

Notes from the Disability Forum Meeting held on Tuesday 13th April, 2pm at Blackpool Centre for Independent Living

In Attendance

8 customers

Jen Ellis – Customer Involvement and Projects Officer, Blackpool Coastal Housing

Yvonne Hammond – Equalities and Communications Officer, Blackpool Coastal Housing

Apologies

6 customers

1. Welcome and Introduction

Jenni Ellis welcomed attendees to the meeting and explained to new members that she is responsible for managing the Disability Forum.

2. Caring with Confidence Representative

Leah Wood from SHIVER attended to discuss the Caring with Confidence courses which are due to take place from April onwards. She explained that the courses are skills and knowledge based and aim to assist carers in making a positive difference to their life and that of the person they care for. Funding to provide the courses has been secured for the next two years as part of the Government's 'New Deal for Carers' initiative which aims to improve support for carers. All sessions are free and expenses such as travel costs can be reimbursed. Leah stated that there had been a positive response from courses run so far and an informal structure is followed to ensure that sessions are carer-led.

Further information on each of the courses was provided in a handout and Leah explained that she could be contacted directly.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting/Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting were read through and agreed as a true record by attendees. The following points were updated:

- **Community Project of the Year** – further to the last meeting, JE provided those involved in the production of the Disability Awareness DVD with their own copy of the highly commended certificate.
- **Disability Information Booklet** – JE explained that the booklet had been sent to Heckfords Design to be finalised and a copy would be posted to all attendees when completed.
- **Magnifiers** – Following testing from volunteers at the last meeting, magnifiers were found to be beneficial and a practical option to replace large print documents. JE explained that the magnifiers were also taken to the last Sheltered Housing Forum meeting where attendees agreed that magnifiers should be introduced to replace large print documents.

4. Annual General Meeting

JE stated that she had received two nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair. All present voted (with the exception of the nominees) and the results were collated by JE:

Elaine Christian – Chair
Irene Bishop – Vice-Chair

JE is to contact both to explain their roles, provide support and assistance.

5. Update on the Blackpool Disability Partnership

Yvonne Hammond provided a brief update on the Partnership and explained that members of this forum were welcome to attend meetings. The Partnership provides the opportunity for a variety of different agencies to meet and share relevant information. YH explained that the Disability Awareness DVD had been discussed and is due to be shown at the meeting in July.

The next meeting is due to take place on 18th May at 1pm at the Blackpool Centre for Independent Living and anyone interested in attending should contact Karen Herschell on 01253 477169.

6. Equality Audits

Yvonne Hammond explained that an equality audit was due to be completed on Streetscene to improve their service and make it more accessible and inclusive. This audit will include different aspects of the service such as accessibility, street furniture, lighting and signage. An information paper was handed out to attendees and further information will be provided at the next meeting in July. Members agreed it would be beneficial for a representative to attend to discuss this in more detail at a future meeting.

JE mentioned that the Repairs Team would also like to involve the Disability Forum in ensuring that their service is accessible – further information is to be provided at the next meeting.

7. Any Other Business

- JE explained that 9 new Service Improvement Panels had recently been launched to ensure that all services BCH provides are continually monitored, scrutinised and developed in partnership with tenants. At the Neighbourhood Improvement Panel, the Disability Awareness DVD had been discussed and it had been suggested that a sticker should be placed on trades vans to remind staff to park responsibly and to give people more time to get to the door when visiting. It was also suggested that a contact number could be provided for the public to call if they are not parked responsibly. The Forum agreed this may be beneficial and for further investigation to take place.
- Following a query raised by an attendee, the handyperson service was discussed and it was explained that this service is available to new tenants (within the first twelve weeks of their tenancy), tenants over the age of 65, tenants who are vulnerable or tenants receiving disability living allowance. Materials need to be supplied by the tenant but the handyperson will provide the tools and labour to complete the work e.g. curtain fitting, picture hanging and erecting flat pack furniture.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 7th July, 2pm in the Elm Room at Blackpool Centre for Independent Living.