



Report of the May 11, 2009 meeting of the Learning Disability Forum in Port Seton Resource Centre.

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Who was there?

Kirstin Doherty	Service User
Jackie Stewart	Carer
Margaret Stewart	Carer
Lorna Wynn	Partners in Advocacy
Margaret Cessford	Smart Talk and LD Forum rep
Robert Auld	Smart Talk and LD Forum rep
Jean Auld	Smart Talk and LD Forum rep
Ann Gray	Smart Talk
Sue Green	Local Area Co-ordinator
Mike Foley	Tynebank Day Centre
Willie Ferguson	Service user
Georgina MacTavish	Service user
Carla Hulbert	Service user
Paul Roger	ELCAP board, Smart Talk
Phyllis Wilson	Convener, ELCCF
Donella Kirkland	Partners in Advocacy
Todd Holleron	Scottish Society for Autism
Kevin Ramsay	Service User
George Paterson	ELCCF Communications Worker
Lesley Aitkenhead	ELCCF Development Manager

News:

Kevin reported he had been invited to the Queen's garden party at Holyrood later in May. He said that if he met the Queen, he would ask her what her Corgis names were.



Visit the Learning Disability Forum on the web at www.elccf.org/forumld.asp

Matters arising: Council Procurement of Services

Forum members are unhappy that this process had not been approved through any of the joint planning groups. Service users and carers have only been involved in the procurement of 'generic' services at the very late stage of interviewing, and there were worries that some people with learning disabilities do not fully understand the implications for their care.

A petition had been put to East Lothian Council's petitions committee asking the council to think again on its decision to put housing support services for people with learning disabilities and other specialist support needs out to competitive tender.

It asked that East Lothian Council puts this process on hold until those affected have an opportunity to consider alternatives to tendering.



The petition was supported by Smart Talk Group (Partners in Advocacy) People First, ELCAP Advisory Group, Ark Housing Participation and the Learning Disability Alliance Scotland. A total of 427 signatures were on the petition, gathered by service users themselves.

Procurement:

Sometimes people working outside East Lothian Council are hired by the council to do specialised work for the council. This 'hiring' is called procurement, or, how the council 'buys-in' services.

The Council are changing the way it **procures 'care-at-home' services**, such as home helps. This is bound to effect the people of the ELCCF Forum communities.

If you, your family or carer have any response of opinion on the procurement issue, you can let us know on the **Learning Disability Have Your Say** page on the **ELCCF website**,

Or, contact ELCCF at ELCCF, c/o Tynepark House, Poldrate, Haddington, EH41 4DA, email info@elccf.org, or phone 01620 822 212.

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Robert, Jeannie, Margaret and Lorna had presented the petition out of a group of 15, but were frustrated because councillors and officials put their questions to Lorna, rather than the others, talked too fast, and failed to ask any questions of the other Smart Talk members.

At the end of the petitions meeting, it was decided that tendering for specialist services would go on, but that in future, the Council would try to see that people with learning disabilities actually participated in the planning process, rather than being 'consulted'.

Members of the Forum who had been at the petitions meeting said:

"It was a bit scary. I was a bit intimidated."

"When you had Councillors of different parties, they started talking to each other and scoring points."

"When I asked about Best Value, they said it was about quality and cost - but how do you get any quality if you don't ask the users?"

There are about 33 providers for specialist care services with their own scales and methods of payment. The Council sees it as less expensive and more efficient if there were fewer providers.

One voice from the Forum said: "What we're saying is, we want to keep our specialist support workers whom we know and who know us well and have a special knowledge of our issues."

It was put to the Forum that East Lothian was lucky in that its specialist support workers had years more contact with service users than in for example, Edinburgh or Midlothian. But at a time when money was tight, service users had to come up with their ideas on how best the money was spent.

One idea put forward by the Forum was to put in place a consortium of providers to save money by sharing resources and perhaps standardising training.

One other worry was the drop in the level of expertise of staff if pay rates were cut once, as is likely, the number of providers were reduced. The result may be large providers offering less choice of service.

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"If the Council do reduce the number of providers, we have to say to them that it's important to ensure the same quality of service."

It was also felt important that some individual service users had to have their support needs protected because of, for example, higher specialised or multiple need.

Representatives on the planning group will make the following points:

- People do not wish to lose their current carers.
- If more providers are kept, explore what could be done to save money.
- Nothing to change until proper policy on Direct Payments has been sorted and users offered support.

Respite:

ELC's Respite Services Manager Vanessa Strong was unfortunately unable to attend the Forum meeting due to a mix up on venue.

Forum discussion revolved around the acute need for residential respite in East Lothian for people with learning disabilities, and possible sites which may provide a suitable location, such as Windygoul at Tranent and Templedean, in Haddington.

During the talk on respite, members came up with recollections of good services, events and places which have disappeared over the years.

Physio services:

There was talk on the range and quality of physio services in East Lothian, with Lesley reporting she was about to meet with physio services later in the week.

One of the main points raised was in continuing physio treatment to ease long-term disability rather than treatment to cure an immediate problem, such as a broken arm.

It was agreed continued services were needed to prevent the onset of longer term problems which would require more medical care.

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You can now write in
and 'Have Your Say' at
[www.elccf.org/
yourvoice.htm](http://www.elccf.org/yourvoice.htm)

ELCCF consults widely.
It links into local groups to
enable views from the 'grass
roots' to be heard at the
planning table.
"Transport is a real issue. Getting
around and about is a real issue
for those of us in wheelchairs or
for those who have a sensory impairment."
"People's care packages should
focus on the needs of the
individual - not to fit in with
existing services."
"It's important to get better
support for carers."

We'd be happy to see you.

We think a lot about how people are treated in community care.
Carers, service users, health service providers and local authority
representatives regularly attend Forum meetings.



We also discuss, and help to advise on, local plans and
national policy affecting people of the Forum communities.
If we get hot under the collar about matters important to us,
we can let off some of the steam together - and try to get
something done.



The Forums are lively and welcoming. They give us a chance to
talk about the things that affect us, and what can be done to
lead our lives as independently as possible. Whether it's earning
a wage, recreation, respite care, or that old subject transport...
we always have something to talk about.



say' about how health and community care services are planned and
delivered. ELCCF has, under its wing, four speciality Forums which meet
regularly. Common issues are discussed, stories are shared, and concerns,
views and ideas are put to the people who make the decisions.



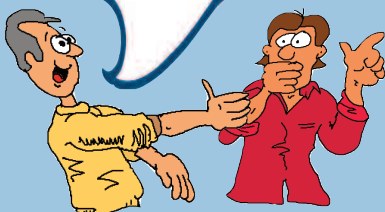
Community Care Services
aim to enable people to stay in
their own homes, and give them
choice and control over their lives.

People and their carers who engage
with services have a special
knowledge. They have experience of
living with an illness or impairment,
or providing care for a loved one.

First hand experience is very
valuable to help improve services for
the people who need them.

A lot of people need services, so it's
important for everyone that the
money is spent fairly, and in the
most effective way.

This is where *your* voice counts.



Visit
the Forum's Website at
www.elccf.org



The website has news and
scheduled dates of the Forum
meetings, reports of past
meetings, information, links to
other organisations and
resources - and a chance to
Have Your Say.

East Lothian Community Care Forum,
c/o Tynepark House, Poldrate,
Haddington EH41 4DA.
Tel: 01620 822 212 email: info@elccf.org
Scottish charity No. SC029791

We'd
just like
to say...



We want our
voices to be
heard - here's
how we do it...

