

Forum for Health and Wellbeing

Training for Personal Assistants and Individual Employers

The Forum for Health and Wellbeing, along with people who need care and support and the London Borough of Newham, co-produced a programme of training for Personal Assistants (PAs), Individual Employers (IEs), and other carers. The workshops were delivered to a total of 200 people over the course of 14 weeks covering topics ranging from 'Dementia Awareness' to 'Disability Equality and Rights'.

Background

The Forum for Health and Wellbeing is a voluntary sector organisation. It delivers a number of services, which include engaging people who need care and support in designing services. Through this role, the Forum has found that there are particular gaps in training for PAs and IEs. Moreover, the Forum also reports that there is a need to facilitate more engagement within and between each of these groups.

What we wanted to achieve

The project aimed to develop and deliver a programme of user-led training workshops to a mixture of carers, people who need care and

support (including those who are IEs), PAs and potential PAs. Through the delivery of these activities, the project sought to improve the skills of these groups who are rarely able to access training specifically tailored to their needs.

By engaging these groups across Newham and Hackney the project also aimed to improve the networks between them so that they can provide each other with peer support. All the training resources were co-produced with people who need care and support services, and they are a key output of the work, available for use in other areas.

What we did

The first step was to appoint leads for producing and delivering the training. Two people who need care and support services who had links with the Forum were asked to take part. They agreed and - in consultation with colleagues from Newham Council, the Forum, and a range of other local disability groups - they produced a 14 week programme of training which covered a wide range of topics.

“ I learned so much from attending... I hadn't experienced anything like it before... It was a bit of an experiment. We gathered strength and momentum as we went along ”

Participant

Topics included food hygiene, medication management and Assisting & Moving – The importance of good back care (which was an accredited course); and more knowledge-based topics such as disability, equality & rights and dementia awareness. Most of the courses were delivered at no cost by staff from Newham Council with expertise in each topic area although each session was chaired by one of the co-designers of the programme.

What we achieved

There were a total of 200 attendances at the training across the 14 weeks involving 120 individual attendees. Data collected by the project team at the end of each session suggested that they were well received: 98% of those who responded to the post-training survey said they liked the session while 96% said they found it useful.

The project team noted that the training succeeded in engaging with people who had previously had little training of this sort. They also reported that several of the training sessions were closely related to the skills required in the workplace. Other sessions were thought to have equipped attendees with new knowledge or awareness of key employment issues such as employment law for self-employed people.

The project was also able to bring together a mixture of informal carers, PAs, and IEs who would otherwise rarely get a chance to train together. Stakeholders reported that this had benefit for the awareness that each group has for the others, and could potentially facilitate future employment opportunities.

The project also co-produced a set of training resources which could – project stakeholders agreed – be scaled up and used more widely. In addition there was a great deal of learning about how these sorts of training offers should be delivered to this target group in order to maximise their impact.

What we learnt

One of the key achievements of this project was to highlight that there is a demand from these groups for specialist training. There is currently little formal training delivered to these groups and

this programme has highlighted the sorts of topics of interest to these learners.

The project identified its key success factor as being the involvement of people who need care and support in the design, delivery and evaluation of the training. This meant that the content was appropriate for the people attending the training. The Forum was also able to draw on its networks to ensure a high level of attendance. This was shown by the fact that originally, some of the training was supposed to be delivered in two other boroughs, but in the end, most was delivered in Newham, where the Forum is based.

Local authority staff also learned through the ongoing engagement with individual employers and personal assistants that there is a demand for a Personal Assistant register in the area to facilitate employment opportunities. This learning will influence future work in this area.

“ I think this training is deliverable in other boroughs... We hope the training will be continued because we saw what the benefit could be ”

Project manager

For more information please contact

Aidan Keightley

aidan.keightley@fhwb.co.uk

Skills for Care Recommends

Skills for Care produces a range of resources aimed at people who employ their own care and support. These can help individual employers to employ personal assistants and develop their workforce.

Individual employer funding

Skills for Care can help towards the funding of training for adult social care individual employers. This application form process can help fund induction and longer term development.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/iefunding

An interactive guide for Personal Assistants

This interactive website helps personal assistants to learn more about gaining the skills they need for their role.

www.paskills.org.uk

Skills for Care
West Gate
6 Grace Street
Leeds
LS1 2RP
telephone 0113 245 1716
email info@skillsforcare.org.uk
web www.skillsforcare.org.uk

[@skillsforcare](https://twitter.com/skillsforcare) 

www.facebook.com/skillsforcare 

www.youtube.com/skillsforcare 

www.linkedin.com/company/skills-for-care 