



Enter and View Report

The Learning Zone - Bradford

28th April 2015

What is Enter and View?

Healthwatch authorised representatives carry out visits to health and social care services in our district, to see how a service is being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement.

Key Findings from our visit

- The Learning Zone offers a very good range of courses, for all abilities and all interests.
- All activities are delivered in a friendly and accessible environment.
- The service works towards supporting people to develop, to become more independent and move on to other opportunities.

Details of the Enter & View visit

Date:	28 th April 2015
Authorised Representatives:	Katie Matthews, Tim Pickles, Yvonne Jardine - supported by People First Keighley and Craven
Healthwatch Staff:	Marcella Celli
Service visited:	The Learning Zone - Hft
Provider Staff:	Mel Papp and Sarah Ridings

Why did Healthwatch volunteers visit this service?

The Enter and View representatives visited The Learning Zone, a service run by Hft, to find out how it is different from a day centre. The Learning Zone is similar to a day centre but people with a learning disability can access a wide range of training courses. Service users ('People We Support') are supported to make new friends, to get involved in other activities and opportunities.

What did we want to see and find out?

This visit was carried out to:

- Look at the reception area, class rooms and other areas where the service is delivered
- Talk to staff about the service, find out what courses they provide and how they support people to learn and build new skills
- Listen to people who use the service to find out what they like about the service and what could be better.

How was the visit carried out?

We were met by Sarah and Mel, two of the managers. We also met Claire, a service user, who has been attending the service for a long time, when it was still run as a local authority day centre. We then went into two classes and heard from the groups about their experiences. At 3pm when the lessons ended, we stayed behind to talk to any service users who were happy to share a bit more about their experiences or wanted to do it in a private space.

What is The Learning Zone?

The Learning Zone is a day service for adults with learning disabilities run by Hft. This large and lively centre offers a range of different courses to suit all interests. Some of their courses are accredited. The centre aims to offer a wide and changing timetable. Tutors deliver the courses but Health Care Workers and Support Workers enable the learners to get the most out of the courses whatever their level of ability. The learners choose yearly which courses they want to attend. Just as important as the opportunity to experience or learn new things is the chance to meet a wide variety of people and make new friends.

A wide choice of courses is offered to service users:

- Dancing
- Cooking
- Pamper zone
- Archaeology
- Computer courses
- Arts and crafts
- Photography
- Sports leadership
- Horticulture
- Textile
- Jewellery
- Train the Trainer (to be on interview panels)
- Beauty and pampering
- Relationships and confidence



What did we think about the environment?

The external of the building is blended with the rest of the nearby buildings. We felt that the building didn't stand out as a facility for adults with a learning disability and so it would reduce the risk of a negative reception or welcome from the general public.

The reception area was bright and airy with good natural lighting, this gave a welcoming atmosphere. It was also spacious with enough room for wheelchair users. The reception was manned by a service user and a few information leaflets were on the desk. Service users' art work was exhibited which was encouraging and psychologically sends out a positive message to service users that they are appreciated.



The classrooms were a generous size. However if additional wheelchair users were to visit then there might not be enough room to move around.

We thought the sport hall was not a great teaching area. The sound was echoing and would be challenging for someone with a hearing impairment.

There are no written door signs but all rooms are colour coded. For some people with learning disabilities this might be easier than reading a sign.

The building is accessible and it has ample parking for the mini buses picking up and dropping off. There are two bathrooms with hoisting facilities.

We thought that there was limited material on display. We didn't see any information for staff on what to do if there is a safeguarding concern. We were later told all staff have completed safeguarding training and have access to a computer for appropriate documentation. All have been given an information card which informs them of the quick guide to safeguarding adult procedure which outlines the responsibility for individuals.

What did we learn from staff?

- The Learning Zone has a total 179 people on the register, with 1 or 2 new people join on average every month. People attend 1 or 2 days a week depending on their needs.
- There are 15 members of staff, plus tutors, volunteers and service users' personal assistants.
- Courses tend to last 1 academic year (September - June). During the summer and other school holidays The Learning Zone offers other activities.
- Service users are often referred by social workers. People can also refer themselves as long as they have been assessed for a service with Hft. Within Hft there is a team called New Choices Team who allocate service users to most appropriate Hft services or signpost them to other services.
- The centre is linked with Bradford College, Shipley College, Co2 Training, WEA, Leeds City College. Tutors deliver courses with support from the Learning Zone staff. Care and personal assistance is provided by the Learning Zone staff or by personal care assistants (1-1, 2 workers)
- Transport to the centre is provided for some service users through Passenger Transport Service. Some people are able to use public transport while others get a lift by their families who might have mobility cars.
- Training for staff include infection control, moving and handling, food hygiene, medication administration, first aid, health and safety, peg training, spoon feeding, safeguarding, equality and diversity, deaf awareness. A DVD on Hate Crime has been produced by service users at The Learning Zone which all staff have seen. Service users deliver this training to other organisations through the Train the Trainer course. Staff are trained at NVQ level 2 and up.
- Service users bring their own lunch. Facilities are available to warm up their lunch with support if required. As of September The Learning Zone will open the kitchen and run a canteen in partnership with Shipley College. The kitchen service will be delivered by mainstream students and service users from The Learning Zone.
- The only contribution that service users make is towards the ingredients used during the catering courses.
- Service users are involved through the Speak Out Group where 2 reps from The Learning Zone feedback to Hft
- Other Hft services include Wakefield Road based in the building, work activities, E4 printing services, Carlisle Crafts.

What did we hear from service users?

Some of us met the Relationship Group, run by Mark independent tutor and another member of staff. On that day, there were about 13 service users in the class, of which 2 in a wheelchair. The room wasn't huge but it seems everybody had enough space around tables. On this course they discuss bullying, intimate relationships, discrimination and what makes us angry.

We also met with another group, from the Healthy Living class, which was in the sports hall. We noticed that some participants seemed to be very loud and had no problem in having their voice heard. Others were much quieter and we wondered how are the less vocal members are included and not left out. When we asked the management we learned that staff who know the individuals well support them if they seem to struggle to take part.

These are some of the things we heard from service users on the day we visited.



What do you like about the Learning Zone?

"I come because my friends are here."

"I like coming on a Monday, this is my best day."

"The staff are nice teachers, they teach us learning."

"It's peaceful here, your mum can't get you and tell you what to do."

"When you come here, you meet new people."

"Stopping getting bored."

"Meet friends and go bowling and to cinema."

"I would like to get a job, anything."

"Meeting new people who you haven't met before."

"Learn to speak up - be more independent and assertive, being able to speak up at home and with other people too."



Who pays for you to come here?

"We pay a contribution to our cooking class, £4. This is cheaper than buying it at the shop"

"The government pays for our courses"

"Hft pays"



What would you do if something happened that you didn't like?

"I would tell my mum and dad or managers."

"I feel safe in the building."

"Staff would help me to change course if I didn't like it."

"If I didn't like it I would stay at home."

"If I wasn't happy I would tell Amy or Sharon."

"If I was scared of another service user I wouldn't know what to do."



Case Studies

Service user A (Female, White British)

This lady has been coming here for a year. She thinks some rooms are large, brilliant, some are a bit small. She is a wheelchair user. She would like to attend IT and sewing classes which are full at the moment. The confidence course has been good. "I would like longer courses. Some people mess about, they are loud but the course on self-confidence is important."

She thinks staff members are nice: "If there is something I don't like, I go to Amy. I feel I am treated with respect"

"One thing I like best is the Relationship course: tutors are friendly, you can talk about feelings. I like courses to be challenging.

"The Social worker referred me to this centre. I am entitled only one day unfortunately, I would like to be able to come more.

"My support worker/personal assistant brings me here."

Service user B (Male, White British)

"I can now use the microwave by myself at lunchtime. Staff used to do it for me, I was able to say that I could do it by myself."

Service user C (Female, South Asian)

This lady likes coming here 3 days a week, she has been coming since August 2014:

"It's a nice place, it's nice talking to people, I like the teachers."

She volunteers at reception, answers the phone:

"If you call on a Wednesday, it might be me answering the phone."

Conclusion

We would like to thank all staff and service users at the centre for the warm welcome given to us and to the Healthwatch and People First staff.

After talking to staff and service users, we felt that one of the main differences is that service users are here by choice, before it was more a choice made by the local authority.

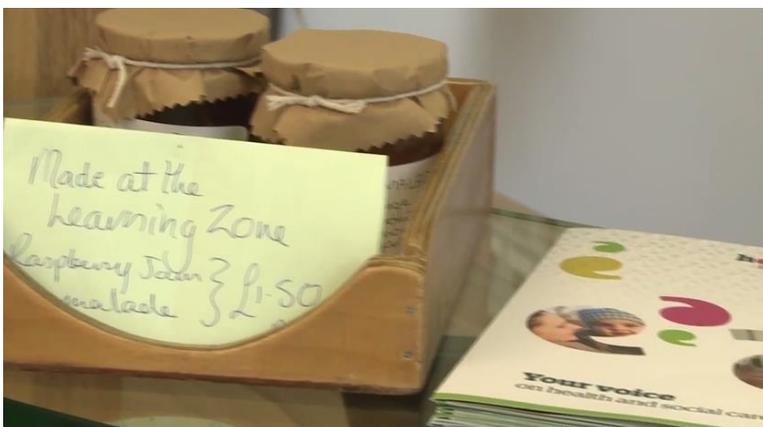
We feel that this service is a shift from the usual day centre to a proper “learning environment”. This September there will be over 40 new courses starting which service users have asked for.

We were advised that people have the option to move on to somewhere else. We think that this might not always be possible due to limited service provision in the area.

We found out that The Learning Zone are trying to deliver a different service which promotes independence and self development. As part of this, The Learning Zone are supporting service users to enter some form of employment or move on to other opportunities following the learning environment. Service users as part of their review have the opportunity to look at other opportunities across the network. Some service users can access the Off to Work Course access employment of 16 hours or more as part of their outcome.

The feedback from service users was extremely positive and each of them had something good to say about their personal experience. They felt they have learned many different things and have access to many courses. They all commented on their friendships within The Learning Zone.

With some minor adjustments to the sound issues, accessible information and links to further services, we think that the concept of **The Learning Zone** is a good shift from the conventional day centre and we would like to see more of this kind of services in our district.



Enter and View representatives' recommendations

- Environment - we would recommend some minor improvements to the acoustic in some of the bigger rooms. Maybe have smaller classes or do some kind of sound proofing?
- Information - we think more information on other activities and opportunities outside the Learning Zone could be available to service users. Easy Read and big posters on display boards might be helpful.
- Support - we acknowledge that one-to-one assessment sessions with service users are provided and we encourage the service to continue to offer them as we feel they are very important to help people develop and move on.
- Partnership working - we praise Hft for working with other services to offer more opportunities to service users to move on and we hope they will continue to do so.
- We would like to see commissioners working with providers to develop more opportunities for training, volunteering and employment across the district.



Katie Matthews, Tim Pickles, Yvonne Jardine

20th July 2015

For more information about this visit and Healthwatch Bradford and District Enter and View activities please contact call 01535 665258, email info@healthwatchbradford.co.uk or go to www.healthwatchbradford.co.uk

healthwatch
Bradford and District

More about Enter and View

- Members of the public volunteer to become authorised representatives, carrying out visits on behalf of Healthwatch. They receive training to deal with sensitive situations and confidential information, and are checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service
- Healthwatch authorised representatives carry out visits to health and social care services in our district, to see how a service is being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement.
- Visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service, but they can also happen when services have a good reputation - so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well.
- Any publicly funded service can be visited like care homes, hospitals, GPs and dentists.

Disclaimer

- Our report relates to a specific visit to the service at a particular point in time, and is not representative of all service users, only those who contributed. This report is written by volunteer Enter and View authorised representatives who carried out the visit on behalf of Healthwatch Bradford and District.