

Better Access To Health

Involving Disabled People in improving NHS services



The purpose of this newsletter is to explain what NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGG&C) is doing to involve and engage disabled people in the planning and running of NHS services.

Over the past few years a number of different laws have come into force giving greater protection to the rights of disabled people. Laws like the Disability Discrimination Act and the Equalities Act are in place to ensure that public bodies pay particular attention to improving the lives of disabled people and other protected groups. Included within the legislation is a specific requirement for public bodies including NHS boards to engage with disabled people in order to understand their views and experiences and, where we can, incorporate these concerns into decisions made in respect of the planning and day to day running of healthcare buildings and services.

To help meet this requirement NHSGG&C has put in place a service user engagement process called 'Better Access to Health' or (BATH). The BATH public involvement group is made up of service users who are interested in improving the accessibility of NHS buildings and services for the benefit of all patients. Its main aims are listed overleaf.

- Assist the NHS know and understand the inequalities and discrimination faced by disabled people ensuring that due regard has been paid and the consequent decisions taken are clearly understandable and transparent
- Help the NHS engage with disabled people experiencing inequality and discrimination in respect of NHS buildings
- Help the NHS know that disabled people's experience of inequality in the built environment affects the health choices they make
- Help to remove obstacles to services and health information caused by inequality
- Help improve access to treatment and care
- Work with the NHS to review how it can use its resources differently to tackle inequality



Deborah MacMillan (left), guide dog user and member of the BATH group; Anne Taylor (centre) and Margaret Arthur (right) from Hearing Dogs for Deaf People helped develop the assistance dog policy

The BATH group meets regularly to consider key issues related to building design and policy development and members of the group have been involved in a range of projects and service improvements including:

- Discussions on the design of new hospitals including the New South Glasgow Hospitals
- Discussions about the design of carpark 1A, New South Glasgow Hospitals campus
- Equality impact assessing the carpark at the Royal Alexandra Hospital
- Developing best practice guidelines for working with Deaf, hearing impaired and Deafblind people
- Developing an Assistance Dog policy
- Designing and agreeing an access audit tool for NHS estates
- Discussions on setting up a pilot project for a hospital mobility scooter scheme

Besides the projects mentioned above the BATH group is also involved in a range of other pieces of work. If you would like to find out more or would like this newsletter in an alternative format please get in touch by emailing anne.taylor@ggc.scot.nhs.uk or by phoning 0141 201 4973.