

Supporting People Torbay

Issue 15

Summer 2008

Supporting People services give support to help people live as independently as possible. Services include a hostel for the homeless, supported and sheltered housing, a women's refuge and 'floating support' where workers visit people in their homes.



People services, who aim to give clients a voice.

Recent achievements of the group are:

- Being awarded Regional Champion status for involving clients in the development of services. Torbay Supporting People won this jointly with Bolton

Torbay Voice update The Service User Group is renamed

Torbay Voice (formerly the Supporting People Service User Group) is made up of people who use or have used Supporting

- Choosing a new name which reflects what the group is about
- Organising a national event to share Torbay's good practice in client involvement and access
- Producing a newsletter for all Supporting People clients about Torbay Voice
- Creating a guide on how to engage with clients and involve them in their services
- Going to a London conference to talk about what Torbay Voice has achieved

Sally and Sheena are members of Torbay Voice. On page 2 they have written about their experiences...

Services going out for tender for homeless people, domestic abuse, (ex) offenders, and people with substance misuse issues

The final evaluation process for the above tenders will take place after 24 October 2008 which is the closing date for tenders. All organisations who have been involved in any stage of the process will be notified of the outcome by the end of November.

Most contracts will start from 27 January 2009. If you need advice about the

tendering process please contact Clair Johnson of the Corporate Procurement Team at Torbay Council on 01803 208517. We would also like to thank all the local provider organisations who contributed to shaping the basic service specifications for these tender opportunities.



How we feel about being involved ...



Sally and Sheena are members of Torbay Voice. They also represent client views on the Mental Health Strategy Group which develops support services for people with mental health needs. They have written about their experiences:

Sally

I got involved with Supporting People about 3 years ago. During that time I got involved with the Mental Health Strategy Group. This opportunity puts me in control and gives me empowerment through a difficult illness. Having first hand experience of mental illness gives insight into various aspects of personal needs and problems which enables one to feedback how the mental health services may be improved. I am pleased that service users can access training such as assertiveness and interview skills. Generally I find Supporting People supportive, understanding and encouraging. We are open to more people who are or have been service users to become involved. Winning the Regional Champions award for involving service users really boosted morale all round.



Sheena

I began volunteering with Torbay Supporting People 4 years ago, and since then the service user group (Torbay Voice) has been created. I have had the opportunity to do a variety of things, including joining the Mental Health Strategy Group; helping to organise and run a forum; meeting with Government inspectors, researchers and people from other Supporting People teams; and being part of an interview panel to appoint a new service user involvement worker. I have met many interesting people, gained a real insight into Torbay Council's housing policy and enjoyed some 'free lunches' at fantastic venues such as the Grand Hotel, Oldway Mansion and Torbay Foyer. It was a proud time for us all when we were awarded Regional Champion status and some of us were given the chance to attend a seminar in London.



Increase in support service for physical disability



Supporting People has added 6 units of support to the SPLASH service.

This service provides floating support (where support workers visit people in their homes) to people with a physical disability, sensory disability, acquired brain injury and long term conditions. These extra units of support will be for clients who communicate using British Sign Language. The new units will be in place by the end of the year. The Physical Disability Strategy Sub Group agreed to commission the units to meet the needs identified in the housing and support strategy. Westcountry Housing Association will be employing a new worker to support 6 more people. The worker will also work with the Deaf community to raise awareness about housing to make sure they feel able to access mainstream housing and support services.

People who want to access the service should contact the Housing Support Referral Hub (contact details on the back page).

Additions to Supporting People web pages

The Supporting People web pages now include information and minutes of the 6 strategy sub groups. These groups develop plans for housing and support services for the client group areas:

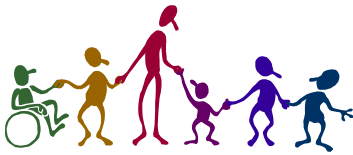
- Children, families and young people
- Learning disability
- Homelessness, Criminal Justice, Substance misuse and domestic abuse
- Mental health
- Older people
- Physical disability, sensory disability, acquired brain injury and long term conditions



Further additions to the web site are the **Guide on how to involve vulnerable people in their services** produced by members of Torbay Voice (see page 1) and lots of other information about Torbay Voice.

All this can be found at www.torbay.gov.uk/supportingpeople

Community Engagement Officer joining Supporting People



The Supporting People Team is advertising for a Community Engagement

Officer. This year long post will involve designing and putting into practice different ways of involving vulnerable clients in the commissioning, development, evaluation, planning and delivery of their services. Supporting People is working towards a Torbay wide integrated approach to client involvement covering the Council, Torbay Care Trust and Probation service.

Projects that the Community Engagement Officer will lead on include:

- Developing a plan for an advocacy service to engage with clients, support their involvement and be independent of the Supporting People Team. Funding has been secured for this service and tenders will be invited at the end of the year.
- Involving clients in the monitoring and review of services. Clients will get the chance to interview people who use services to find out their opinions of their services. Clients will be given full training and support to do this.
- Building upon the benefits of Torbay Supporting People service user involvement champion status. This status was awarded by central

Government due to the way service users are involved in their services

We hope to have an officer in post this autumn.

Contact details

Housing Support Referral Hub – if you need a Supporting People service:

 01803 208058

 referralhub@torbay.gov.uk

Torbay Supporting People Team – for information on development and monitoring of services, and the contact for this newsletter

 01803 208729

 supporting.people@torbay.gov.uk

 www.torbay.gov.uk/supportingpeople

Supporting People Manager:

Fran Mason:

 frances.mason@torbay.gov.uk

With acknowledgement and thanks to Change picture bank for some of the pictures used.