

Nottingham Regional Society For Adults and Children with Autism

NoRSACA Adult Services

PUBLIC STATEMENT - 2006

Our Services

NoRSACA provides Residential, Further Education, Day Services and a variety of Outreach and support services for people who are aged 16 plus, and are diagnosed with an autism spectrum condition.

We currently provide services to approximately 160 people who are funded by Social Services and/or Health Authorities.

The Service Review

The Review took place from the 15th March 2006, with the Action Plan being discussed on the 12th July 2006. This Review took into account most areas of our service provision, and included a total of 6 service users being visited.

The team was made up of: -

- a Senior Manager (overseeing process, not involved in Review)
- a Registered Manager
- 2 Service Users (both of whom live in Residential Services)
- a Residential Team Manager
- 1 Parent
- Day Support Worker
- Day Service Tutor

Findings

This is the fourth annual review that NoRSACA has undertaken and once again the outcome was of a largely positive nature. The main disappointment has been the loss of some of the previous review participants and the difficulties in recruiting replacements. This meant that the team was able to "shadow" six service users. This represents less than five per cent of service users being involved which is not considered high enough by the review team to be indicative of NoRSACA services overall. However, the team felt it was important to continue with the review process so as not to let go of the momentum that had built up over the previous four years. It was agreed that there should be recruitment campaign towards the end of this year to generate further interest and, hopefully, volunteers. For the second, consecutive year, the review process tended to focus on service users who are considered to have a higher level of dependency.

Encouragingly, and despite the low numbers, a comprehensive review was carried out and it generated some quite intense debates as to the way forward. However, it does need to be acknowledged that due to the low numbers involved, the results need to be viewed in the context that it is only a snapshot of NoRSACA Adult Services.

The Review Team were conscious that the organization is still working hard on the implementation of the two action plans from 2004 and 2005, both being substantial projects in their own rights, focusing on Person Centered Planning (PCP) and

communication respectively. With this in mind, it was decided not to focus on those areas of the review which it was felt would improve as the effects of those two action plans begin to impact over the next two to three years. Therefore, it was agreed to focus on areas that would appear, on face value, to be “okay” across services and so would, ordinarily, be overlooked when contemplating an action plan. Accordingly, it was decided that the 2006 action plan would concentrate on three areas for improvement:

- Making important decisions in one’s life
- Being part of my [local] “chosen” community
- Getting the chance to work

Identification of these aims encouraged the group to discuss some interesting concepts including the perception that society needs to adopt a vision for the future that enables individuals who are disabled to be able to pursue the same life plans as any body else. This is starting to happen with changes in funding with the move towards direct payments and individual budgets. Questions were also raised regarding what is meant by the “local” community and what are normal patterns of access to it, if there are such patterns. There was also lengthy debate around the perception of what is important and how that differs from individual to individual.

Action Plan

Once the three main aims had been identified, the Review Team set to dissecting the findings of their reviews to determine what the objectives should be in order to achieve those aims. The following objectives were agreed:

Making important decisions in one’s life

- To make more information available and accessible to enable more informed choice
- To identify how each individual feels about the extent of control in their lives and matching it with their needs

Being part of my [local] “chosen” community

- Define what ‘community’ means for the individual
- Agreeing individual levels of access
- Enabling informed choices to be made regarding accessing communities

Getting the chance to work

- Identifying the reward for the individual
- Creating opportunities for work
- Identifying areas of interest/ability for/with individuals

Each of the identified objectives were then broken down into achievable actions to create the attached plan (Appendix 1).

Conclusion

The action plans from previous years continue to be implemented with mixed degrees of success. This year's review has seen a significant change in the focus of the team. It was noticeable that the debates and discussions that took place during the process were at a different level compared to previous years. The intensity of discussion was not focused purely on NoRSACA but society in general. That is probably the reason why parts of the action plan contain strategies that not only involve people within NoRSACA but people and organizations external to it; perhaps the time has come to take the mission to ensure high quality services for people with autism to a wider audience.

Next year will be NoRSACA's fifth Autism Quality Networks review and, in consultation with our BILD facilitator, 2008 will see the team take a break from the review process, not to have a break but to actually formally review the whole Quality Networks process. The team will look at what impact each year's action plan has had on NoRSACA and to look if there are any ways to improve the service. It will also be an opportunity to examine the role of BILD in the total process and offer constructive suggestions for the future. It is a process the team is looking forward to.

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