

# Let's talk about restraints

The 'Safer Restraint' project is one of the first in England to assess the needs of people employing their own care and support (individual employers), their personal assistants (PAs), family carers and practitioners to develop practical and accessible information, training and support planning for safer restraint.

## Background

With the [Workforce Development Innovation Fund](#) support, Sheffield Individual Employer and PA development group developed and delivered a project, hosted by Disability Sheffield, which has 'started the conversation' locally about the use of restrictive practices, with individual employers PAs.

The Individual Employer and PA development group is made up of: Individual employers, PAs, Family Carers, Local Authority representatives (including the Learning and Development Service) and Disability Sheffield CIL. Its focus is on improving the PA workforce in the city and supporting people in receipt of direct payments to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to be an effective employer. In order to increase the reach of this work, the group worked closely with another user-led organisation (ULO), Active Independence who work in Doncaster.

## What we wanted to achieve

The project was designed to address a legitimate need in the area; practitioners, family carers, PAs and disabled people wanted safe alternatives to restraint, information about minimising restraint practices and training to use restraint safely when and where needed. This was achieved through the delivery of a number of co-produced tangible outputs:

- the evaluation of existing knowledge and training needs via three separate questionnaires (for statutory staff, individual employers and PAs)
- production of a 'Let's talk about restraints' easy-read flyer, introducing the concept of restrictive practice
- bite-size training sessions on what restrictive practice means and best practice
- a training/resource pack to support the bite-size sessions.

Working with local statutory organisations, employers and PAs, this activity would start a conversation in the city and inform local processes. To measure the effectiveness of the work an independent evaluation would be commissioned.

## What we did

To inform the development of the 'Let's talk about restraints' flyer and bite-size training sessions on restrictive practice, a public survey and consultation on existing understanding and experiences was conducted. Over 100 responses from social care and health professionals,

individual employers and PAs were collected via on-line and hard copy surveys, using Sheffield City Council contact list and contacts via Active Independence. A steering group made up of individual employers, family carers, PAs, ULO representatives and practitioners provided further feedback and encouraged participation.

Using the feedback from the survey a training package was developed and piloted, taking into account how survey respondents had said that they wanted to learn. These sessions were delivered by the Clinical Psychologist for the Sheffield Health & Social Care Foundation Trust, Sheffield City Council Joint Learning Disabilities Service and a member of Disability Sheffield. Held at two ULO venues that individual employers were familiar and comfortable with (Disability Sheffield and Active Independence).

Reflecting on what was learnt at the bite-size sessions and the learning from the initial survey the steering group commented on and developed the 'Let's talk about restraints' flyer, testing it with local stakeholders and employers.

## What we achieved

An independent evaluation was undertaken which reported that:

- individual employers welcomed the opportunity to talk to other disabled people about restraint
- For many participants it was either the first time they had received training in this area or the training represented a useful up-date: "it is about ten years since I has this training last"
- Participating made employers think about restraint and prompted some to talk confidently and positively to their family about what they wanted
- One practitioner involved in the project reported that: "They (the ULOs involved) have reached disabled people and their families in a positive way that the safeguarding team might not have...We sometimes focus on risk and harm too much – this project has taught me that prevention can be just as effective".

Over 100 people participated in the consultation and survey exercise; over 35 individuals received training via the bite-size sessions developed; the independent evaluation received 40 responses from participants; the 'Let's talk about restraint' flyer has been made available to all individual employers in Sheffield and Doncaster via Disability Sheffield and Active Independence.

## What we learnt

- It is crucial that enough time is allowed for consultation on resources and any adaption needed following those discussions
- Projects gain momentum and even initial engagement with a small number of individuals is positive; word of mouth soon grows engagement
- Strong and representative steering group, which included local statutory practitioners gave the project validity and supported 'buy-in' from wider stakeholders
- Starting without assumptions and with an open approach to discussing difficult topics benefits all parties and builds confidence.

## Next Steps

The group have been successful in securing funding from Skills for Care to develop this work further, through developing resources for individual employers, PAs, family carers and practitioners with the aim of embedding good practice with regards to restraint within workforce development, and social care. This will include the production of a toolkit, training programme and regional conference to share learning.

“ As a consequence of this work the voice of people who use services including individual employers will be included in future work in the region around this important subject area ”

## For more information please contact

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## Skills for Care Recommends

Restraint is an important issue for all of those working in adult social care. Skills for Care resources can help you ensure your staff understand restraint better.

### A Positive and Proactive Workforce



A guide to workforce development for commissioners and employers seeking to minimise the use of restrictive practices in health and social care.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/restrictivepractices](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/restrictivepractices)

### Support for Personal Assistants and Individual Employers

Support and guidance for Personal Assistants and Individual Employers including training, funding and managing risk.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Employing-your-own-care-and-support](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Employing-your-own-care-and-support)

### Workforce Development Innovation Fund

The Workforce Development Innovation Fund (WDIF) is a special funding stream within the Workforce Development Fund (WDF). It aims to fund projects that are innovative in their approach to influencing workforce development in the longer term.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/funding](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/funding)

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