

'Help us get it right' Day 5th Nov 2008



Feedback report December 2008

What was the day about?

The council, and its Social Inclusion Working Group, want to make sure that everything we do, alone or with other organisations, is as inclusive as possible.

Council staff from 9 different services held workshops to discuss important areas of their work. We want to make sure we do all we can to promote equality and inclusion in the way we work and serve the public.



Who was there?



Over 45 delegates attended the day. Some delegates were individuals and others were from the following community and voluntary groups or organisations:

York Humanists

Higher York

Interfaith Forum

York Youth Service

Churches Together in York

York LINK

Valuing People Partnership Board

Older People's Assembly

York People First

York Carers Forum

York Access Group

Mental Health Forum

What did we find out?

Information and Access to Leisure Facilities



This workshop concentrated on printed publicity material, like leaflets, and buildings. This covered Libraries, Adult Education, Sport and Active Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces and Arts and Culture.

This is what we found out:

- Generally printed material was ok.
 - There are some improvements needed in using signs to help with readability.
 - Some publications needed to use larger fonts.
 - Some people liked some publications, whilst others disliked them. There was no universal agreement about this.
 - How material is distributed and displayed is as important as how it is produced.
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- Signage on buildings is important.
 - Background colour on walls makes it inviting.
 - Some photos on the outside of buildings to show the inside makes them more inviting.
 - Someone to welcome people into a building is important.
 - Displaying leaflets in accessible places is important.
 - Perhaps having a single focus for information would be good.

However there was a clear message that we should not over rely on printed information and that it was ok as far as it went but that we needed to find other ways of communicating the message. Ideas included:

- Better use of posters, public spaces to display material e.g. supermarkets.
- Developing a network of people to promote events and pass information on.

- Large screens that promoted events and activities.
- A single publication – like the citizens guide that listed information and contact details

What are we going to do with this information?

- The information about printed materials is going to be fed back into the group that deals with marketing and printed material.
- We are going to develop some standards and guidelines to include the use of symbols in publicity where appropriate.
- We are going to consider where we might produce material in other formats.

If you would like more information on this work, contact Alistair Gourlay, Head Of Lifelong Learning. Alistair.gourlay@york.gov.uk
01904 554294

The Future of our City



Without Walls is the name of the city-wide partnership that produces York's Community Strategy. The partnership is made up of services like education, health, housing, police and social services. It also includes community and voluntary groups and business people.

The Community Strategy is a long-term plan that tackles challenges facing our city. It has been updated for 2008. Without Walls now wants everyone to work together to deliver the plan. We can all help with this.

The Without Walls team asked how easy or hard it would be to help out. They asked about living a healthy lifestyle, looking after the environment and building a strong community spirit.

They found out about some of the barriers that stop people from taking part in these activities. These included the expense of healthy food, leisure facilities and bus travel. Comments collected

also confirmed that we need to do much more to make information on these subjects accessible to everyone.

The comments collected will be taken to the following partnerships for their consideration:

- Healthy lifestyles comments to the Healthy City Board.
- Looking after the environment to the York Environment Partnership.
- Building strong communities comments to the Inclusive York Forum.

If you would like more information about Without Walls contact Denise Simms, 01904 552027 or denise.simms@york.gov.uk

Homeless Strategy



This workshop focused on the Homeless Strategy for 2008-13, which was published in July this year. The Strategy is trying to end the use of emergency temporary accommodation by planning ahead to use re-housing and independent living instead.

The Strategy has four key strands:

- Partnership working and developing shared objectives. This means we had to ensure this strategy fitted in with other work like the Local Area Agreement.
- Preventions advice and information. A wide range of services contributes directly and indirectly to the prevention of homelessness. For example, services improving people's education and skills; identifying and supporting those at risk at an early stage; and ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing.
- Accommodation. In the short term we will improve the quality and use of temporary accommodation, to help us move towards longer term housing in the future. Having affordable homes is also crucial. In 2007/8 approximately 50 affordable homes were available and over the next two years the target is 425 affordable homes.

- Support Services will need to develop towards providing support that either keeps customers in their existing accommodation or helps them live independently.

The Strategy has a five-year action plan that supports all the work above. This will mean that the council and partners will need to adopt new working practices, think and plan for the future and develop flexible policies that deal with future challenges.

We had detailed discussions at the workshop about the Strategy. Generally people thought it was good and they supported the new approach that was being taken.

If you would like more information on the Homeless Strategy contact Tom Brittain, Housing Operations Manager.

Tom.brittain@york.gov.uk 01904 551262.

Contacting the Council



This workshop concentrated on some of the different ways to access council services and what will be important in the design of the council's new customer service centre. The session also looked at the new 'Feedback and Complaints'

leaflets and procedures.

This is what we found out:

The new customer centre:

- Meet-and-greet is very important.
- Provide induction loop systems.
- Bring together different services around 'life' events.
- Clear signs needed.
- Need confidentiality ensured when in an open area.

The website:

- Website not designed for easy accessibility – can't find information quickly.

Opening Hours:

- One late night per week would be good.

Email:

- Need to get an acknowledgment that email has been received, and when to expect a reply.
- Need a central location where you can make an enquiry and then the right person emails you back.

Telephone:

- Council telephone numbers could be better advertised.

Text Messages:

- Could be used to advise on road works – text alerts by subscription.

Feedback & Complaints leaflet:

- Provide an advocacy service.
- Offer support in making complaints.
- Vital for people with support needs to have other ways to complain and know how to complain.
- Use plain English.

What are we going to do with this information?

We will use this information in developing the various ways to access council services in the new customer centre.

We are creating new standards and procedures for 'Feedback and Complaints', which will take into account the comments received.

Who to contact for more details

Jane Collingwood, Business Change Manager, 01904 553407
Lorraine Lunt, Customer Relations Improvement Officer, 01904 553421

Kofi Mensah, Business Analyst, 01904 553404

Email: yourviews@york.gov.uk

Waste and Recycling



This workshop looked at signage and information on waste and recycling around the city.

What did we find out?

- Use the Higher York Students website to explain recycling to students.
- Large dumpsters could be dangerous.
- Assisted collection – talk to agencies such as Age Concern.
- Review progress annually.
- Phone numbers are different on bins.
- Use the Recycle for York logo more.
- Give feedback on how we are doing compared to the rest of the country and what happens to our recycling.
- Learn from other authorities - Milton Keynes is excellent at recycling.
- People are keen to recycle food waste.
- Signage needs to be consistent to build up people's knowledge.
- Plastic bag recycling bin at each bring site.
- Signs on main roads to sites – could they be improved?
- Could the council sell a can or cardboard crusher?
- Leaflets (people thought they were '1st class!'), are they 100% recycled?

What are we going to do with this information?

We will use this information to improve our services and make them more accessible.

- Leaflets - talk to York Access Group and York People First to help make improvements.
- Investigate opportunities to promote recycling via churches/faith groups, student societies, and cinema adverts.
- Use cartoons/humour in our communications to attract attention.
- Increase the range of road shows to take the message out further.
- Increase service to include promoting composting and rainwater re-use?

- Advertise assisted collections through York Older People's Assembly, Age Concern, Help The Aged, St Sampson's Centre or through the council tax form?

If you would like more information on recycling please contact the recycling team recycling.team@york.gov.uk. 01904 551551

Adult Social Care

This workshop looked at people using Individual Budgets to meet their support needs. This might be people from different ethnic groups, older people, people with physical or sensory impairments, or people with learning disabilities.



An Individual Budget is worked out following a self-assessment.

When a person knows how much money they are entitled to they can then make plans on how to spend it to meet their individual needs. Some people may be able to do this on their own, but others may need some help to do this. They can get this help from a national organisation called 'In Control' (www.in-control.org.uk). Their website has lots information and stories about people who have been using an Individual Budget to meet their support needs.

The workshop group liked:

- The idea of Individual Budgets.
- Giving people a bigger element of independence.
- Empowerment :opportunity for freedom.
- More flexible scheme for individuals.
- The flexible and individualised approach.

The workshop group were concerned about:

- Discrimination in the community.
- Trust – strangers in people's homes.
- Dealing with real people from all backgrounds.
- Payments being index linked to increase with the cost of living.

- Ageing community – more demand.
- Not enough guidance.
- The move / transition from one method of delivery to another.
- Timescale of moving to Individual Budgets.
- Money – is there enough?
- People who are not literate or articulate may miss out – unless they have close and supportive/understanding relatives and carers.
- The best way for people to get to know about this is via Age Concern, the Citizens Advice Bureau, their doctor.
- Care for older people needing temporary care on discharge from hospital – lack of communication between hospital and home-care (home help, community nurse or social worker). Who is responsible for making this link?
- Standard of care and attitudes of some home care agencies now they are privately run and financed. Who should check on levels of training and care?
- The constant cuts in Government funding and Local Authority funding requires care managers to work on less and less money.

What are we going to do with this information?

- Explain the process to family carers, voluntary organisations and individual people.
- Carry out a number of road-shows.
- Use examples of where an Individual Budget has helped someone, and how they overcame any problems
- Help people tell their own stories to inspire others.

For More information contact Ralph Edwards, Deputy Head Of Learning Disabilities. 01904 554105 Ralph.Edwards@york.gov.uk

Children and Young People



This workshop was an excellent opportunity to engage with the wider community about the Children and Young Peoples Plan.

The Children and Young Peoples Plan sets out how all services work together to meet the needs of children and young people in York.

These were some of the issues raised:

- All children and young people in York should have the best possible start in life.
- We must be concerned about the effects of poverty on children and young people. Especially as it can affect those who are most vulnerable.
- Support for parents and how agencies can help through information, advice and guidance.
- Safety in the community, especially about bullying. There was recognition that much work was being undertaken but there could be no room for complacency especially about homophobic and racial bullying and cyber-bullying.
- Recreational activities were important and need to be inclusive.

What we will do with these comments:

The workshop was part of a wider engagement process on the Children's and Young Peoples Plan. The plan is currently being written and will be published at the end of March 2009. It will be available in a number of formats and staff will be available to give feedback on the contents of the plan.

If you would like more information contact: Bernie Flanagan
Early Intervention Fund Manager – Bernie.Flanagan@york.gov.uk
01904 554463

Housing Benefit Abuse (Fraud)



This workshop explained how people claim housing and council tax benefit and what the council does in cases where they think someone might be deliberately claiming when they shouldn't (this is fraud).

These were some of the issues raised:

- raise the awareness of fraud - publicity should include something about the cost of fraud to citizens of York.
- reporting changes of circumstances should be made easier, for example by telephone or internet contact.

What we will do with these comments:

- We will include details of the cost of benefit fraud as part of the council's annual publicity campaign about benefits in spring 2009.
- We will continue to work to simplify the process for claiming benefit and telling the council of changes of circumstances. For example you will soon be able to tell the council about a change over the phone.

If you would like more information on benefit issues contact John Madden, Benefits Technical Manager. John.madden@york.gov.uk
01904 552206.

If you would like more information on benefit fraud contact Richard Smith, Deputy Audit & Fraud Manager. Richard.smith@york.gov.uk
01904 552936

Safeguarding Adults



This workshop was about the two main messages in the safeguarding adults policy, which are a) knowing what safeguarding is and b) knowing what to do about it.

Safeguarding means making sure you are safe from abuse and neglect. It also means helping people to be independent and to make choices. Safeguarding means working together to help keep people safe. We want everyone to know what safeguarding is and what to do about it.

We wanted to find out how we could make sure that the policy was accessible to all communities and what would stop people getting the information and help they need. We asked people:

- What are the best ways for you to get information about abuse?
- What would make it easier for you to report abuse?

What we found out.

How to make the policy more accessible:

- Provide information in an accessible style/format, for example
 - TV adverts, articles in the press.
 - send a leaflet to every household.
 - give out wallet sized cards with details of who contact.
 - run a drama workshop with different scenarios.
 - Website/DVD.
 - Use pictures in information.
 - Put information on tapes.
 - Posters in doctor's surgeries/post office/libraries.
- Provide information through people's own community groups and organisations where they can talk to their peers/ feel safe/get advice.
- Use existing forums to spread information.
- Set up a help-line or help-centre.
- Train staff to understand issues experienced by particular communities or involve vulnerable people in training sessions.
- Explain the steps of what happens when you report to reduce people's anxieties.

Getting help when abuse is reported:

- Establish peer support through people's own networks / existing forums.
- Support befrienders / survivors networks.
- Establish back-up team for long term support.
- Give presentations at meetings of groups/forums.
- Use mediation not just punishment (e.g. school bullying mediation).
- Tell potential abusers that we take it seriously and we will do something to stop it long term.
- Encourage reporting from people in the community e.g. neighbourhood watch.

What we will do with what we found out:

- Report the outcome to the Safeguarding Partnership Board and consider any further resources required.
- Report on safeguarding to other Partnership Boards that are in place and request that members take the suggestions and concerns into the forums that they represent.
- Ensure that staff training and public awareness programmes to promote safeguarding are reviewed.
- Consider any strategies, which may need amending to take account of the EIA outcome.
- Ensure that approaches to personalisation reflect different individual requirements for safeguarding.

For advice and information on safeguarding contact:

Advice & Information Service, PO Box 402, 10-12 George Hudson Street, York, Y01 6ZE
8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday

tel: (01904) 554141, minicom: (01904) 554120

fax: (01904) 554119

email: housing.socialcare@york.gov.uk

For comments on the Safeguarding Adults Policy contact:

Anne Bygrave, Assistant Director Assessment & Personalisation

Anne.bygrave@york.gov.uk