



Report of the November 1st, 2010, meeting of East Lothian Equality Forum in Port Seton Community Centre.

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Who was there:

Ross Carpenter	Service User
Alex Donnelly	Service User/ MS Society
Ricky Richardson	Service User
John Waddell	Service User
Elizabeth Barnes	Service User/ ELCCF/ Headway
Charlotte Elder	Prestonpans Day Centre
Andy Wilson	Prestonpans Day Centre
Sandie Hibbert	Prestonpans/ Port Seton Centres
Wendy Miller	Day Officer, PRC
Kayleigh Hunter	Work experience
Robert Dalrymple	Service User
Jim Whitelaw	Service User
Julie Brown	Service User
Alan Brown	ELCCF vice-convener
George Paterson	ELCCF Information Worker

Previous report

The March report of the Equality Forum was approved.

CAR Project

Alan described the ELCCF Community Research Project into day activities for physically disabled people in East Lothian. This was commissioned by, and is now due to be seen by, the PD Joint Planning Group. The Equality Forum has a presence on the JPG which is composed of representatives from health and the local authority.

Alan explained the project would contribute toward how monies may be allocated for PDSI services in the face of ever tighter future budgets. Research involved PDSI people being invited to say what kind of activities they would like to see.

One problem was trying to contact people who were not known to the social work services.

Alan pointed out that although there were social work 'specialties' in other areas such as learning disability and mental health, there were none for physical disability.

This was a point which could be made at an upcoming Rapid Improvement Event - a series of meetings to help formulate strategy on services - called for by the council's new head of Adult Social Care, Murray Leys.

One forum member said: "For too long PDSI have been at the back of things. Physical disability and complex needs don't get any money unlike other groups."

It was suggested that the East Lothian Older People's Strategy could be a route to funding for PDSI services.

Better or worse?

The forum was split into three groups to discuss what goes right and what goes wrong with the services they currently receive.

The first group said:

- Travel time was included in the working time of home helps from one agency.
- paid carers' times not sticking to roster schedules.
- patient transport times were erratic. One forum member in a wheelchair said he had been left for some time facing a wall in the hospital without help.
- there was difficulty in finding a suitable ambulance for people in wheelchairs.

In a wrap-up of the groups, forum members made the following points:

- the level of education about physical disabilities should be higher.
- social workers have too heavy a workload.
- in terms of activities, you can't just stick people in a church hall and expect them to get on with it.
- there tends to be a lack of information between the social worker and his/her PD client - "What the social worker thinks is happening and what the physically disabled person thinks is happening are two different things."

One forum member suggested: "They want to make Prestonpans Day Centre a centre of excellence for disabilities. Community-based activities don't have to be shipped into a community centre."

- the Care & Repair service should be extended past its current limit for people over 50.
- aspects of design for physical disabilities should be incorporated into the design for all new housing in East Lothian.

Future Forums

Forum members were asked what they wanted from future forum meetings.

Suggestions were that forums should be held three times a year in the mornings when participants were less prone to be tired. Meetings should also invite planners to be present. Prestonpans should be considered as a venue.

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The next meeting of East Lothian Equality Forum will be held on
March XX in XXXX