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The collective voice for Leeds' health and care third sector

The Leeds Autism and Learning Disability Employment Task Group Meeting Notes

Wednesday 20 March 2024 via Zoom

Attendees	
Name	Organisation
Dominique Burley, Robert Stephens, Saarah Hamayun	Forum Central
Madeline Fahy	Connect in the North
Thomas Chalk	Connect in the North
Pip	Leeds Partnership Team
Molly Pearson	Future Horizons Leeds
Nick	People Matters
Amy Hirst	Learning Disability Services - LYPFT
Tracey	Aspire
Ray	Person with lived experience
Joanne Milburn	United Response
Chris Hattrell	Leeds Autism AIM
Julie Sinclair	Leeds City College
Sam Ibison	NHS Leeds & York Partnership Foundation Trust (LYPFT)
Olivia Bennett	Reed Partnership
Judy	DWP
Lauren Lewis	Leeds City Council
Nicky Lines	Pyramid/100% Digital Leeds

Anna Quinn-Martin	Leeds Mind
Imogen Day	CHANGE
Wendy Cork	Advonet Group
Phil Chan	Leeds City Council
Ann	SLATE Charity Group
Alex Toothill	Advonet Group
Jimmy Knott	Advonet Group
Kathy Fulton	Wilf Ward Family Trust
Stella Chan	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Katie Parlett	Lighthouse Futures Trust

Welcome and Updates

- Everyone introduced themselves.

Forum Central Updates

- Tenfold Awards - Now Forum Central Learning Disability Awards - Royal Mencap Seed Funding obtained. More information will be launched about when tickets will go live. There will be 100 free places for VCSE organisations and volunteers of these organisations. It will be a celebration of people's/organisations accomplishments. More information regarding voting and awards:

Date and Time: Friday 21st June 2024, 7:30pm – 12am

Location: The Marriott Hotel, 4 Trevelyan Square, Boar Ln, Leeds LS1 6ET – The Thomas Ambler Suite

Dress code: Black tie – however, we do not want anyone to feel uncomfortable! Please wear your best clothes that you feel good in!

Voting is now open! Tickets will be launched 1st May 2024.

Forum Central Learning Disability Awards - Celebrating and recognising the achievements in the learning disability sector! 100 free places for VCSE organisations and their volunteers who have a learning disability.

Awards Criteria and Guidance

The Learning Disability Awards recognise and celebrate the amazing work done in Leeds to support and improve the lives of people with learning disabilities.

The Awards were first hosted in 2013, previously in the name of Tenfold. Our name is now Forum Central.

Forum Central is now inviting nominations for the 2024 awards.

The Award categories are:

- Volunteer of the Year
- Making a Difference
- Forum Central Member of the Year
- Outstanding Contribution Award

Nominations can be made by anyone, but you must vote for a VCSE organisation or someone who volunteers for a VCSE organisation, in Leeds.

A VCSE organisation is Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Organisations or sometimes called ‘third sector’ organisations.

How to make a nomination

It’s easy to nominate – please read the Awards criteria and guidance, choose the category you are nominating for and, using no more than 500 words, explain why you think the nominee deserves to be in the running for an Award. You can make more than one nomination.

Nominations can be made using this [Google Form](#) or by scanning the QR code attached.

To ask for someone to be nominated, please email hello@forumcentral.org.uk or phone 0113 242 1321

The nomination deadline is: **24th April 2024, 12:00am**

Other Updates

- International Day of Disabled People - 911 people reached through the small grants fund as well. Report to be shared of findings from the day with wider partners. Want to share the feedback from everyone and welcome ideas for this year.
- Funding for the Employment Task Group is coming to an end so we want to thank Shaun Webster MBE and Robert Stephens for their time, brilliant work and co-chairing these meetings. We wish them the best of luck in their next steps.

Reverse Jobs Fair

- Thanks to everyone who made that day possible and for all your contributions.
- [Report linked here.](#)
- Key highlights - [presentation linked here](#)
- Leeds Disability Confident Employers - **Action for KP**: may know the link to where the contact information is, to share with Dominique.

- KP Feedback from the day: Gave jobseekers huge boost of confidence - more prepared for interview and feel confident to go in front of employers. Consider pitching it differently if it's done again - advertise to employers as giving an opportunity for young people to experience talking to employers, rather than pressure of having to have jobs available - could wear a coloured badge if they actually have vacancies. One great takeaway from the day was that it has enabled us to streamline our approach and come up with more innovative ways to display the young people's skill using technology - 3D portfolios. LIEN will now run an internal reverse jobs fair for internships in June - paved the way for this to happen.
- NL Feedback: really nice atmosphere on the day - staff on hand to reassure anyone feeling nervous - laid out very nice and good that we had a quiet room available. One frustration was potentially that employers handed out papers with QR/barcode or employment and skills had just referred people to a phone number - not very user friendly.
- Agree that signposting is not the best form of support for everyone - and if signposting then considering extra support an individual may need with that.
- DB response: understand these frustrations - acknowledging that whilst we hoped some people would find employment through the event, it was made clear that it couldn't be promised - limited time and budget - best was done with what resources we had - lack of employers.

Being Employed Leeds - Madeleine Fahy

- Being Employed Leeds website hosted by Connect in the North - struggling to obtain funding as its an existing website, though we have attempted to curtail it but lack staffing time - lack of jobs on the website.
- WC comment: problem with funding - requirement for something innovative but actually this is a really useful resource which is needed as things aren't there in an accessible way.
- **Ask to group:** If any organisation with employment funding would be interested in taking over the website. Biggest outgoing cost is the maintenance of the website.
- KP suggestion: funding suggestion to connect with Madeline
- MF response: It's still worth keeping up without jobs being offered regularly, website getting hits - when jobs do come up they have to be translated into easy read and has to made accessible for them apply - needs time to do it justice

- Nick suggestion: Consider using AI to create easy read
- WC: Consider keeping the website without the jobs page - would that be more manageable
- DB suggestion: can connect with DWP
- leeds.partnershipteam@dwp.gov.uk
- Judy suggestion: Advertise volunteering opportunities where people may be able to get real-life work experience.
- PC comment: UK SPF (Shared Prosperity Fund) funding range of grants up to 50,000£ small grant schemes for organisations to enable them to develop innovative ways to support individuals into sustained employment - contact james.turner@leeds.gov.uk - if anyone would like to talk about the Community Grants Programme and potential bids
- NP comment: suggestion for writing a bid for someone with a learning disability working with Connect in the North to train other people with learning disabilities on how to use the website.
- Any suggestions email Madeline:

Review of Action Tracker

[Employment Task Group Employment Services Survey July 2023 data](#)
[Employment Task Group Action List](#)

Action for all: Review actions before next Employment Task Group meeting - update table with employment support they offer. This will be on the Forum Central website.

Member Updates and Any Other Business

- Sarah Cockburn (Pyramid) Developing You Course Tuesday 7 May 2024 10:30 - 1:30 - helping people with learning disabilities move closer to the workplace.
- Phil Chan Launch of Sensory Inclusive Supermarkets: <https://research.reading.ac.uk/autism/launch-of-sensory-inclusive-supermarkets-a-practical-guide-to-make-supermarkets-more-inclusive-for-autistic-people/>
- Stella Chan, Enterprise Coordinator - West Yorkshire Combined Authority - Inclusive Futures event, students in year 10/11 having the opportunity to talk to employers, become confident in their own skills, experience of a workplace environment and get ideas for pathways to work once they leave school.

Action for all: an ask to the group if anyone has any businesses/employers that they think might be appropriate, that would like to come or would like more information my contact details are below.

To share with networks:

We're looking for employers such as yourself to join us on 8 May at the St George's Centre in Leeds, to meet with young, neurodivergent talent and **discover ways to improve equality, inclusivity and diversity within their workforce.**

What to expect on the day

Inclusivity awareness workshops, led by inclusion and disability consultants
Speak directly to neurodivergent young people and get to know their skills and attributes and what they could bring to your business.

We believe every young person should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks. Students with special educational needs are no exception. Businesses who take part must be interested in offering experiences of the workplace to students in the future.

If you'd like to find out more and express an interest in joining us, please contact Stella Chan - Stella.Chan@westyorks-ca.gov.uk or

visit: futuregoals.co.uk/inclusive-futures

For case studies and guides to working with young neurodivergent people, please visit: futuregoals.co.uk/inclusive-employment

- KP - Trailing supported internships for young people with SEND but they don't have EHCP - anyone working with young people around 18-19 age group contact Katie - employer sites are ready to go, pilot scheme as a non - EHCP pathway that the government are trialling - 16 young people with a focus on care leavers but open to any applications. Ask Katie for any more information.
- Tracy : Tips for interview techniques to better support people - Different interview questions for different positions - questions that lead to conversation which they fed back, have put them at ease and prepared them for further interview. Also removing eye-contact to make individuals feel comfortable - share learning from good, inclusive interview techniques and anyone can add and feed into this.
- AH comment: work in a similar way designing questions based on the job specification - also trying to work towards having one panel to include people with lived experience and appointed managers in the same room - good discussions coming from this structure.

- WC comment: Consideration that more prep is needed beforehand and after and support with scoring on a panel with individuals with lived experience.
- **Action for AH:** Share guide for staff with the group once developed.
- WC lottery funding: Self-advocacy and employment running self-advocacy workshops to know your rights in employment - how to put your adjustments and needs forward and resources to put them forward more easily. Peer support groups for later on - support with keeping employment - 3 year project. Positions coming up for people with learning disabilities.

Any questions email Wendy: Wendy.Cork@advonet.org.uk

- PC update: refresh the Leeds Autism Strategy - more action-focused and assess what the priorities are for autistic people - sharing experiences of autistic people and sharing the work of this group. Discussion around what kind of outcomes we can achieve with this group and how people can get involved to feedback on this strategy.
- WC: review whether this group is useful for the aims of the group.
- DB: In terms of carrying out a more in-depth review - we are not funded for that, this was to connect people - a question for the partnership boards - what's the plan to address these things. A survey can be put together to gather general feedback.
- NP update: Halo Hamara - 18 months a new centre will be built in Beeston for people with learning disabilities - jobs will also be available for individuals with learning disabilities.
- Trying to recruit for NVQ Course Level 2 in Food Hygiene at Cafe Leap - free for people with Learning Disabilities - trying to reach a more ethnically diverse group of people.

Next meeting date, thanks and close

Next meeting: Thursday 27th June 2024, 1pm - 3pm