

Minutes of Learning Disability Focus Group Meeting



Monday, 10 May 2004

Venue: 24 Ribchester Drive, Bury

1. Work Experience at School – good/bad?

- There were mixed feelings whether school work experiences had been good or bad, 50/50.
- School offers little support making the move from education to work – it does not prepare students – schools have a lot to learn.
- It is more beneficial to do longer work experiences to enable clients the chance to develop their skills.
- It would be a useful tool to create a portfolio with references from work experiences.

2. How do you find the Job Centre – helpful/unhelpful? Easy to Access?

- The job centre is more difficult to use now they have computers.
- It would be helpful if there was someone there available to assist.
- Some would like the option of the job boards still being available.

3. Do you use the DEA's – Do you find them helpful/unhelpful?

- There were mixed experiences of the DEA's.
- Clients felt that after their initial meeting with the DEA there was no feedback (follow up contact) and felt slightly neglected.

4. Have you tried college courses – Have you found them helpful/unhelpful?

- The college process can be too long sometimes.
- College does help build up confidence.
- Courses should be tied in with employment opportunities/work experience.

- Some clients experienced “micky taking”, within school/college.

5. Training schemes/basic skills courses helpful/unhelpful?

- Basic training helps with social skills.
- Attending these courses helps with confidence.

6. Bury EST – Has the support been helpful?

- Interview support is really useful.
- There is some frustration regarding how long the service takes (paperwork).
- Bury EST is a good resource which benefits from good contacts/links.
- Some other agencies can be patronising – Bury EST are more professional.
- Support was available in looking, gaining and maintaining a good job match which is invaluable.

7. What could these services do different?

- There should be an LD advisor accessible within DWP, Housing Benefits, Job Centre etc.
- There should be appropriate support within work experience.

8. Any other comments?

- Clients feel that they want to work for more social reasons rather than financial gain.
- May felt they had bad experiences with interviews and felt unable to answer questions accordingly, which bears no reflection whether they could fulfil the job tasks.
- Benefits are a barrier.
- Using the Leisure Centre is helpful and improves on socialising skills.

9. Actions to be taken

- Dennie to arrange a date for the next Focus Group meeting, and to inform group members.
- Dennie to write up the minutes of the meeting and distribute them to group members.
- Focus Group Action Plan to be developed by Lee & Dennie.