



Right Skills, Right Practice

Transforming the Adult Social Care Workforce for the Personalisation of Care Services

WECIL in partnership with City of Bristol College have just completed a pilot project which was devised to support the adult social care workforce in responding to person-centred approaches and the personalisation agenda in line with *Putting People First*¹. The pilot project was funded by Skills for Care and was called Right Skills, Right Practice.

An integral feature of the pilot project was the involvement of Disabled people and learners: from the design and delivery of the training programme through to the evaluation of the process.

When published later in the year *Right Skills, Right Practice* will provide advice on how learning style, design and delivery can be adapted to teach social care staff effectively to deliver person centred care and support. Learning providers will also be able to use the recommendations to develop the social care workforce so that they are ready for personalisation and involving people who use services.

The two trainers who designed and delivered the course are Disabled people. They were supported by a focus group of direct payment recipients and their employees who were asked to discuss and evaluate the draft course outline. Their feedback was incorporated into the final course programme.

Two sets of training were provided. The first was for personal assistants (PAs) of direct payment recipients presented as a six week set of three hour sessions. The course was designed to provide a learning environment in which PAs could explore issues and topics

¹ *Putting People First: A shared vision and commitment to the transformation of adult social care* (2007)



influencing the development of the relationship between Disabled people and their employee and so enabling them to join the social care workforce of the future. Some of the topics covered included:

- Understanding of the PA role including barriers, expectations, power and judgments
- Boundaries
- Empowerment
- Disability Equality
- Values
- Confidentiality
- Vulnerability
- Legislation

The second course was a one-day workshop for social workers looking at identifying the barriers to personalisation and how to overcome them. The objective of the workshop was to create a programme which would support social workers working with direct payment recipients in responding to the personalisation agenda so that they are able to deliver a truly personalised service.

Both of the very experienced trainers were Disabled people with a fully informed and personal understanding of the social model of disability. This was crucial to ensuring that the training was delivered effectively and that it was well received.

The ability of the trainers to encourage discussion and to be flexible in delivery was vital to the success of the training. Many of the learners were isolated or had little opportunity for reflection so being able to discuss issues rather than following a set agenda was important in their learning.

We have received very positive feedback from everyone involved in the project including the employers of the PAs who attended. The recurring theme identified that there is a clear need for training of this nature.



One student stated that it made him;

“...appreciate the job I’m doing even more”

Another student stated that:

“It was a useful way to reflect on your practice and challenge your preconceptions and discuss your opinions with others”

Verbal and written feedback from the social workers who attended the course indicated that more in-depth training is required. All the learners felt that the training would be relevant for their managers, colleagues and fellow professionals.

If the goals of the personalisation agenda are to be achieved, the availability of a suitably skilled workforce for Disabled people to employ is essential. This pilot of training for PAs and social workers has therefore been both essential and timely.

As anticipated the pilot project identified gaps in training provision for PAs and social workers but it has also identified that there is a real need for training in relation to employers of PAs.

The collaboration of a leading education provider and an experienced disability charity resulted in a wealth of expertise and knowledge in relation to education, disability and the personalisation agenda, and ultimately a successful pilot.

This pilot has demonstrated that delivering high quality, relevant training to the social care work force involves three essential ingredients; an education establishment, a user led disability organisation and Disabled people.

It has also demonstrated that collaborating with Disabled people and their employees in the design, delivery and evaluation of the training programmes ensured person centred approaches and the principles



of personalisation were at the core of learning provision for the social care workforce.

If you would like further information regarding this pilot project please contact Kath Tobin, PA to Chief Executive at WECIL
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