

Closing Thoughts.....

The story goes that not long after President John F Kennedy had committed the United States to put a man on the moon and return him safely, he visited the original Cape Canaveral in Florida to see how the project was progressing. During the visit he had to go to the toilet and while there, met a janitor. The President asked the guy "What do you do here?" The janitor replied "I'm helping put a man on the moon"*

Luckily, we are not engaged in anything like as complex or dangerous as a moon landing but we are all working in the field of Learning Disability services which is one of constant change, constant challenge and, just like the janitor at Cape Canaveral, we are all in it together.

The coming year will see major changes in the way we deliver and monitor our services. The changes that are taking place will need flexibility, skill, imagination and initiative to carry through.



The Christmas Party was held on Thursday 6 December in Selkirk at the Philiphaugh Rugby Club. The food was excellent and a great time was had by all. Many thanks to all the staff who helped organise and take part in such an enjoyable event.

.....*And finally*

We intend to publish a newsletter on a regular basis and any contributions that are relevant and would be of interest to your colleagues and others will be welcomed.

Gordon Robb - Director

*The story about the President continues when the janitor asks President Kennedy "What are you doing here, this is the Ladies bathroom!"

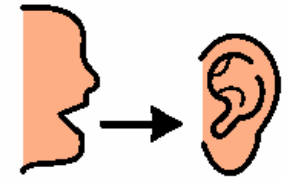
Streets Ahead →

Streets Ahead
(Borders)

January 2008

Happy New Year and welcome to another edition of the Newsletter. It has been a while since the last publication and inside, you will find information about some of the changes the Company is going through and important news about the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) registration scheme.

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In addition, there is news about the merging of Streets Ahead and Mount View in Duns which is planned to take place at the end of March this year. As well as news about what is happening in the Scottish Borders at large and throughout Scotland in general, there is information about the recent Care Commission inspections and the new grading system which is being introduced next April. The grading system will have a direct impact on current and future work we undertake and I am confident that the organisation can adapt to the new scheme and continue to demonstrate our commitment to delivering a quality service to the people we support.

Most importantly, there are successes to celebrate with a number of staff completing their SVQ courses and I know they are rightly proud of their achievements, well done to everyone who successfully completed their work.

Some of the information will already be known to some readers, others will find something new and hopefully of interest. We hope that you find this newsletter informative and of interest. Any suggestions, comments or views will be much appreciated and please do not hesitate to get in touch if you wish more information on any of the topics covered.

Many congratulations to Jayne Stirrat and Anne Graham on successfully completing their SVQ III course.

In addition, congratulations to George Kay, Helen Ramsay, Nina Armstrong, Ruth Barnes and Lynette Sneddon for achieving Level II.



Streets Ahead have recently entered into a contract with BC Consultants to provide training for more staff to achieve these National vocational qualifications. Our application to the Scottish Voluntary Sector Development Fund has been successful and we have been awarded £37,063 towards SVQ training this year.

Internal Advert

Home Support Worker - 2 Posts

We are looking for someone with initiative, energy and a willingness to “go the extra mile”. If possible this person should have some experience of supervising/directing others in their work. These are challenging posts in a time for significant change within this Service and the successful candidates will need to demonstrate their flexibility, initiative and commitment to personal and professional development.

For further information please contact Liz Ainslie or Anne Liddell.

Please contact Aileen Rafferty on (01450) 377924 or
e:mail info@streets-ahead.org.uk if you require an application form

Closing date for applications: 19 February 2008

Scottish Social Services Council

The Scottish Social Services Council is responsible for raising standards in the Scottish Social Services workforce. They are based in Dundee and have been organising the registration of all Social Workers and Child Care workers in Scotland as Phase 1 of their work. Phase 2 is starting now and will involve all our staff being registered with SSSC and having their training, experience and professional development monitored to ensure that each member of staff is aware of their responsibilities and duties towards each other and the people we support.

Every member of staff should have a copy of the SSSC Codes of Practice and these are essential reading for all staff in this sector. There are around 138,000 social service workers in Scotland providing care and support to some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

These people deserve and expect to have suitably skilled and qualified staff to deliver their service and over the next few years the SSSC will register key social services staff who will need to evidence and demonstrate agreed standards of conduct, practice, education and training.

The SVQ courses and other relevant qualifications will be essential components in evidencing competence to work in this sector and all staff will be put forward for external qualifications over the next 2 years.

If you need another copy of the Codes of Practice please get in touch with Aileen at the office.

Check out their website at www.sssc.uk.com for further information about their work and the registration process.

Joint Working with Mount View in Duns

For a number of years there have been close links with a Care Home service at Mount View in Duns. As many of you are aware, Bridget Sinclair who is the Director there, has been working closely with Streets Ahead staff on the training and development plan as well as offering support to the Management team.

At the end of March we shall be formalising this arrangement by Streets Ahead taking over that service and all the current staff there will become Streets Ahead employees. This plan has the support of both Boards of Directors, the staff group and the people who live at Mount View and their families.

It is intended that staff from both services will be able to access the training and benefit from some of the common themes and challenges highlighted in the sessions, in order to give staff from across the Services the opportunity to meet and share views and experiences.



In addition, managers from both services have been meeting together and have written a joint staff development plan for each organisation, clearly identifying aims and goals which will compliment and enhance the provision we both can offer staff and service users.

The change will effect the way that both existing Boards of Directors operate but should be a seamless transition for the people who live and work at Mount View.

Providers Forum

Streets Ahead have been active members since the Providers Forum was established. The forum consists of most of the service providers here in the Borders who meet and discuss the common challenges and risks that we manage in delivering services.

The Learning Disability Service Manager also attends and gives us feedback on the statutory services view of the on-going work. The forum has also developed working groups to explore in greater depth issues such as Collaborative Working. This is where staff from one service are working in another setting for the benefit of the service user e.g. we already support a young man to attend the Katherine Elliot Centre and Lanark Lodge in Duns. On the face of it this is a simple and straight forward arrangement but the difficulties that need to be overcome are considerable;

- Differing cultures
- Who takes responsibility?
- When do our staff get breaks?
- What happens when things go wrong?

Are all the kinds of issues that need to be addressed. The group looking at the Collaborative Working have been taking feedback from staff involved and the results will hopefully steer us towards the preparation work that will eliminate the difficulties that can occur.

Sadly, one of the driving forces behind the Forum, Rachel Sherratt, died tragically last week in a hill walking accident in very poor weather conditions. Our thoughts are with her family at this time.

Care Commission News:

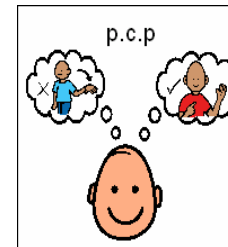
In April 2008 the Care Commission will be adopting a grading scheme as their preferred method of inspection. The main changes are:

- *More involvement from people who use a care service and their carers in assessing the quality of care*
- *Introducing a grading scheme to help the Commission report on the quality of care*
- *Improving how the Commission registers and inspects services*
- *Clearer information on quality of services*
- *Empowering People*
- *Making inspection targeted and proportionate*
- *More open and transparent*

Having a system to assess how much inspection time each service needs from the Commission will result in the Commission spending more time on services that need to improve and less time on those that are performing well. These changes will involve a more detailed system of self evaluation and it is important for all staff to be aware of these changes and to encourage and promote the people we support, and their families to become actively involved in the preparation of plans and the inspection process itself. Each service will be graded on a scale 1 to 6 (6 being excellent and 1 unsatisfactory) and work has already started on our self assessment documentation.

The information about the new grading system is available at both offices and from Home Support Workers. We have a DVD about the role of the Care Commission and it can be viewed on line at: <http://www.carecommission.com>

Person Centred Planning



A series of training sessions have taken place to engage staff with the Person Centred approach to planning and delivering support.

Some of the people we support have already been introduced to this way of identifying their needs and the response has been very positive

The plans now incorporate the necessary information for staff to provide support and care in a way that makes sense to the individual service user and incorporate text, symbols or any other means of communication needed to make it clear what the staff can be expected to do in different situations.

Each plan is written with the individual needs stated, including likes and dislikes and preferences in terms of how the support is offered.

All staff will receive instruction in PCP and every plan will eventually adopt this approach to benefit the people we support and their families.

For example, one woman we support has her communication needs written in plain and straightforward language along side symbols that she understands and uses.