

B&NES Mental Health Network Meeting

Somerdale Lodge, Fry's Conference Centre, Keynsham

Thursday 18 November



Attended: Nik Browne, DHI; Julie Macnamara, Job Centre Plus; Julia Weaver, Rethink; Andrew Evans, Rethink; Philippa Forsey, Willis Newson; DEF, Lynn Jones; Mary Jane Middlehurst, Family Information Service; Andy Roger, Bath Mind; Sarah Elliott, First Steps Bath; Ronnie Wright, The Care Forum.

Apologies: Helen Storey, Crossroads Care Wessex; William Chitolie, Focus Resources; Karen Stephenson, Family Information Service; Wendy Barker, Dorothy House Hospicecare; Angela Auset, Bristol Older People's Forum; Claire Silcocks, Job Centre Plus; Lisa Otter-Barry, Soundwell Music Therapy Trust; Mark Salter, Second Step; Andy Coombs, Bristol Link; Claire Hicks, Rethink; Christopher Hailstone, Bath Mind; Jay Shah, B&NES Link.

Julie Macnamara, Mental Health, Carer & Childcare Partnership Manager, Jobcentre Plus

Download Julie's presentation at:

http://www.thecareforum.org/publication_uploads/WoE%20Welfare%20Reform%20%20IB%20Reassessment%20briefing%20pack%20v3%200.pdf

Q: In terms of Work Together – how will this be supported? Will there be funding towards this?

A: There will be no funding for this. Jobcentre Plus will actively encourage customers to apply for volunteering opportunities which may increase their chances of finding paid work. We are working with Organisations across the South West Region to ensure we promote all available placements to our customers

Work clubs: Jobcentre Plus would like to work in partnership with VCOs providing jobsearch services. Not contracted and no funding available but would signpost people to VCOs providing the service.

Universal credit – white paper discussed last week. Executive summary.

- Simplification of the benefits system.
- Incorporate means tested out of work benefits with “in work” support, for example, working tax credits. The current proposal is that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will be responsible for the Universal Credit but the detail of how this will be implemented is being developed. Focusing on ensuring customers better off in work. Due for launch 2013.

Q: Work together – is there any restriction on number of hours volunteering?

A: Customers would still receive benefits provided they meet the eligibility conditions for the benefit they are claiming – eg for JSA they are available for and actively seeking work as well. There is no restriction on the number of hours. Volunteering can be taken up from day one of their claim.

Q: It would be useful to have an analysis of those on benefit by incapacity.

A: Not all this information is available – some is detailed within the presentation.

Work capability assessments: B&NES customers will have to get to Atos reassessment centre in Flowers Hill in Bristol.

Q: Will people be able to do work focussed interviews by phone?

A: Possibly- the detail of this will be made available following the national trials in Burnley and Aberdeen.

Q: What is the age limit for children in relation to whether or not someone would switch to JSA?

A: Once child is 7 will change to JSA.

Q: Will people receive expenses to attend work capability assessments?

A: Sorry I have been unable to verify the answer but I understand travelling costs are currently paid.

Q: Where does DLA fit with this?

A: Will continue for time being and doesn't appear to be included in the review of benefits as part of the Universal Credit reforms.

Q: Is there an opportunity at letters stage for individuals to say they don't want to be called on the phone?

A: The onus is on the individual to highlight that. Process includes a phone call.

Q: When DWP phones, does the number come up on the person's phone or is it number withheld?

A: The number may show as withheld although I understand some DWP 0845 numbers will appear. I would suggest that groups must impress on people the need to answer their phone when a DWP call is due in relation to reassessments as it is in their own interest to do so.

Q: What is the 'plan B' after the 3 calls are made for example if someone has not answered any of the phone calls?

A: Will always receive information in writing. Phone calls are a back up. Whole process will be set out for people.

Q: Will there be a timescale between attending WCA and hearing result?

A: Yes – this information will be available following the trials.

Q: Is a decision based solely on WCA or other assessments made too?

A: The WCA is done on the basis of information provided by the customer on the ESA50. Customers are at liberty and should be encouraged to provide as much information about their condition as possible to enable an accurate assessment to be made. The ESA50 will be amended from April 2011 following a review of the WCA Process.

Q: How long have organisations got to get in touch with you?

A: I am hoping to run another similar event in January. If other agencies wish to attend they should contact Julie Macnamara via email.

JULIE.MACNAMARA@JOBCENTREPLUS.GSI.GOV.UK

Q: For parents and carers groups it might be useful if Julie was available in the evenings for some groups. Is this possible?

A: Julie is normally only paid to work and attend meetings between the hours of 8.30 and 18.30.

Q: At DEF – prefer "impaired" rather than "disabled". How is people's ability to work considered in relation to, for example, stamina when people have ill health? How DWP relating to those delivering in relation to recovery? Concerns in relation to this all being an exercise to massage statistics.

A: Very aware of that.

There was a general discussion around recovery and the use of the recovery model.

Q: How might this information be cascaded to those who it will affect most?

A: Advertising and media campaigns nationally. DWP hoping to provide info through TV and press. Jobcentre Plus External Relations Teams events.

Q: Can we have the journey in easy English please?

A: The journey is not for use by or to be issued to customers. The process for reassessment would be set out in the letter. If Easy English is nationally recognised then information will be available via Jobcentre Plus on request.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 24 March 2011

Evaluation

What was the most significant outcome of the event for you?

- A good understanding of the customer journey
- Better understanding. Able to inform disability workers
- Getting to grips with the forthcoming changes and how it may affect some service users
- Good update of changes
- Increased understanding of welfare reform plans
- Clearer understanding of forthcoming changes
- Really useful information that can be used for my work

Do you have any suggestions regarding topics/speakers for future meetings?

- Feedback on progress with trial areas
- Progress on recovery model
- Personal budgets

Are there any other comments you would like to make?

- Table useful for notes. Visuals too congested - shading too dark

Content	Average mark (out of 5)
Understanding of subject at start	2.1
Understanding of subject at end	3.9
Sessions	
Speakers	3.9
Other elements	3.8
Organisation	
Pre-event information	3.0
Facilitation	4.0
Organisation on day	4.0
Venue	
Access	4.1
Refreshments	4.0
Standard of room	4.0