

Valuing People Support Team Minority Ethnic Leadership Course "Valuing All People"

The Valuing People Support team worked with 9 Partnership Boards from different parts of the country to help them make things better for people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities in the areas where they live.

The teams first met in Manchester in September 2004 to share information, experiences and expertise and to plan the changes that they felt were necessary to make positive change happen in their own respective areas. The teams then met up 3 more times in November 04, March 05 and the last module was in May 05. Over this period of time some excellent support networks and contacts were established, as well as long lasting friendships. It is very important to share what teams have learned, what has been implemented so far, what has or has not worked well and that all important help and guidance for the future development of services.

A team from Darlington took part in the course. The team members were:

- [Steve Gibson](#) (Valuing People Coordinator)
- [Helen Eyres](#) (family carer)
- [Lisa Holdsworth](#) (Service Development Officer, Adult Social Services)
- [Tracy Roberts](#) (Co-ordinator, DAD Direct Payments Support Service)
- [George Cree](#) (family carer) (for the first session only)
- [Georgette Rouse](#) (Recruitment Support Worker, DAD Direct Payments Support Service) (for the last 2 sessions only)

During the training some of the things we did were:

- We found out how many people from different Black and Minority Ethnic communities live in Darlington. We got this information from the 2001 census.
- We looked at how to make sure that people from Black and Minority communities know about the services that we provide and how to get in touch with them.
- We looked at what we need to do to make the services we provide better for people with a learning disability from the different communities. This includes:
 - Making sure that staff know about different cultures and religions;
 - Making sure that we are aware of any particular dietary requirements.
 - Making sure that we provide prayer facilities;
 - Making sure that we provide interpreters.
- We are also looking at how to increase the number of people we employ from black and minority ethnic communities.

During the training we learned that some of the bigger Cities have dedicated teams to respond to and provide services for a diverse range of people from many different cultures and religions. What became very apparent was that individually you need to look at your respective authority and complete a mapping exercise. This will determine the numbers of people in your locality who require, or have a right to access the services you provide.

What this actually means for Darlington is that, due to the numbers of people from Minority Ethnic groups currently living in the Darlington area, it would not be financially viable to have a specific dedicated service for Muslim Woman or Sikh Men with a learning disability, as the numbers of people who may access the service are simply not there.

What the "Valuing All People " training gave us was the knowledge and information that we needed to move things forward in Darlington. We have just completed our Learning Disability Commissioning Strategy for 2005 to 2008 called "**Putting People First**". This document clearly sets out the actions required by the Learning Disability Service over the next 3 years. Within the document there is a specific action regarding communicating and engaging with people from minority ethnic groups in Darlington. This also includes mandatory training for all staff currently working in LD services in "**Equality and Diversity**" and "**Cultural Awareness**".

Working in Partnership.

The crucial points that the team from Darlington learned from the leadership training was the need to have a "Culturally Aware and Culturally Responsive service". We needed to engage with people from Minority Ethnic groups to consult about future service provision to ensure that we were getting it right to enable people from Minority Ethnic backgrounds with a learning disability to have the same opportunities to live a fulfilling and meaningful life as possible.



Steve Gibson
Valuing People Co-ordinator
Darlington Learning Disability Service