**Disability Sheffield**



**Disability Equality Roadshows**

The Equality Roadshows were set up to hear first-hand from disabled people, their carers and families about the issues affecting them. This is to help the council focus on the biggest challenges and ensure they move forward. To do this effectively it’s important that disabled people and those with a long term health condition highlight the issues they themselves think need to be tackled.

One of the main objectives was to further the 3 aims of the Equality Act; to eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations.

Partner organisations have been bringing people up to date with what’s happening in different parts of the City whilst the Disability Sheffield report [‘Developing Voice and Influence for disabled people in Sheffield’](http://www.disabilitysheffield.org.uk/voice-and-influence) provides further back ground reading.

**Where and when?**

We invited disabled people, their families and carers to come and tell us what it’s like to live in their communities with a physical or sensory impairment or mental health problem or long term health condition. We have hosted a total number of 5 events, including two featuring issues affecting British Sign Language users. We are to host one more event for the Somali community and all the disability equality roadshows were put together in partnership with community organisations:

* Thursday 13th Nov, BSL event with CAB Deaf Advisory Team at the Circle
* Monday 23rd Feb Paces, High Green Development Trust & Community Organisers at Paces
* Thursday 26th Feb for BSL users with Deaf Advisory Team, Sheffield Advice at the Circle
* Monday 16th March - with Manor & Castle Development Trust at Manor library
* Wednesday 24th March with SOAR at: Methodist Church Firth Park
* TBC with Somali Community Centre, Venue TBC

**Attendance**

Disability Sheffield provided the facilitation team for the events and included Graham Whitfield (Trustee and author of Voice and Influence), Andrew Crooks (Events), Emily Morton (Director Operations) an two student representatives, Jo and Lucy.

**High Green:** Natalie Yarrow (Paces/High Green Development Trust), Natalie’s PA ( ), Gareth Douglas (Community Organisers), Christopher Hughes (Exyo), Kathy Markwick (Home Instead Senior Care), CEO (Home Instead Senior Care) **(16 individuals including 9 service users and 5 organisations represented including Paces, Exyo, Community Organisers, Paces and High Green Development Trust).**

**Manor & Castle:** Trevor, Raymond, Rob (manor Castle Volunteer), Matthew, Tony Diana, Diane, Laura Frost, Martin, and Sally Moody and her Dad Bob Moody **(16 individuals including 8 service users and 4 organisations represented including Sheffield Mind and Manor & Castle Development Trust).**

**Firth Park:** Jeremy Wallis (Sheffield International Venues), Liz Bowman (SRSB), Thomas Cox (Sheffield University), Dawn Young (SOAR), **(21 individuals including 14 service users and 8 organisations represented including Partners for Inclusion, Sheffield Healthwatch, Winkobank TARA).**

**Issues**

**High Green** is found to the northernmost part of the City, located about 8 miles from the city centre. It is served by a number of buses; the nearest rail station is in Chapeltown which is about 1 mile away. **Transport** when was discussed amongst those gathered that the train is the only good option for people to get from Highgreen to town but the train has obvious problems in terms of access.

The **transition services** and how they dovetail school issues and education need addressing. Participants said for people with complex needs sometimes there is little effort to enable people with learning difficulties and complex needs to be included in setting the agenda for change. Why can this not be more important in terms of special education needs agenda?

Everything seems to be centred about what happened centrally and it's more difficult for people in the High Green area also because it is less at work in less affluent than other areas.

One participant said so difficult to get into shops which are inaccessible. Without adjustments in the areas there still seems to be problems for disabled people in terms of getting around and the **built environment** in general.

It was also agreed that Volunteering was also a difficult solution where disabled people don’t have the same access to opportunities. So **employment** is vitally important but the danger is that sometimes those making decisions on other disabled people's behalf is why things don't always work out for disabled people.

In **Manor Castle**, despite different peoples personal support around being unemployed, one person talks about finding the **Springboard group at Manor** which is also helping so they said they were lucky find that because of further support they will find their way around **employment and support allowance assessment process**.

many agreed that without the Springboard opportunities they have found it hard to go forward. For example when trying to find a disability employment advisor, although experience of working with DEA was unimpressed with very little mental health knowledge. One person said employment and support assessment experience they feel shut me out of a job.

One participant told how they had been advised not to take on employment as “you’d be better off out of work and on benefits”. Staff need more knowledge about the problems disabled people experience and so they are more able to look at the benefits of work.

People identified a need to work and to try and engage with **GPs around mental health issues** i.e. with LGBT workers but it's hard to pin down services trying to get clients were very difficult but no many more referrals but the question is what other organisations can help in Manor Castle.

What people can for example one understands still on **waiting list** in official channels but moved on. While one person talked about the family development group and who had taken part in ‘health champions’ but wondered how do others get to know about ‘springboards’? More work with **AIPT** workers to create awareness about mental health solutions.

Many participants at the **Firth Park** event remarked that the environment was very difficult. Both the built environment and the lack of understanding about older disabled peoples needs. One person remarked about the difficulties on pavements which related to the council and their waste management service. As well as with bins blocking people’s way when using a wheelchair or scooter or with walking aids a participant also mentioned that he has seen the removal of grit bins which makes it difficult for disabled people to keep pavements clear of snow and ice during the winter. Those present said the local authority should hold public meetings before making these decisions.

People talked about the built environment and one state in particular where people parked on pavements and resulted in some disabled people not getting out of their homes regularly. Also that when trying to ask neighbours to move they are met with disdain.

People were receptive to hearing about inclusive sports at the Concorde and the efforts SIV carry out to engage with the community. Concorde is one of few venues housing NHS clinicians. Some felt funding for aqua aerobics cycling and other opportunities should be available locally and not just in one part of the city ie **Cycle4All**

One lady talked about seeking help when returning to work and talked about bills being delivered but no quick way of resolving disputes when things go wrong eg when trying to contact payments desk about council tax.

One organisation rep said they were getting issues raised where people were having social care cut without warning. Others recognised this issue.

**Working together:** Not enough localised charities and communities are integrating with one another, Especially when doing similar work.

**Information:** Not enough information on what is happening as regards disability issues.

**Public transport:** Lack of full access or difficulty using; getting on and off buses; inaccessible bus stops; taxi’s, where some taxi companies are not good with manners and/or timings.

**Transition services:** for younger disabled people.

**“Why do families and young people have to fight for their services**

**when children reach adulthood?”**

**Prejudice and Inequality:** People talked of their experience where people with learning difficulties are faced with different prejudices throughout their lives.

**Inclusive meetings:** participants said for people with complex needs sometimes excluded.

**Social work teams:** Why do social workers not refer people to agencies more readily such as information advice and advocacy disability Sheffield.

 ***“Making sure that people get to hear back about what we are about”***

**Volunteering:** was also a difficult solution or alternative to some people.

**Employment:** a danger that sometimes those making decisions on other disabled people's behalf is why things don't always work out for disabled people.

**Social inclusion**: was a big topic for people gathered at the event there are other issues for example with disabled people go to college younger disabled people find this very difficult to go to college and stay in college as much of the sport is not available for the calls locally.

**Social care crisis:** One organisation rep said they were getting issues raised where people were having social care cut without warning. Others strongly recognised this issue.

**“It’s difficult to get meaningful advice to move away from my estate.**

**I don’t know who to urn to”**

**Solutions**

People were asked what they like to take away from them from their mornings.

Within the new care act is an area that disabled people together can explore and Sheffield to make stronger and to make services better for those younger people in transition.

A representative from home care agency Home Instead Senior Care talked about **WOW** which is a Sheffield information brochure which highlights opportunities for older disabled people.

People identified with the **Changing Places** campaign about better and more accessible access to toilet provision with changing benches for adults.

Some people think your needs can also be more difficult one of the areas were developing a special taxi service to combat the difficulties disable people experience in a green of getting from 8 to be picking up SERVICE if you like where people taxi firms can clear the details together and work to be accessible from perhaps an application or an area office number.

People said a jointly supported and also the old question about what happens in the north of the City in Barnsley and Rotherham.

One individual said that it would be good to build resilience amongst the voluntary and community sector.

This is a good example things working together trying to bring all disabled people in High Green area working together with other organisations and can share together.

People talked positively about the good things disabled people getting to speak up and they themselves leading promotional or the idea that they would like more lunching clubs and people were pleased greater community organisation helping others has been so successful. Call for setting up community organisers more widely and ensuring projects are led by people firstly.

Throughout the conversation people talked about **alleviating loneliness** and the need to support people through volunteers was mentioned as possible means to offsetting problems with the care industry.

People heard about the volunteer led **telephone befriending service** run by Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind which everyone agreed was a great idea. SOAR participants said they do other pieces of volunteer work.

One participant said their daughter was referred to Disability Sheffield and was so pleased **advocacy services** were there.

One participant said they had no problem when complaining but there was little dialogue and very little evidence that complaints are acted upon when it comes to disability. They want to be told how and when there issues have been resolved. This will keep them re assured.

Once support has been delivered people hoped it would then open doors for further support in other areas for disabled people.

**Feedback**

From the feedback collected everyone said they had enjoyed the format of the sessions. A handful of people thought the meetings were too short but most thought they were just right. When we asked people if they felt able to participate we received a 100% affirmative response.

***“The Focus Group Disability Sheffield ran at High Green provided a lot of insight for us, and we were able to follow up with Sheffield cycling for all, and the paces school as a result of recommendations from the Disability Sheffield team, so thanks for getting us involved!”***

We asked people how they would rate the way information about the Voice and Influence report and what is happening in your local area was presented. 33% thought it was OK, whilst 66% thought it was good.

Some 82% of respondents said they rated the discussions as good or very good.

***‘Very informative’***

The venues were 100% accessible and those who needed support felt they had the support they needed.

***‘Anything that would include older disabled people will be useful’***

All participants indicated that they found the sessions worthwhile.

**Conclusion**

The conclusions drawn from the events so far are that disabled people do want to be included in developing services that these services should be tailor made to each geographical ward and location and

**April 2014**