

DECIDING TOGETHER – EasyRead version

REVISING THE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

What is the job of the Partnership Board?

The Partnership Board meets regularly to talk about opportunities and support for people with learning disabilities in your area. Its job is to make sure that things get better for people with learning disabilities in your area.

It should try to:

Make services for people with learning disabilities better

Help you have the same chance to use the services everyone uses.

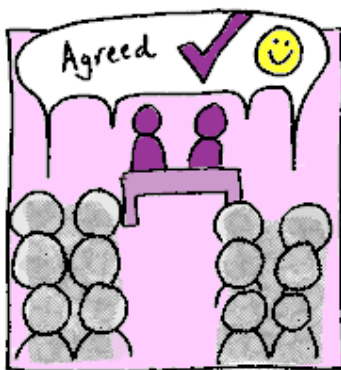
Help different people to take part in the Board



Who?

Who is on the Partnership Board?

Partnership Boards should bring together people who have a big say over local opportunities and services for people with learning disabilities - like council services, health trusts and other services. It also needs to include people with learning disabilities and family carers. The Board should include people from minority ethnic groups - like Chinese, African-Caribbean, Indian or Pakistani people



What should Partnership Boards do?

The Boards should ask different services to say how the things they do affect the lives of people with learning disabilities and their families.

The things that these services decide might be about:

- What choices and support there are for people with learning disabilities and their families
- How to give everyone a fair chance of getting the help they need
- How much money is needed to make services better

The Board brings together council departments and health services that give you support. This means that everyone can share information about what is happening in your local area. Everyone can agree what needs to be done and can check that the work they are doing fits in with what everyone else is doing. So the Board can be a local "champion" for people with learning disabilities

How do other partnerships boards work?

Some authorities are only just setting up! There are 4 beacon councils – Rotherham, Wiltshire, Norfolk and Greenwich.

Rotherham

- Chair has an informal meeting before PB to go through agenda with people
- They use flashcards (red – stop, yellow –slow, Green OK and white -?)
- Agendas sent out the week before (mostly electronically)
- Minutes in EasyRead
- People who use services are supported by speak Up advocates
- Two standing items on the agenda – carers issues and people's slot
- Meeting held 10 – 12.30 and are kept short. Work is done in task groups.

Greenwich

- Learning disability action group (self advocates) meets two days a month supported by outreach worker. Visits and reviews local services and amenities
- PB is whole day's event 4 times a year. Cabinet member for adults and self advocate co-chair meeting. Pre meeting to set agenda. Co-chair has advocacy hours to support.
- In morning, subgroups present work done and work planned. 2 groups per PB present a workplan. 45 mins per group. Then lunch. Some people leave after the workgroups and others join. Afternoon session lasts about 2 hours.
- Open meeting. Key workers support people. Have a problem involving people with profound and multiple disabilities

Wiltshire

- Have just reviewed PB. Their professional partners also have stopped attending PB.
- Meet 4 times a year. They have invested heavily in advocacy – People First. Learning disabled co-chair. EasyRead documents.
- 4 localities system. All have task groups and it feeds through to PB.
- 3 or 4 'themed' conferences per year on specific issues

Norfolk

- PB meets every two months. Open meeting. All day meeting. Open forum in the morning and main meeting after lunch. Council partners difficult to engage. Good response from Independent sector after flyers sent. Learning disabled co-chair.
- Up till now – Learning disabled reps have people from advocacy services. This has been revised to limit advocacy to 2 –3 places. Setting up 5 'Getting Involved' groups and a People's Parliament.

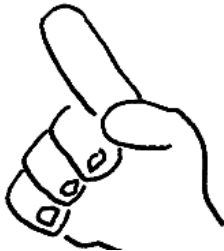
What we do well

- People with learning disabilities and their carers are on the Partnership Board and some task groups
- Partnership Board is well informed and involved in new initiatives

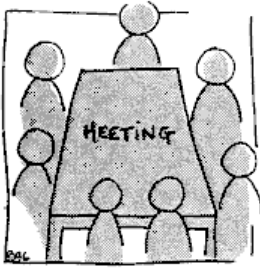
What we need to do better

- Get our housing, education, employment and leisure colleagues involved and coming to the board
- Get the independent sector more involved and coming to the board
- Have black and ethnic minorities representatives involved
- Checking what we do (both quality and quantity) for people with learning disabilities
- Forward planning and redesigning services.

Priorities



- Develop leadership and self-advocacy in the Partnership Board. Self-advocates need to be part of setting the agenda
- Agendas and papers need to be sent out a fortnight before to enable full meaningful discussion.
- Engage mainstream services as partners with a focus on promoting both independence and inclusion. Mainstream partners say they do not attend because the discussions are too specialist and 'not for them'.
- Find a better way of the Task Groups to report back and develop systems to track performance



Ideas from Valuing People Support Team

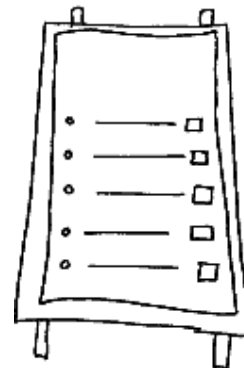
- Have an agenda group which organises the programme for meetings
- Set up forums for people with learning disabilities and their family carers

Working inclusively

- Good support for people with learning disabilities on the Board
- Involve people from the beginning not at the end
- Accessible information
- Consult widely on issues and check that changes are actually making a difference to people's lives. Review changes
- Provide communication training for everyone on the PB. Employ people with learning disabilities as trainers

Running the Partnership Board inclusively

- Clear agendas with time to prepare before the meeting
- More work in small groups
- Refreshments and regular breaks
- Taking time to listen
- People working as a team
- Relaxed discussions with support (more time)
- Use Plain English, no difficult words and no jargon. Everyone needs to be able to follow what's going on



This means

- ½ hour before meeting for coffee and a chat
- Introductions every meeting
- A good news item at beginning
- Flash cards
- Time on the agenda for family carers and self advocates (where they can bring issues from other forums)
- For agenda items that need a discussion get people to work in small groups with clear questions to think about rather than just 'what do you think?'
- Message Board for comments



Some suggestions

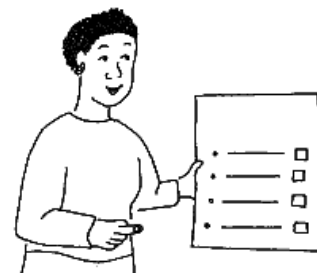
- Have a couple of themed days a year. One could be an all day Christmas or March Partnership Board debating the annual Report. It could be tied into our Self Assessment Survey that goes to the Inspector if it is in March. Another could be the conference during the Learning Disability Awareness week on a special topic.



- Reduce the subgroups to 6 (see chart). Then we could look at two areas each Board meeting in depth. Each subgroup would have two slots a year looking at what they have done and their plans for the future. Work in Groups and discuss properly. Other council departments or partners would be invited to attend and discuss too. The sub-groups would have to lead the discussion and prepare the session.



- Work towards having co-chairs for all the Sub-Groups and the Board. This will mean investment in leadership and involvement training. Co-chairs would need advocacy support.
- Accessible information. This would need investment in software and training.
- Papers sent out a fortnight in advance. Communication and advocacy support will be needed for people with learning disabilities to take part.
- Use Flash cards consistently
- Slots on the agenda for family carers and people with learning disabilities to bring issues from other forums.
- Develop People's and Carers' Parliaments so that Board members are elected from a group.
- Message Board at Partnership Board



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