

The Advonet Group

Providing Independent Advocacy

**Leeds
Advocacy
Network**



Empowering Our Communities Through Self-Advocacy: Notes from Coproduction Workshops

Wednesday 28th October 2020

Group One: Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Migrants and People from BME Communities

The group viewed the toolkits and resources as very useful. The meeting and phone planners were viewed as good guides for people. The following suggestions were made:

- **Toolkits** - Planners look like forms to fill in and may put some people off who may already be struggling with their issue. It felt that there was too much information on one side of the A4 page.
Perhaps think about spreading it over two pages and give examples for each section. It would also be useful to add a brief note or tips about the form at the top e.g. user to fill in the areas relevant to them so they don't feel they have to fill the whole planner.
- **Complaints flowchart** - The complaints flowchart shows clear steps to making a complaint and helps to understand the process as this is what people often struggle with. People also struggle with knowing who to address the complaint to.
Adding a brief explanation of how to obtain the contact details of who the complaint should be addressed to would be useful.
- **Fact Sheets** - Found these very useful as it prevents people from stressing over searching for the right information for their issues, or people may not be aware of supporting organisations. They may not have access to technology or simply are unable to use it. It was noted that all the fact sheets were not consistent as some had information and contact details of the organisations and others just stated contact details.
It was also suggested that other organisations may have their own fact sheets and to include links on The Advonet Group's fact sheets; also to compare the fact sheet of the organisation for consistency in information on The Advonet Group's fact sheets.

Barriers highlighted were:

- Language Barriers
- Access to technology
- Physical inclusion

Suggestions:

- Toolkits and resources in different languages
- Toolkits and resources in audio form and languages
- Production of demo videos to demonstrate the use of self-advocacy resources
- Dummy samples of completed toolkit components for different scenarios

Group Two: People with Learning Disabilities

Self-Advocacy resources:

- The resources should be in Easy Read.
- Less writing, bigger words, larger boxes and images/symbols. It's ok if it is double sided or is printed on bigger paper. The planners could also be more colourful.
- Could include a question about next steps.
- I might need support to use the phone call and meeting planner. It would be harder on my own.
- In meetings people talk too fast and don't explain things properly. Could these planners include some meeting 'rules' or communication guidance which could be sent out before the meeting.
- We discussed about whether people would use this on the computer or prefer a paper version. People had different preferences.
- Someone suggested having a pack/booklet sent out with a DVD like the Valuing People information.
- The toolkit could have some demo videos on how to use it.
- It would be useful to have versions with different background colours like blue and yellow to make them easier to read.

Self-advocacy groups and training

Self-advocacy could help me to be more confident and happy

- It could work as a prompt to talk through things with my support worker before a call or meeting
- Sometimes it is hard to talk
- I need some support to go to a meeting
- Sometimes, people don't know where I'm coming from

Peer Advocacy

- Peer Advocacy would be good as it means I could have someone with me
- Peer Advocacy could help to build confidence
- When I am upset it is good to talk to someone who understands
- Being in a group makes me happy and I can make friends
- Being part of a self-advocacy group (Leep1) means I have more experience. I can speak up for myself and people with learning disabilities and do presentations
- We all agreed we would need more time to look at the toolkit and to give feedback

Group Three: People with Mental Health Difficulties and Other Communities

Self-Advocacy Resources:

- “I am 100% sure it will be useful so for clients who are often chaotic and have lots of services involved and are not as confident in getting across what they want” - This is a tool that they recognised as so needed but didn't know where to access
- Need for advocacy training also in social prescribing
- User feedback said that the tool is good. Often complex bureaucracy to navigate and issues of professional dominance. Lack of awareness of rights/law means people can get disempowered
- Something in addition on rights and how services work/how to navigate may be useful
- Question was asked about how could this be used with people who cannot read and write or have low literacy? Would benefit from more accessibility and colour, less formality etc. to engage?
- Is it too long and complex for some?
- Better to have all boxes included and people can just choose to only fill some in instead of not including them, if it is clear and says that is okay at the start
- Would benefit from some guidance and/or a few lines at the start that people can use parts that will be useful and don't have to complete it all
- One participant would be happy to share/test these resources with their groups of people with learning disabilities
- Video summary possible?
- Phone call planner: Really helpful at this time, especially with greater need for more remote communication
- Discussed some space for info on communication preferences/needs (e.g. extra processing time)
- Useful for those with high levels of anxiety. Hard to explain communication needs each time to get the most out of a call. Something needed about whether the person needs support or permission to speak on behalf or with them?
- One participant was asking about how these initial resources have been co-produced
- Questions about whether the outcomes/actions bit was too servicey in wording. One participant discussed using a traffic light system to prioritise
- Paper-based and electronic versions of resources needed
- Maybe have somewhere to keep track of meetings/calls coming up?

Group Three: People with Mental Health Difficulties and Other Communities Continued

Self-advocacy workshops and training

- One participant felt it would definitely be useful – they have seen people being far too accepting of poor support
- There is a need for this sort of support for older people, but they may lack digital access and find it hard to plan and keep track of appointments etc.
- Another attendee suggested offering training in something like “active citizenship” and rights/processes, with role play practice in a safe way to empower



Actions: What we will do after receiving feedback from the Coproduction Workshops

-

