

GATESHEAD

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1. The Skills for Care rationale/ selection criteria for funding

Gateshead Council and the Multi-Agency Physical Disabilities and Sensory Impairment Health Improvement Board received New Types of Worker funding in April 2004. It is known as:

A project to ensure a framework for users and carers to shape priority setting, policy development and business planning processes (Waddilove 2004, p27).

Kessler and Bach (2007) wrote of a newly created Service Development Officer's role that it was:

...focused on those with physical disabilities... It sought to strengthen the service user structures underpinning the Physical Disabilities and Sensory Impairment Partnership Board and bolster user engagement with service delivery [and that it was looking to develop] a rehabilitation officer assistant role [p24].

The Physical Disabilities and Sensory Impairments services in Gateshead are currently part of the *Health Improvement Group Matrix* and their work is underpinned by the social model of disability (e.g. Oliver 1996). The service has come a long way since they were disaggregated from Older People's services and merged (following a review to which the Service Development Officer contributed) to form a service for people with disabilities, deaf, hard of hearing, blind and partially sighted people.

There are four key areas of activity for the New Ways of Working in Gateshead:

- 1) The Physical Disabilities and Sensory Impairment (PDSI) Partnership Board. This has membership from key stakeholders across health and social care provision;
- 2) Service User and Carer involvement. This is robust at the PDSI Board insofar as there are users with physical disabilities and visual impairments. The Board recognises however that representation from people with hearing loss and from family carers is inconsistent;
- 3) New roles/ new ways of working. In the last 12 months this has focused on *Sight Service* a voluntary sector organisation providing services to people with visual impairments in Gateshead and South Tyneside; and
- 4) Research and development. The PDSI is to consider the recommendations arising from commissioned research regarding the needs of people with Muscular Sclerosis in Gateshead *and to support the PDSI Partnership around implementation (Milestone Report 4, p8).*

A key service innovation hinges on the development of a contract, *where the non-complex assessment function for visually impaired people can be commissioned out to the voluntary sector...this new way of working provides a more streamlined, efficient and effective service* [in terms of organisational outcomes] *the 'one stop shop' approach is a benefit with all services being available in the same building* (Milestone Report 4, p6).

2. The context, setting and history

The manager and former Service Development Officer identified three motivations for seeking New Types of Worker funding in 2004:

(i) It was clear that PDSI services were facing significant pressures with limited resources and there was no infrastructure to delegate or take forward collective priorities. A dedicated co-ordinator, familiar with the priorities of other Boards relating to PDSI, who could rationalise strategic planning, was promoted to Skills for Care as a New Type of Worker. The social services aimed to appoint a co-ordinator; ensure ongoing service user and carer involvement; and look at innovative ways of assessing for services and reviewing services in partnership with the voluntary sector. In turn, when the NTOW project started in Gateshead, the work of the Physical Disabilities Team and the Sensory Impairment Team came under scrutiny. Both were under pressure as they were carrying unacceptable waiting lists and their respective workforces were struggling, not least as, *between 130-150 people a year are newly registered blind in Gateshead.*

When NToW started in Gateshead the Physical Disabilities Team and Sensory Impairment team were managed separately. The sensory team had a Team Manager, two social workers for Deaf Adults, one Rehabilitation Officer for Visually Impaired People and three sensory support workers. There was an overdue need to conduct a review of the service to ensure *Best Value* and address matters relating to waiting lists, for example. The internal structures of Community Based Services changed:

...the Team Manager moved to manage a new service and the physical disabilities and Sensory Impairment Services were merged into one team. Then the social worker for deaf adults, a rehabilitation officer for visually impaired people and a sensory support worker also left to take up new posts with another authority and this really was the catalyst for change. It highlighted the need to implement a New Type of Working for sensory services in Gateshead.

(ii) It was the absence of a clear post-qualifying programme for staff working with people with impairments that galvanised colleagues and managers and Gateshead undertook to develop one. It is striking that there is no career route for Rehabilitation Officers and that their training is focused on a *Diploma for Rehabilitation Officers* offered by the University of Central England. Accordingly, Gateshead's Rehabilitation Officer, who is undertaking a PGCE as part of the workforce redesign enterprise, is keen to see: Sight Service becoming a registered centre to deliver specialist training in the region; the availability of this service to others in the authority; and the generation of income by offering courses via a registered centre, externally (not least as there has been a lot of interest expressed by Newcastle, Sunderland and

North Tyneside social services). A more explicit agenda is that Gateshead should become 'a centre of excellence' in respect of people with disabilities in terms of offering a career pathway up to, and including, Masters level studies.

(iii) Hayley Quinn regarded a failed inspection for Gateshead Housing Company as a critical milestone for New Ways of Working in Gateshead. The Housing Company, which managed the council's housing stock, failed because of their inattention to the diversity of council tenants. Hayley Quinn worked with the Company's Diversity Officer and their Tenant Involvement Officer (Equality and Diversity). An event planned with the Housing Company was entitled *Valuing Inclusion* and arose from the *Towards Inclusion* event. *Towards Inclusion* was the first milestone for the project. It was planned with tenants with disabilities and delivered to a largely social care audience. The low uptake from colleagues in Health was subsequently attributed to the 'social care' language used in the promotional materials. *Valuing Inclusion* was experienced as transforming as tenants shared their experiences, including that of *being treated like rubbish*. From this: a *Disability Action Plan 2006/07* resulted, reflecting the priorities of tenants with disabilities; the Disabled Tenants Housing Forum was born; a Training and Development Plan was sketched out, including Disability Equality Training; and gaps in such skills and understanding as using British Sign Language, deaf awareness and visual awareness, were identified. As this programme of work was taken forward, Gateshead Housing Company was rewarded with a *pass in diversity* in a re-inspection, not least as a significant shift in their workforce's practice was evidenced. Also, the Housing Company received a commendation from the Audit Commission for their accessible diversity resource.

These developments impacted elsewhere in the Council: it was not just housing assessors and housing officers who were known to require disability awareness training. A more interconnected programme of work was outlined in the Service Development Officer's *Action Plan 05/06*. In this, she sought to empower disabled people across sectors by enabling them to secure credible participation in service planning and development. It was envisaged that by: beginning a *detailed conversation with users and carers* about their aspirations; gauging their willingness to contribute to a programme of work designed to promote participation, especially regarding individual needs assessments; and fact-finding; then the Gateshead workforce across sectors would be in a better position to join together to understand and respond. The fact that Gateshead Council, in partnership with the social enterprise New Vision Training, won the Skills for Care Accolade, the 'Best Involver of service users and carers' in 2006, confirms the investment of the Council in enhancing the skills and awareness of, *inter alia*, Gateshead Council employees.

In 2006 Gateshead Council reviewed the assessment function of its Sensory Support Team to look at skill mix, referral patterns, demand and capacity. The Council sought to more effectively target *preventive support and services*. In turn a partnership with Sight Service was formalised to commission

assessment provision for people with a visual impairment and enable direct access to information, advice and specialist support.

Kessler and Bach determined that Gateshead's overarching objective was *voice* i.e. facilitating more effective user engagement. They regarded *independence* and *workforce capacity building* as the Project's associated objectives.

3. The funding specifics

The service will have received £177k by March 2008. It was a partnership proposal from Gateshead Council and the Physical Disability and Sensory Improvement Partnership.

4. The models for leadership and management

The Service Development Officer responsible for New Types of Working in Gateshead acknowledged that she took a lead in steering her own advisory group. While this is not a criticism of the group, it is suggestive of the flexibility (which may also be construed as a want of guidance) from Skills for Care about New Types of Workers. The Service Development Officer was initially managed and supervised by an author of the funding application to Skills for Care, located in Planning and Development part of the Council. During the course of the work, the management and supervision transferred to Training and Development, which takes a lead in addressing workforce development matters.

It was hard for the Steering Group to get a grip on New Types of Workers so they were less challenging and questioning than I expected. It followed that I had a lot of autonomy.

The Service Development Manager left Gateshead Council before the end of the funding period:

I had to work two months notice so during that time I had discussions with stakeholders to plan the best way forward after my departure. I prepared an issues paper that was presented to the PDSI Partnership and proposed that commissioning out to a user led organisation was the best way to take NTOW in Gateshead. They were left with a fully costed project plan and clear direction of travel.

When she left, the Steering Group took the view that the post need not remain within the Council and that it could transfer to the voluntary sector. Accordingly, the post was out to tender in June/ July 2007.

Kessler and Bach (2007) regarded the Service Development Officer's role as that of a *co-ordinator* whose role of newly generated tasks and responsibilities had been *recreated* (p22)

5. The assumptions and aspirations shaping the NToW roles

It was observed that at the outset of the funding period:

...Sight Service was approached to deliver a short term contract as an interim solution while possible ideas were discussed and explored. The sensory

support worker for visual impairment also began to spend part of his week at Sight Service's Low Vision Clinic and we began to consider the added value that could be gained by working in this way. The result is now that the whole of the Council's low/moderate assessment needs for visually impaired people are commissioned out to Sight Service on a long term contract and the sensory support worker is now permanently based at the Low Vision Service and works as part of the assessment team.

The added value for an investment of approximately £34,000 (the cost of the Rehabilitation Officer) is advocacy, training, employability, social activities, equipment loan, volunteering, a service user forum, emotional support, specialist counselling and independent living skills training. There were only two social workers for deaf people in Gateshead. Their work was supplemented by that of Rehabilitation Officers who undertook the bulk of assessments.

For the past two years Gateshead has been developing a New Way of Working for the support workers employed by Sight Service to become rehabilitation assistants:

This will be a new role and links in with the Guide Dogs research 'Rethink Rehab' that highlighted the critical shortage of Rehabilitation Officers and the need to think differently. The Rehabilitation Assistants will work closely with the Rehabilitation Officer and will have a very clear remit and boundaries. The workforce has been involved from the beginning and has been instrumental in shaping their role. The Rehabilitation Officer outlined a Training and Development plan to enable a qualified and specialist workforce to be developed. A New Type of Worker, sensory support workers/ low vision therapists/ rehabilitation assistants have been commissioned, with the voluntary sector's Sight Servers, in order to undertake assessment functions for the council.

In Gateshead Council, the Service Development Officer had many roles, including being involved in service reviews; briefing colleagues in respect of *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say, Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People* and the *Disability Equality Duty* for example. The voluntary sector, and in particular *Hearing Concern* were animated by the availability of a Service Development Officer and she contributed to the reform of the Deaf Forum (it now has a constitution, a Chair and Treasurer); and to the engagement of the Multiple Sclerosis Society in Gateshead and Northumbria University in research regarding people living with Multiple Sclerosis and the services they use.

The assumption that service users would appreciate the additional capacity arising from the roles of the Service Development Officer was not wholly realised as two people noted:

From our side there are still gaps that haven't been taken forward...when you compare what has been done with what's still to be done, there's been a lot done for sensory impairments and not much for physical disability. Maybe it was too broad a spectrum and not enough senior leadership? That might have given it status.//

Advocacy is non-existent at the moment. They talk about advances that are 'user-led' when in fact they're 'user-involved.'

Gateshead Council sought the position of a Development Officer to make things happen - someone who was mindful of the 'bottom line' constraints, and who was strongly practical. Her challenge was to engage with a network of users, carers and professionals across sectors. While people with visual impairments expressed qualified satisfaction with the developments they have witnessed, people with physical disabilities were more circumspect and challenged the assumptions framing the NToW proposal.

Gateshead Housing Company's collaboration with tenants with disabilities has grown since 2004. At the outset it was unclear what would arise from a partnership enabling deaf and vulnerable people to have their say in making housing services more accessible. NToW funding and specific work with the Service Development Officer motivated a pattern of gains for the Company e.g. free British Sign Language training and minicom training for employees; the creation of a Service Improvement Group made up of tenants with disabilities; and training for Housing Officers on services provided by Gateshead Council and other agencies supporting people with disabilities.

6. The key personnel/ partners, management plan and transition plan

The Service Development Officer worked within Gateshead Council (in Planning and Development and then Training and Development) and specifically with the Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Partnership Board and its subgroups. She worked with: the Gateshead Housing Company; the Primary Care Trust; the Disabled Person's Housing Forum; the Deaf Forum; Gateshead Visually Impaired Forum and Sight Service.

Further afield, the Service Development Officer collaborated with other New Types of Working sites engaged with service user and family carer participation. They designed an event *Time to Listen, Time to Act: A New Way of Working Making Real Changes to People's Lives* to capture the views of Service Users, and Carers who had engaged in the NTOW programme over the pilot sites. Although Skills for Care were supportive and agreed to fully fund the event, it did not happen. As a service user noted:

We were let down at the last minute. It was pulled because funding was not coming through in time. It died a death

The Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Health Improvement Group's priorities were instrumental in shaping the work of the Service Development Worker. Her departure and changes in the key personnel in the Primary Care Trust have inhibited the confidence in which people spoke of the future. As one service user noted:

We've got a structure and terms of reference and people who wanted to be part of the groups but then Hayley left. It needs lead and direction, enthusiasm and stuff because sometimes things didn't happen.

7. The assumptions shaping the *development over time* of the NToW roles

In considering the current gains in Gateshead, the Chief Executive of Sight Service (The Bradbury Centre, Bensham Hospital) looked back:

Historically, charities were tea and crumpets...now we have got folk involved in what we're doing...Much of what we do is driven by what service users tell us. I don't know that it matters that now everyone understands the bigger picture. They clearly value the social side...they've moved on from having someone to run their group to it being its own entity and looking at how it can fund itself. Hayley [the Service Development Officer] was in the background to advise and support. It stands on its own two feet with users advising transport services and providing vision awareness to Gateshead's Community Based Services and Learning and Children. It's at a stage of moving into sustainability.

'Maximising the resources' and 'It's a big agenda' are refrains in the Gateshead NToW programme:

Eight years ago there was no training in using public transport and everyone used taxis. In 2007 that is no longer the case and that has to be an improvement...//

Social services couldn't have done it by themselves. It's a partnership. Having an integrated worker is about achieving public value.//

Some of it isn't about changing roles. It's about capturing the good practice and developing it further...like the traditional role of the Rehabilitation Officer, someone else can do some of the things they're doing...it's an investment for the future.//

Partnership with Sight Service has gone exceptionally well...we came third in the Health and Social Care Awards...there's nothing but praise for it. //

We've involved those who are interested in adding value to the roles they have. It's not short term. We're in for the long haul. //

There are parallel gains acknowledged by Gateshead Housing Company in association with the Disabled Persons' Housing Forum. The outcomes that they take pride in include:

An adapted kitchen for blind/ visually impaired people; a visual smoke alarm for deaf/ hearing impaired people; customer care packs at all reception areas containing magnifiers, adapted pens, signature guides; hearing induction loops in all offices; the development of a Disability Equality Scheme, available in large print, Braille, audio, British Sign Language and Easy Read; support services...to ensure that people can access and get information in their preferred communication format; assistance to maintain gardens for disabled and vulnerable people; making all our offices accessible to disabled people; providing all employees with training on disability awareness and equality; ensuring all partners and contractors train employees on disability awareness; a vulnerability guide –providing employees on advice about upgrading repairs for disabled and vulnerable people; audio version of the company's

newsletter; easy read version of our A-Z of services; new gas service cards in larger print; and a [revised] anti-social behaviour policy and the introduction of Dictaphones to help people record details of incidents and antisocial behaviour.

Homework connecting such valuable and valued skills with National Occupational Standards and career pathways remains to be undertaken in Gateshead. The Council has altered its structures to better meet the needs of people with disabilities and have used the NToW funding to nurture training and development within and across services. Sight Service is committed to remodelling the service it provides and creating a rehabilitation service/ rehabilitation pathway that incorporates New Ways of Working, including a shift in emphasis from Rehabilitation Officers to Rehabilitation Assistants. The latter will provide the 'low level' or discretionary work of service delivery and monitoring and free up the time of the Rehabilitation Officers to assess and plan. Their Training Needs Analysis has resulted in a Development Plan which commenced in September 2007.

8. The primary beneficiaries of the NToW roles

The NToW programme in Gateshead has no figures confirming its coverage. It has produced qualitative information throughout the course of the work which confirms its perceived value, most particularly to people with visual problems:

I used to have to go the Royal Victoria Infirmary once a year to have my sight reassessed. This is nearer than Newcastle and it's better to come here and have the same facilities and to meet people. They just like, look after you totally...it's a lifeline//

*My sister saw an article [about Sight Service] and I made contact. It's been a great help to get on with life. There's a lot of contact. They're good at connecting you...I have more of a social life now than I had when I could see!
//*

I said [of Sight Service] 'It'd do me lovely!' It's the initial contact that matters...you meet a lot of friends. It's the best thing that's happened to me because I like old films, the autobiographies of the stars and here, I go on the web and everything and I love it! //

It took my social worker and my wife to get me out of the house to come here!

Doing computers with Christine, it's given me confidence and skills. I'm the secretary of the residents' association and it's opened so many doors, including peer advocacy. When you live alone you feel so disadvantaged by your lack of sight. You lose your confidence...It hurts when people say, 'Not speaking then?' I have to say 'I can't see you – please come to me.' //

The thing about Braille is that you can save on the lights and read in the dark! We helped with the Metro. We went on it and said where signs should be

posted, about contrasting colours and we give feedback about traffic light signals and raised pavements. //

I went blind in 12 months...joining here is the best thing I've done. My family say, 'Since you went blind you've got a new lease of life!' I still put my glasses on though and when I was asked why I said 'People won't know me if I don't!' At first they think you're stuck up if you don't speak to them...//

I used to just sit in the house and do nothing then one of my family got a leaflet about this service and I rang up and they said they'd come and have a proper chat. I'm not really confident and it was mainly my brother and father who did the speaking for me...now, I've done classes and I get involved. I was learning to swim when I went blind and now I've started again; I'm starting a walking group; I go to meetings; I help out when I can; I used to come in by transport, now I don't need it; and I've got basic skills in business administration.

These quotations reflect the experiences of some of the members of Sight Service. They have been introduced to the service via a six week 'Vision Support Course.' It is noteworthy that the NToW programme in Gateshead was not a feature of their reflections on their service.

Housing and social care personnel spoke of the enormous gains arising from focused and valued training:

Training is now the golden opportunity that we've not had for many years. Previously it was sadly lacking//

The partnership with NToW has gone exceptionally well.

9. The secondary beneficiaries of the NToW roles:

The following quotations speak of the impacts of the NToW roles i.e. the Service Development Officer, the Rehabilitation Assistants, and housing and Council personnel who are more attuned to the experience of disability:

We have routes into Skills for Care regionally. //

Social care staff took ownership of the business case to maximise the resources we have. //

Staff have been given the authority to work differently because it's about making the best use of all. //

NToW funding in Gateshead commenced with coordination tasks in order to make sense of the highly fragmented and specialist ways in which people with disabilities experience services provided to them. The obstacles they faced in negotiating their way through services, including the waiting times, motivated a pattern of service improvement initiatives.

Pre-existing views of who should be doing particular tasks in supporting people with disabilities have shifted and there is greater recognition within the Council, Housing Company and Sight Service that managerial practice has to change in hand with the emergent forms of working. While it would be

premature to claim that this has been realised, what is in train is the start of a programme of work with a long term agenda.

10. The outcomes that will signal the (minimally acceptable) successes and achievements

Prioritising gains for Gateshead's citizens with disabilities was the overarching purpose of seeking NToW funding. The journey of the Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Partnership Board has embraced differences in organisational interests, professional agendas and political agendas. The current users of Sight Service benefit from a system-wide goal of improving the experiences of people who are newly registered as blind and of those who have been registered. The current tenants of Gateshead Housing Company benefit from the Company having been prepared to learn from people with disabilities and people with disabilities being prepared to share their experiential knowledge. The flourishing training agenda, which has a long reach and ongoing time frame, highlights the importance of learning as a feature of collaboration:

What's been done has been done well. //Good linkages [across agencies] // Having an action plan. //The facilitation of leadership roles [across agencies] and with users//To build on and continue the good work.

11. The outcomes that will disappoint/ be resisted by the site

Five quotations capture the disappointments which exercised Gateshead Council and the Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Partnership Board:

*Good work does not continue when lead people move on//
Inattention to advocacy for people with physical disabilities//
Expectations that haven't been met//
Lots of groups and partnerships with broadly similar aims that aren't achieving much//
The failure to engage with family care-givers//
The project...became chameleon-like during its life span [and] has taken on many different initiatives.*

The credible involvement of service users, family caregivers and service managers is critical to sustaining the NToW programme in Gateshead. Ensuring that its work is both meaningful and relevant to people's lives and work is not unique to Gateshead. It is difficult. Collaborations at different levels across groups and organisations require different skills, roles and supporting infrastructures and those associated with the NToW programme have a fragility about them since the departure of the Service Development Officer. The Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Partnership Board is clear about its role and accountability and this is shared in meetings and presentations about their work. The experiential knowledge of people with disabilities and their frank feedback about the NToW programme as they experience it is critical to the work delivering promised outcomes.

12. The plans after the cessation of Skills for Care funding

The Skills for Care funding ends in March 2008. The vacant Service Development Officer post and remainder of the funding is to be used to *tender*

a contract with a user – led local voluntary sector provider to evidence the PDSI Board's investment in the third sector and further strengthen partnership working (Milestone Report 4, p2). Gateshead sees the funding slippage as having the potential to embed user and carer involvement in working up to 2010. The aspiration remains to fund this work jointly, but the departures of people in the Primary Care Trust have meant that it is hard to pin people down i.e. explicit agreements between the organisations about their respective areas of operation remain to be put in place.

Materials shared by Gateshead

Gateshead Council and Sight Service (2007) *Sight Service Review: New Types of Worker and New Ways of Working*

Gateshead Council (2007) *Community Based Services and Learning and Children: Learning and Professional Development – Training Directory 2007-2008*

Gateshead Council (2007) *New Types of Worker Project: Milestone Report 4. 31 August*

Gateshead Housing Company (2007) *Outcomes from (i) the NToW Project, (ii) Disabled Persons' Housing Forum*

Sight Service: *Annual Report 2005-2006 Enabling visually impaired people to enjoy the quality of life they are entitled to expect*

References

Kessler, I. and Bach, S. (2007) *The Skills for Care New Types of Worker Programme: Stage 1 Evaluation Report*. Leeds: Skills for Care

Oliver, M. (1996) *Understanding Disability: from Theory to Practice*. London: Longman

Waddilove, D. (2004) *Redesigned and Redrawn – developing new roles in social care. Interim report of the Topss England 'new roles' task and finish group after the first year of the project*. Leeds: Topss