



Neuro Partners Governance Stakeholder Panel Meeting, North East Wednesday 25th January 2012

Attendees

MR – Service user
CH – Service user's family member
GB – Service user
Ian Younghusband – Spinal Injury Association
Chris Reed – Three Rivers Housing
Carol Holland - Head of Service
Jackie Moore - Public Relations Manager
Rachel Davidson - Community Services Manager
Ioulia Zygouri - Assistant Psychologist

Apologies for Absence

JD and Tom McLaren

Agenda

- Welcome new members
- Housing presentation by Three Rivers
- Company update
- Benefits update
- Quality Questionnaires – feedback
- Electing a chairperson
- Any other business

New Members

CH and Ian Younghusband were welcomed to the Governance Panel, and introductions were made around the meeting to new staff and guests.



Three Rivers Housing

Chris is the Assistant Director of Operations from Three Rivers Housing and attended the meeting to provide details of housing and services.

Jackie Moore and Rachel Davidson provided Chris with an introduction to Neuro Partners and the specialised support services offered to individuals at home, in the community, at work and in education.

Regarding housing; Neuro Partners are sometimes responsible for cleaning individual's homes and monitoring the condition of the property. Occasionally NP are involved in assisting their service users to resolve housing issues or move into new property.

Information provided by Three Rivers:

Three Rivers Housing can provide information and advice on building adaptations, housing and welfare benefits, procedures, what questions to ask, where to look and how to apply.

Three Rivers provided brief information on the application procedure, guidelines for housing, services and schemes, private tenancies, minor and major home improvements and short term solutions and adaptations when needed, eg a stairlift.

There are several housing schemes and providers. Three Rivers cover Northumberland, North Tyneside, Newcastle, South Tyneside, Co Durham, and Gateshead.

Three Rivers can offer housing to people with various issues and it is not exclusive to disabilities, e.g. may include homeless people, people being abused, mental health, etc. There is an application procedure set to access housing and it can be filled in online, or by someone else, or via the telephone. The application is assessed and graded and a priority reference is given to enable the appropriate housing to be sought. It is necessary to know people's full circumstances which may influence the priority of their application.

There are various schemes available, e.g. the home swapper scheme whereby you can use change home if conditions change, choice based lettings offered through housing associations and local authorities are designed to introduce an element of choice for people who apply for council and housing association homes.

Three Rivers can also provide information and support for benefits, and offered to assist Neuro Partners to increase their knowledge on the rights of their service users for benefits. Action: C Reed

Housing issues discussed during the meeting included;

Housing applications and re-housing can be frustrating and difficult.

May qualify for a house but you don't necessarily get it.

Many houses are unsuitable for the service users living there.

Cannot easily be re-housed if your needs change because you are not a priority.

Adaptations can be very slow.

Appropriate housing is always difficult to find, and if you need repairs or adaptations there is insufficient support and guidelines to assist you.

It is extremely difficult to reach the decision-maker or person in charge.

Disabilities are often classified by being obvious, and hidden disabilities can be neglected.

Government has not kept all promises due to lack of money.

Three Rivers offered to involve their experienced staff for benefits and housing, and possibly provide free workshops/training for Neuro Partners, their service users, family and support workers.

Action: C Reed

Chris Reed suggested that now he was more aware of the specific issues discussed during the meeting a further presentation should be organised where Three Rivers can discuss and address the housing and benefit issues in more detail.

Action: C Reed/J Moore

Neuro Partners suggested it might be an idea to meet with social services and housing officials to provide a better understanding of the issues faced by an individual with brain injury. Neuro Partners can present some free awareness training. The attendees agreed it would be a good idea and the proposals should be discussed further.

Action: J Moore/C Reed



Company Update

Carol Holland introduced herself as the new Head of Service for North East Community and described her role within Neuro Partners.

Ioulia Zygouri has recently joined the company as Assistant Psychologist and we are currently recruiting some more new support workers.

Carol Holland asked the panel if they had any issues or concerns about their support. One service user raised an issue about communication and feels that Neuro Partners should communicate better with their service users and family members about changes to services and support. Rachel Davidson asked from the members of the meeting to provide suggestions for improving communication at our next Governance Panel meeting.

Chairperson

Jackie Moore asked the panel to give consideration to electing a Chairperson at the next meeting and confirmed that it needs to be a service user or family member. None of the panel were keen to put themselves forward for election; Jackie confirmed the responsibilities and support which will be provided by Neuro Partners.

It was agreed that the remaining items from the Agenda be deferred to the next meeting when there will be more time available for discussion.

For discussion at the next meeting:

- Benefits update
- Quality Questionnaires, feedback and suggestions
- Election of a Chairperson
- Communication, suggested improvements

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 21 March 2012, at Neuro Partners head office, commencing at 11.00am.

The meeting closed at 12.30pm