



Disability Hate Crime Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability

Executive Summary

Running during 2013 and 2014, this project aimed to raise awareness and understanding of disability hate crime for those with learning disabilities and their carers and also aimed to equip people with the skills to respond to disability hate crime if it arose.

The Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability (SCLD) approached the Scottish Government for funding to work with four local authorities (North Lanarkshire, Inverclyde, Glasgow City and MidLothian) using a play commissioned from Q Fusion Creative Theatre Company to promote messages about disability hate crime and how to report it. A national steering group of partners coordinated the project with the play scripted and performed by Q Fusion actors alongside sessional actors from SCLD who themselves had disabilities.

Initially there were four 'facilitating effective communication' training courses at which support staff were trained to facilitate the workshop events where the play was performed to service users. Following these initial training courses, there were a number of workshops in which, as well as seeing the play, attendees could share their experiences and learn from one another and get advice from support services. An easy-read hate crime "What to Do" guide was developed by people with learning disabilities and circulated at these sessions; and Police Scotland also used them to promote third party reporting sites. After these events, four multi-agency conferences used feedback from the workshops to create area-based action plans within each local authority area and an online good practice toolkit.

Although initially support staff were trained as facilitators, and felt these new skills would benefit their day-to-day roles aiding better relationships with service users; in later courses service users were also trained as facilitators enhancing the community engagement, resilience and sustainability of the project.

Future developments might give more control of the play to community groups rather than touring with the theatre group which would allow resources to stay within communities and develop a more co-productive approach. SCLD are also collating information on good practice around Scotland in addressing disability hate crime and will be hosting it on "The keys to life" website¹ as a resource for everyone to access.

The project was runner up in the Strengthening Community Engagement and Resilience category at the 2015 Safer Communities Awards

¹ <http://keystolife.info/>

Background and Aims

The Disability Hate Crime project run by the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability (SCLD) was funded by an award of £45,850 from the Scottish Government and ran from January 2013 to April 2014.

The grant was made to enable SCLD to work with local agencies to achieve the following outputs:

- Establish a National Steering Group with a remit to oversee the project and evaluation
- Production of Easy Read Guide developed with people with learning disabilities
- Awareness raising workshops delivered through the medium of Forum Theatre
- The training of facilitators to ensure people with learning disabilities were supported to engage as fully as possible with the Forum Theatre workshops
- Local conferences to develop area based action plans
- Production of a Good Practice toolkit for agencies in how to ensure the appropriate responses to hate crime

The project intended for people with learning disabilities to be safer, more empowered, included and to have healthier lifestyles through improved physical and mental health. It also aimed to increase their self-confidence. For professionals, the project aimed to give them empathy for how people with learning disabilities are harmed in the community ensuring they take it seriously, signs to look out for; and give them the skills to respond accordingly.

Activities

Facilitator's Training Event

This one-day course was delivered by SCLD staff to people identified by each partner authority to act as table facilitators at workshops and the conferences. The objectives of the course were that delegates would be able to:

- Identify how they felt when they could not understand what was being said
- Promote effective communication
- Effectively facilitate discussions around a forum theatre performance

The morning training session utilised presentations, small and large group discussions and communication exercises.

In the afternoon, delegates watched the Forum Theatre performance and the director explained how the workshop performances would be facilitated. During the development of the script a decision was made by those with experience of harassment/hate crime to use language and wording which were more realistic, to reflect the hard hitting nature of the harassment often encountered.

Hate Crime Workshops

These half-day events consisted of the Forum Theatre performance of a play called "Who Do I Turn To?" based around a central character who was subjected to bullying and harassment, and eventually hate crime, by a variety of people including

her so-called friends until she became so frightened she took her own life (although this part of the play is implied rather than explicit). Following the performance the groups of service users were led in discussion by trained facilitators around three questions:

- Did people respect the central character's wishes?
- How could the central character have acted or behaved differently?
- Who could the central character have spoken to about how she felt?

Following a period of facilitated discussion, service users were invited to suggest alternative actions which the central character could take to keep herself safe and improve her physical and mental health and well-being.

Conferences

The Conferences were service user led events, attended by delegates with learning disabilities who had seen the theatre performance before, those seeing it for the first time, and professionals with responsibility for strategic planning.

SCLD provided Graphic Facilitation for each conference and each Local Authority kept the graphic for their own use, either for planning, training or communication.

Impact

Facilitator's Training

Delegates were asked about what they learned, and for any additional comments. Overall the comments were positive and attendees felt they had been equipped to facilitate the hate crime workshops.

Hate Crime Workshops

Delegates responded overall very positively to the workshops, with specific feedback from the areas with a formal evaluation process as follows: most delegates liked participating in the event, the play/actors and/or the information and advice given the best. Almost half of attendees said they had learnt to tell someone about what was happening to keep themselves safe; others highlighted that they had learnt to contact Police and/or their key worker, stand up for themselves and that support is available.

Conferences

Delegates responded positively with similar feedback from participants of the workshops about what they had learnt from the play about keeping themselves safe and what they liked best about the play (see above). They were also asked about what services could do to keep them safe: responses included contacting Police, giving them support/advice/protection and looking out for signs of distress.

Professionals were positive about the play, and enjoyed theatre as a medium – particularly the realistic and interactivity of the event - to get messages across.

Professionals were present to hear this feedback from service users, and at one of the conferences a panel of professionals were asked what they/their organisation could do to improve things for service users.



Feedback from the events was used in the creation of area-based action plans within each local authority area and an online good practice toolkit. An easy-read hate crime “What to Do” guide was developed by people with learning disabilities and circulated. SCLD will also be collating information on good practice around Scotland in disability hate crime and hosting it on “The keys to life” website as a resource for everyone to access.

Monitoring and Evaluation

An internal formal evaluation was carried out using pre- and post-course surveys for the training days; and interviews and feedback from discussions for the workshops was submitted by each of the four local authorities. During the delivery phase, feedback from events was taken on board by the National steering group and used to adapt and/or tailor future events.

Lessons Learnt and Sustainability

While the touring theatre production was the preferred method of delivery; financially this would be difficult to roll out across Scotland. SCLD are considering alternative approaches which give control of the play to communities thus allowing resources to stay within communities and develop a more co-productive approach. Continuing to train service users as deliverers will also contribute to the sustainability of the project and ensure communities learn from one another.

Each local authority area conducted their own evaluation which meant that collating these to evaluate the whole project was challenging. Additionally, no baseline was set for a ‘pre-project state’ so measuring the scale of the impact of the project could not be done.

SCLD will also be collating information on good practice around Scotland in disability hate crime and hosting it on “The keys to life” website as a resource for everyone to access.

Resources

- Funding:** The project costs a total of £45,850
- The Scottish Government contributed all funding. Part of the Scottish Government funding was used as a contribution to each of the four partners who contributed in-kind support to assist with the costs of running their hate crime conferences.
- Partners:** Four partners contributed in-kind support of staff time, venues and catering for events: North Lanarkshire Council, Inverclyde Council, Glasgow City Council and MidLothian Council.
- The national steering group was: Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability, North Lanarkshire Council, Inverclyde Council, Glasgow City Council, MidLothian Council, Police Scotland, Central Advocacy partners, South Lanarkshire Council and Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN). Q Fusion Creative and the actors were also involved as partners.
- (East Ayrshire Council joined the project in the later stages commissioning the programme from SCLD)

Outcomes

- National** We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger
We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others
We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society
- Justice Strategy** Tackling hate crime and sectarianism
Supporting victims and witnesses
Increasing public confidence and reducing fear of crime
Strengthening community engagement and resilience

Practice Note Information

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