



## Voice for All Advocacy Group



# Autumn Newsletter

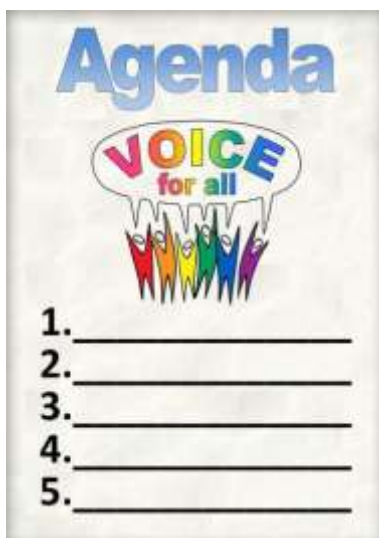
*Latest news from Voice for All*



Please find below some of Voice for All's latest news and events and more about what we have been up to recently;



- The Voice for All committee members continue to work very hard and meet every week to discuss important local, regional and national issues on behalf of everyone using the Brothers of Charity Services and beyond!



- Recent agenda items have included;
  - BOCS Welcome Days and training staff
  - Updating the Customer Surveys
  - Meeting with Lancashire Healthwatch
  - BOCS Recruitment Events
  - Questions and involvement in interviews
  - Customer Service Excellence Award
  - Ossyfest - The North West Music Festival
  - National Supported Loving Campaign
  - Preston Pride and LGBT+ events
  - Loss and Bereavement Conference
  - Pathways Associates and Blackpool Conference
  - Voice for All Film nights and Halloween Disco



Some of Voice for All's most recent work and current projects include;



- **Delivering a new 'Welcome Day' staff induction training programme for new members of staff**



We present this new training course on the first Monday of every month and it's going great! We have had some fantastic feedback and everyone seems to really enjoy it



We talk about; the Vision, Values and Ethos of the Brothers of Charity Services, the Common Core Principles of Dignity, Relationships, Citizenship, and the Qualities, Skills and Support we want and need from our support staff.



- **Having a stall at Preston Pride**  
Once again we had a fantastic day at this year's Preston Pride.



We made lots of friends and met lots of people and it was great to celebrate 'Diversity' and 'Sexuality' with so many fantastic people.  
***We were proud to be at PRIDE!***



- **Meeting and working with Healthwatch**  
It was great to meet and work with Beth Tildesley and the Healthwatch team



We talked about all the different Health Services including hospitals, doctors and dentists. We thought about what was good and what was bad about the different services. We all shared our own personal stories and experiences and Healthwatch listened.



We made lots of suggestions and recommendations to Healthwatch on how Health Services could be improved and how they could provide better services and supports for people with disabilities.



- **Lancashire Relationships Group**  
Making positive changes!



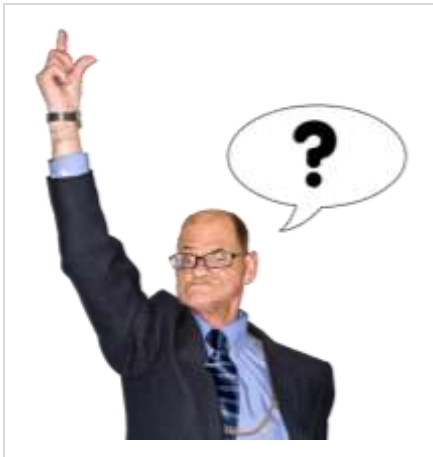
At a recent meeting we questioned why the Care Quality Commission (CQC) doesn't pay particular attention or ask specific questions relating to people's friendships and relationships when they inspect health and social care providers up and down the country.



We contacted CQC and made some recommendations on questions we felt they needed to ask on an inspection visit.

These included;

- *Does the organisation have a relationships and sexuality policy, including an easy read version?*
- *Are staff trained to support people with their personal relationships needs?*
- *Do they have examples to demonstrate positive support for relationships?*
- *Do they have information about and links with sexual health services?*



- *What do they do about people staying over for the night?*
- *What do you do to encourage and support people to develop relationships?*
- *Do you provide training for service users about relationships and sexual health or are you able to signpost to a local organisation that does so?*



We are pleased to say that the CQC listened very carefully to us and took our suggestions seriously and have put them forward for consideration.



**Fantastic news!**  
**We have recently heard that CQC have added our suggested questions to the inspection list.**

**CQC inspections up and down the country are about to change!**



We hope this will have a huge impact and make a positive difference in ensuring that good 'Love, Sex and Relationships' support and services are provided by all health and social care commissioners and providers so that relationships opportunities, information and education are available for people with a learning disability.



- **Supported Loving Campaign**

'Supported Loving' is a fantastic social media campaign to improve 'Sex and Relationships' supports and services for people with a learning disability with an aim of highlighting the importance of good support in making and maintaining relationships for people who use services.



**Did you know that only 3% of people with a learning disability live with a partner, compared to 70% of the general public!**

You can find out more about the campaign here  
<https://www.facebook.com/SupportedLoving>  
<https://twitter.com/supportedloving>  
<https://www.choicesupport.org.uk>



After hearing about the fantastic work Voice for All have been doing around Friendships, Love, Relationships and Sexuality, Becky was invited to give a presentation at the National meeting in Westminster, London.



This was a great honour and not only did Becky make lots of new contacts and friends from all corners of the UK, she made a huge impact with all the delegates regarding the importance of 'Love, Sex and Relationships' for everyone and in raising awareness of people with a learning disability having the right, choice, freedom and support to form meaningful and loving relationships of their choice.



- **Customer Service Excellence Award**



Once again the Brothers of Charity Services has been awarded the Customer Service Excellence Award, as well as achieving compliance plus in six elements!

Voice for All helped to achieve 3 elements with;

- Welcome Days – training for new staff
- Easy read 'Love, Sex and Relationships' Policy
- LGBT+ awareness, events and partnerships



- **LGBT+ events**

*(Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender or Transsexual, plus)*

*The "plus" is inclusive of other groups, such as asexual, intersex, queer, questioning, etc)*



Voice for All and the Brothers of Charity Services are proud to host a brand new initiative offering bi-monthly support group meetings to LGBT+ people with a learning disability



In October we held our second meeting with many people coming far and wide from across the North West. The meetings offer much needed support and information to people who are gay or transgender and we have welcomed guests from Lancashire Police LGBT Support Team, Lancashire LGBT Support Group and the Lancashire Sexual Health Service.



Please come along to our next meeting on **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December** from 2-4pm in the Voice for All room at Lisieux hall.

***You'd be very welcome!***



- **Loss and Bereavement Conference**



Following last year's successful conference on 'Friendships and Relationships', we helped to organise another conference for people with a learning disability but this time to help with 'Loss and Bereavement'.

**Loss and Bereavement  
Conference**  
Thursday 26 October 2017



The conference held on 26<sup>th</sup> October included various workshops, guest speakers, lunch and refreshments and several information stalls about End of Life, Funerals, Making a Will, and Bereavement Counselling



The workshops helped people to discuss and learn more about;

- The services and supports that are available to people with a learning disability
- The Stages of Grief – looking at emotions, feelings and what helps
- Planning for your own funeral



We all know that 'End of Life' will one day happen to all of us, and although we tend not to think or talk about it, it is so important that our voices, future plans and wishes are heard, respected, recorded and acted upon and that we are all best prepared.



The conference was well attended and helped many people in learning about wills and funerals and in particular, talking about and dealing with loss and bereavement. It made us think about our own futures and how we can ensure our own wishes are carried out.



- **Some of the events we have organised and been involved in recently include;**



**Annual Gala Dinner** on 14<sup>th</sup> September at the Hilton Hotel, Blackpool.  
*This helped to raise much need funds for the Annual North West Regional Advocacy Conference in Blackpool (February 2018)*



## BOCS Recruitment Event

This was held on 26<sup>th</sup> September at Chorley Market, meeting lots of members of the public and spreading the word about our services and the jobs we have on offer.



## Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Patient Advisory Group (PAG)

We continue to meet and work with Dawn at the CCG and recently attended their AGM, PAG meeting and Equality Delivery Assessment.



## Ongoing monthly film nights

- We watched Disney's Toy Story on 19<sup>th</sup> October.
- The next film night will be our Christmas Film Night on Thursday 7th December and we will be watching 'Elf'.

*Doors open at 6.30pm and film starts at 7pm.*



## Ossyfest Music Festival

This was a fantastic music festival held in Oswaldtwistle on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October for people with a learning disability and/or autism, and their families and friends.



It was a fantastic day with lots of bands on the outdoor and indoor stages, DJs, circus skills, glitter, festival hair, arts and crafts, bar, food and most importantly FUN for all the family.



We hope next year to have a 'Glastonbury' type camping weekend and music festival in Lancashire. Pathways Associates together with several advocacy groups, friends and colleagues across the North West will be getting together to plan the event which we think will be amazing!





## Halloween Disco

On 31<sup>st</sup> October we had our annual Halloween Disco at Fox Lane Sports and Social Club, Leyland. Over 80 people attended in fancy dress and it was a fantastic night with live music from Tabu, Hot Pot Supper, Bar, Raffle and Fancy Dress Competition.



Congratulations to everyone who dressed up and entered the competition and to those who won.  
**You were all winners!**  
A fantastic night was had by all



## Voice for All AGM and Party Night

On Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November we will be having our Annual General Meeting and Party Night at St Joseph's Club, Harpers Lane, Chorley



The AGM is a great night and a great opportunity for Voice for All to share and celebrate with their members, colleagues, friends and partners the fantastic work they do and their many 2017 achievements and stories of success.



Also this year 11 of the 15 current committee members have completed their 2 year service and are now up for re-election.  
**Do you know someone who would like to become a member of the Voice for All committee?**



The Annual General Meeting is an opportunity for anyone using our services to put their name forward to join the committee and to serve for the next 2 years. All nominations received will be put forward at the AGM to all members present.



In the event of more than 11 nominations received, members will vote for whom they want as their representatives and the candidates with the most votes will be duly elected.



If anyone is interested in joining the Voice for All committee and wishes to put themselves forward for election, please get in touch with Voice for All or John Whitehead before Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November.



- **Finally some new and exciting news!**



### **Award Nomination**

Voice for All and the Brothers of Charity Services have recently been nominated for the **Best Supporting Organisation Award**.

The 'Oscar' type award ceremony was held at the Hollywood Ball on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November at Preston Grasshoppers RFC.



We had been shortlisted for this award because of the fantastic support BOCS provide with Friendships and Relationships together with the fantastic work Voice for All have done in relation to 'Love, Sex and Relationships' and 'LGBT+'.



On behalf of Voice for All and the Brothers of Charity Services, Becky Gammon and John Whitehead attended the event and...

**WE WON!**

**...TWICE!**



Becky Gammon won the 'Trainers' award for her support, commitment and involvement in relationships training, groups, events and activities and for being such an amazing Friendships, Relationships and LGBT+ Champion!



From all the providers across Lancashire and the North West, the Brothers of Charity Services were announced winners of the '**Best Supporting Organisation**' award.



This was awarded for the progressive and positive approach, work, commitment and passion shown in best supporting people with friendships and relationships.



The award recognised the Brothers of Charity Services 'Sex and Relationships' Policy, the easy read 'Love, Sex and Relationships' Policy and Guidelines, the 'Y be Shy about Sex' joint training courses, and the involvement, participation and contribution to local, regional and national campaigns, groups and events relating to friendships and relationships such as the Supported Loving Campaign, Friendships and Relationships Groups, Conferences and Workshops, Preston Pride, and the new LGBT+ support group and events.



**Huge congratulations to Voice for All and the Brothers of Charity Services!**



## **BBC Radio Lancashire**

Becky and John have been invited to be guests on the John Gillmore Show on BBC Radio Lancashire at 1pm on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017



John Gillmore heard about some of the fantastic work being done by VFA and the Brothers of Charity Services and together with some friends and partners we will be talking about all the fantastic things that are happening in Lancashire in support of **Friendships, Love and Relationships** for people with a learning disability.



Don't forget to listen in and find out more about Voice for All, Meet 'n' Match Dating Agency, Y Training, LGBT events and the National Supported Loving Campaign and much more!



**As always Voice for All continues to meet and work with all our partners across Lancashire and the North West.**

***We are presently meeting and working with;***



- Chorley and South Ribble and Greater Preston CCG's (*Clinical Commissioning Groups*) and the CCG Patient Advisory Group



- Lancashire Friends and Relationships Group and associated partners



- Lancashire County Council Learning Disability Commissioners and Partnership Board



- North West Training and Development Team and Pathways Associates



- North West 'Being Safe' Group
- North West 'Living Well' Group
- North West Regional Forum
- North West National Campaigns Forum



- Caritas Care and REACT and other Lancashire advocacy groups and providers



- Meet 'N' Match Learning Disability Friendship and Dating Agency (Lancashire)



- Dr Claire Bates and the National 'Supported Loving' Campaign



- Healthwatch Lancashire



- The Brothers of Charity Services Senior Management Team



If you would like any more details or information about any of the above, please contact Voice for All or John Whitehead at Lisieux Hall



Please remember that Voice for All is **your** advocacy group and we represent and speak up on behalf of everyone using the Brothers of Charity Services in Lancashire.



If you ever need our help and support or simply want to contact Voice for All please use the Voice for All contact form (*see back of newsletter*)

*Contact forms are also available from any Voice for All committee member*



You can find out much more about Voice for All by visiting our webpage



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**Thank you and bye for now!**



Kind regards

*The Voice for All Committee Members*

A few photographs of what we've been up to, including LGBT+ events, Preston Pride, Chorley Recruitment event...



