

## **Notes from the Disability Forum Meeting held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2pm at Blackpool Centre for Independent Living**

In Attendance  
10 customers

Jenni Ellis – Customer Involvement and Projects Officer, Blackpool Coastal Housing  
Yvonne Hammond – Equalities and Communications Officer, Blackpool Coastal Housing

Apologies  
4 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. Representative from Blackpool Centre for Independent Living (BCIL)**

Devry Souayed, Events and Engagement Officer, attended the meeting to give an overview of the facilities and services available within the BCIL. She explained that the Centre re-opened in April 2009 following £1 million investment from Blackpool Council and the NHS and after much consultation with disabled people and groups on the types of facilities/services to implement.

Meeting rooms are free to book for groups such as this one and there are many available facilities/services, some of which are as follows:

- Direct Payments Team
- Social Care Volunteers/Community Volunteers
- Café
- Liveasy – A display showroom stocked with aids, furniture and equipment to aid independent living.
- Changing Places – hygiene needs/personal care
- Interactive White Board
- Workstep – programme for long term unemployed people with a disability to look for work and apply for jobs
- Computer courses and basic digital photography
- Disability Information and Support Service – includes assistance with form filling etc
- Health Section – available through appointment or referral only

Although there has been a large amount of internal refurbishment there have been negative comments about the appearance of the building and so workshops are being held to address the issue and to make it more appealing.

A tour was provided and information packs given to all attendees on the available facilities/services.

### **3. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

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

- Staff Guide to Culture and Diversity – Yvonne Hammond is to chase up the production of this.
- Community Involvement Awards – Those who attended agreed that they had an enjoyable evening and praised BCH for the organisation of this. J Ellis informed attendees that the Disability Forum had been awarded highly commended in the 'Community Project of the Year' category. It was decided that the award certificate should remain with the chairperson (once elected) and members asked if photocopies could be given to each member involved with the production of the DVD – JE is to provide these.
- Viewpoint Front Cover Selection – JE explained that Style B will feature on the spring and all future editions of Viewpoint magazine.

#### **4. Formalisation of the Forum**

JE explained that formalisation information was sent out to all members in January with a feedback form for comments. 8 out of 18 members returned the forms and all were in agreement that the Forum should become formalised. Present members also agreed that they would like the Forum to be formalised (those present that had not returned their feedback forms were asked) and JE stated that two members are interested in standing for the roles of Chairperson and Vice-chair. It was stated that no one had expressed an interest in taking on the role of Secretary and so JE will continue with this. The first Annual General Meeting will be organised for the next meeting in April where the Chair and Vice-chair will be elected. Once the Forum has become formalised, the Forum will be affiliated to the Tenant Liaison Forum and the Chair and Vice-Chair will be invited to TLF meetings.

#### **5. Disability Information Booklet**

The revised draft of the booklet was handed out to attendees. It was explained that further information has been included as a result of the discussion at the last meeting and information is now provided on the Adult Placement Service, Vitaline, Blackpool Carers Centre, the Blue Badge Scheme and Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Society for the Blind. Relevant pictures are to be included in the booklet to make it more appealing and all members agreed that the final draft should be sent to Heckfords (Design Company) for publication.

#### **6. Any Other Business**

##### **– Magnifiers**

Following a discussion at the last Forum meeting, JE explained that some magnifiers had been purchased in order to test whether or not they would be effective as an alternative for use by tenants and leaseholders currently requiring publications in large print format. All present agreed that this seemed to be a lower cost and extremely beneficial option: Pauline Richmond, Tim Elson, Irene Bishop and Maurice Christian all agreed to take a magnifier home for a week to test the practicalities and feedback to JE. An update will be given at the next meeting in April.

##### **– Future Venue Choice**

The group agreed that the Centre of Independent Living was a more suitable meeting place for future meetings and so will be held here instead of Spencer Court.

– **Frequency of Meetings**

JE asked the group if they felt it would be more beneficial to meet quarterly instead of bi-monthly, of which meeting quarterly was decided. This is to be implemented after the Annual General Meeting has taken place in April.

– **Guest Speaker**

Attendees agreed that it would be beneficial for a representative from the Care and Repair Team to attend the next meeting to discuss the service they provide.

**6. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April at 2pm, Blackpool Centre for Independent Living, Whitegate Drive.