as was wished.

In less than five years, referrals have grown by more than 40% with no staff increase. There are 2,700 'live' cases on the go.

With the Adults with Incapacity Act is in force, all the private guardianships throughout the county have to be monitored every six to 12 months and this, with added paperwork, has added to the workload.

The Adult Support and Protection Act, live last year, has had a huge impact.

Social Work is not delivering on the National Care Home Contract, because all energy has to be given to priority emergency and critical care work coming through. All local authorities in Scotland and all care home providers have signed up to the contract.

The Care Commission has taken over the monitoring of standards within care homes but SW still has responsibility for the individual's well being. Built in to the contract is the condition that each individual is properly reviewed at least once a year. This affects 570 over-65s in East Lothian.

Delayed discharge targets are also a challenge: these are now to be met once a month, rather than previously, once a year.

Linda explained: "Whilst it's an outcome and a performance indicator we have got to deliver on, it's very difficult to do because we haven't got the human resources or the care home beds. Care home agencies are a finite resource as well.

"We've hit a ceiling where there isn't any more capacity or space - which is why the Older People's Strategy is so important. We have got to work together in a better way with integrated services and with better use of people and funds."

There was concern from Forum members about the amount of information available and on discharge options and social work services in East Lothian from acute services and hospitals in Edinburgh.

Linda added there was an ongoing exercise in finding out what people want from services. From information gleaned, people want:

- simpler and quicker access to services
- consistent and positive relations with staff offering long term support
- a flexible approach responsive to people's needs to to give them the power to change arrangements themselves
- giving information about other services and how to access them

She explained that to address these points and deliver the necessary service meant building a better infrastructure and not just about 'pouring social workers and occupational therapists in' but about putting in good admin staff, getting good IT, getting better telephony.

"That is the big need for us," Linda said.

"Operating on a partial freephone on quick the council only allows one line with half a dozen extensions - no wonder there's a queue at getting through."

Linda described improvements whereby a local area coordinator would help users integrate with services.

A first point of contact under a new caller response system would answer simple needs, such as getting a piece of adaptive equipment. A pilot is already in place, with in built evaluation. Rod pointed out that experience showed nearly 95% of calls could be dealt with as 'simple needs'.

It was taken on board that people with sensory impairments would have problems using a telephone, and that a dedicated fax line may still prove valuable.

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Linda passed round papers describing a sketch 'blueprint' of how services may work once revised. Provision includes OTs, community care assistants, finance, welfare rights, mental health officers and community care brokers.

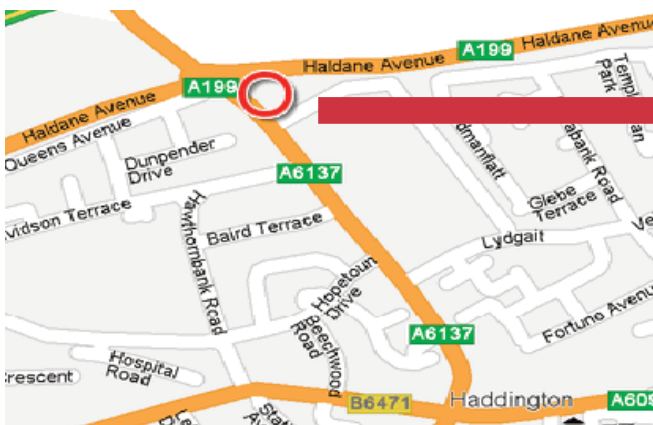
There was concern over the transition area for services for those under and over 65 years of age. Linda explained that for the future, based on primary needs, it may be possible for the under 65s to continue the services with which they were familiar once they had passed the 65 mark.

There was also being made provision for a coordination worker to check on the needs of service users with sporadic longer term needs, to avoid the user from having to 'loop round' and go through the system again reiterating the same assessment information.

In terms of social work access, she also pointed out that budgets don't allow for the older practice of having local social worker offices.

On behalf of the Forum, Lesley thanked Linda for her presentation.

The Equality Forum meets again from 11.00am-12 .30 on Wednesday, August 12 in the Doughty Centre, Herdmanflat, Haddington.



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