

‘Time to Communicate’

Leonard Cheshire Disability Communication Project

Catherine Harris – Speech and Language Therapist

Leonard Cheshire Disability

The UK's largest voluntary sector provider of services to disabled people. Operating over 150 services in the UK, enabling over 21,000 disabled people to live as independently as possible. 7,000 staff and 3,000 volunteers.

Working with partners in 52 countries, it supports more than 25 independently managed disability organisations.

Leonard Cheshire Disability's core purpose is to change attitudes to disability and to serve disabled people around the world.



www.CreatureDiscomforts.org

**Leonard
Cheshire
Disability**

The Communication Project

- The Communication Project began back in 2002 following an initiative by the Service User Support Team.
- Internal Audit began in 2003 to identify need
- Pilot project began in 2004 in Leonard Cheshire Disability's Central Region.
- Awarded Big Lottery Fund Grant Spring 2006 to the sum of £0.74m over three years.
- National Rollout of the Communication Project began in Autumn 2006
- Recruitment of 10 Communication Support Officers, one for each of the Leonard Cheshire Regions.



The Role of the Communication Support Officers

- Liaise with external support services such as Speech and Language Therapists, Communication Aid Centres, Manufacturers/ suppliers etc...
- Support specific individuals with little or no verbal communication – utilising the various methods available.
- Enable service users to communicate their choices and to be involved in decision making about their lives.
- Be aware of the types of communication aids available and how they could benefit individual service users.
- Deliver the communication training package to staff and volunteers developed as part of the project pilot plus any specialist training required for an individual device or communication aid.



Working in out at a the 'local' level

Specialist Speech and Language Therapist working county-wide.

Link Therapist for AAC

Significant number of people in Leonard Cheshire home, Cheltenham, who needed ongoing support

Recognition of value of partnership working

Case reviews

YUNUS

JAMES

SIAN

CHRIS



PROS

Time

Background information

Low tech resources

Following up recommendations

Ongoing liaison

Raised awareness for care staff



CONS



Lack of SLT's in some areas

Relationship between SLT and CSO

Perception of 'training'

Danger of 'going it alone'

Continuity of care

3 year funded project-what next?

The Future

- External audit was completed by team at UCL.
- Internal evaluations have enabled management to learn from the work that has been done over the last 3 years.
- However funding was not allocated or found to continue the project which ended in December 2009.
- Feedback from training programme delivered to staff and volunteers showed it was one of the most popular courses run with the organisation.
- 3 regional representatives have been appointed in the place of the 10 to continue raising awareness of communication needs.
- Long term implications for future success of AAC in LC homes.



Change the
way you see
disability

Questions and Discussion

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