

Northampton Borough Council – Disabled People’s Forum

Friday, 22 January 2016 at 10:30 am - 12:30 pm

The Holding Room, The Guildhall, St. Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE.

Agenda

1. Welcomes, introductions and apologies

Present: Cllr Larratt (Co Chair, NBC CL) Martin De Rosario (Co Chair MD), J Forrest Smith (JFS), Barbara Barber (Independent BB), Larry Barber (Independent, LB), J O’Neill (Independent JO), Jane Marriott (Northants Parents Forum Group JM), Carl Wieninger (Northants Polio Fellowship, CW), Dean Eales (Disabled Go, DE), Elissa Turnbull (Disabled Go ET), Madeline Boys (Independent MB), Norman Adams (Northampton DCH, NA), Beverley Mennell (Northampton BC Tennant, BM), Mike Jackson (British Polio Fellowship MJ), Laura Noble (Shared Voice Network LN), Katie Billingham (Deaf Hub KB), Cllr Ashraf (NBC, CA), Emma Kilby (NBC, EK), Steven Galvin (NBC, SG), D McCann (Individual, DM) Alice Morgan – (NBC, AM), Nisha Mejer (NBC, NM)*

*Took minutes.

Apologies : Louise James, Graham Wilson, Simon Burgess, Elnora Latchman, Deborah Clarke, Rashmi Shah

CL opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

Minutes were recorded as true to record.

3. Jessica Marayan - Deaf Hub

This organisation covers services for all kinds of deafness. eg – through injury, deaf blind Also provide advocacy. For eg – where there is a dispute in the workplace and people are not deaf aware, Jessica Maryan can provide support. Deaf Hub is also branching out to Wellbeing services. There is an Open Day on 17th Sept. Venue TBC. There is a sign language performance which is also accessible to people who don’t sign language.

There is an interpretation service and sign language support is given at places such as medical appointments. Can help people overcome difficulties with hearing aids. Staff visit people in the workplace and provide hearing loops.

CW: How do I as a hearing person receive someone when they cannot hear me?

KB: Have lots of eye contact, ask questions etc. There are deaf awareness

courses.

BM: There is a system through DWP for people on Disability Allowance. You can reclaim DIP. This society can people make a reclaim.

KB: This is an important point. There is a dedicated appointment system for this. There is also a sign language event in October. Will let Forum know.

4. **Steven Galvin - Senior Adaptations Officer - update on Disabled Facilities Grant**

SG offered to answer questions/queries from the Forum.

NA suggested that his current understanding is that an application is shared with NPH and NBC (Northampton Partnership Homes and Northampton Borough Council). Are we asking for private sector budget? SG answered yes.

NA went on to say that the actual spend last year was 39% of the budget. Have figures until end of November and there still is a large percentage that has not been spent. NA questioned why money wasn't being spent.

EK: We manage our own budgets and we have spent more than that. We look at monthly spend. We are on good target to spend £1.4 million. The organisation is trying to promote service so people have access to this fund.

NA: You say that you are on target to spend £1.4 million but the budget is meant to be £1.8 million? NA questioned this point.

EK stated that this will be looked into.

CL: The Forum would like to know who made the decision.

CW: What would happen if there is an underspend?

CL: The fund is transferred into other funds. It will not be added onto the next year.

NA: Where do the funds go?

EK: This is for NBC use.

BM: Accept that this dept is from the private sector and this needs to be discussed with Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH). BM explained that she lives in a small two bedroom house and have a staircase. BM was rejected by the DFG and was asked to move to another location. However, BM does not wish to leave Kingsley. The Minister for Housing is pushing forward a Bill where new council tenancy will have to be signed. BM will not do that - instead will ask NBC for a new bathroom.

Most disabled people will not move if their homes are not fit for purpose.

EK: Will look at this differently to make it a better service.

CL: **ACTION:** Situation for tenancy to be an item for the next agenda

CW: What happens if a person has adaptations made to a house and is then relocated?

SG: This will depend if you are tenant. If you are an owner occupier, the condition is attached to the grant. If you move within 10 years part of the grant will be repayable. The reasons for relocating will be reviewed. For eg – if person goes into care, there is an option to waive repayment.

CW: what is the situation if the person is elderly?

The occupational therapist (OT) will look at the immediate needs and can adapt the proposal. If the adaptations are carried out and the person passes away, this will be looked on into.

NA: The status for the private sector is that as long as the landlord lets the person rent for three years, the tenant is eligible for a grant. Where there is a situation where the tenant has died, the adaptations needs to be taken out and used elsewhere.

EK: There is no policy to put a charge on property to recoup any money to claim back a grant.

BM: How many OTs in the private sector? Think there are 7 under Olympus Care. This is not a large amount. There are also Tech Inspections (TIs) to look at standard needs.

CL: What is the turnaround process for OT? Is there a Performance Indicator (PI) for this?

EK: Unsure about the PIs. The therapists set their own. The turnaround is 9-12 weeks depending on the case.

CL: This is still a long time. Is it possible to have a contract with Olympus Care (OC) and bring it down to 5 weeks?

EK: This is up to the County Council.

CL: NBC is the user of the service. Therefore the contract should be on our terms. A tighter period is needed.

EK: We are not a party to this.

SG: We are talking to OC to have OTs to be based in the Guildhall to help make the process quicker. We would like the OTs to be in-house.

NA: The system is blocked at the OT stage. All councils have the same problem.

5. Grosvenor Shopping Centre - Lifts

AM: Read out an update from NBC about the lifts.

BM: Thanked MD for putting story in the Chronicle and Echo. BM highlighted that the waiting times for lifts for was too long. Spoke to Sainsbury's manager and working to get lifts repaired.

The other two lifts are a concern. NBC need to repair these two lifts. Not everyone wants to use the glass lifts.

AM: Lifts are being refurbished and will let Forum know of updates.

6. Action Plan

Completed Independent Day for People with Disability 2015. The first one went well and open to suggestions for future events.

MB: Enjoyed the sign language workshop.

KB: Great first step. Would like a better venue for people to navigate. Welcome activities in a separate room.

AM: There were Christmas parties in the Great Hall and the rooms were booked. Will look in November so the event can be hosted in the Great Hall.

KB: Should charge organisations to have a stall at the venue.

ACTION: Look at booking dates for next venue. Can do weekends too?

ACTION: AM: There is a tea dance in May. Will send details.

BM: Concern that NBC has little or no toilets for disabled people. The Action Plan should look at having toilets for elderly and disabled people. They resort to going to local shops and restaurants. Business owners are angry with NBC.

Appreciate that there are cuts but this is a basic right. Portable toilets should be provided.

NA: Do not accept these cuts. These cuts go too far as they effect lives. We must get out of this habit to say that "we understand". Why does my council tax go up and the services go down?

AM: Disabled Go reviewed all toilets. Will ask them to revisit them.

CW: Toilets are an important issue. Sometimes they are closed in car parks and in town centre. This is a fundamental human necessity.

7. Community Information Exchange

AM: Partnership Grant Showcase event – opportunity for people to apply for funding. : 25th Jan

Holocaust Memorial Day – Civic ceremony at 12pm. 6.30pm – evening event.

NA: important to attend HMD.

DEPAC – will be outside library on 23rd Jan. Gaining information on how cuts effecting families.

Sport events to be circulated to Forum.

CW: Would like to partner with organisations for funding. Please get in touch

8. Items for Next and Future Meetings

AM: Suggested that School of Life and NPH will go on next agenda. All agreed.

9. Date of the Next Meeting

March 18th 10:30am -12:30pm. The Holding Room, The Guildhall

Map and directions at: www.northampton.gov.uk/guildhall

For more information about this meeting please contact:
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More information about the Forum generally is at: www.northampton.gov.uk/forums



Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/NorthamptonDisabledPeoplesForum?ref=hl>

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