

Salford CVS Annual Conference – Note Takers Template

Justice for Disabled People: The Role of the VCSE Sector in Salford

Name of workshop	Exploitation and Abuse
Facilitator	Ella Bulbeck, Salford CVS
Panel members	Kay Fairhurst, Salford Disability Forum Barbara Bentham, Salford Unemployment and Community Resource Centre
Panel speaker notes	<p>Kay Fairhurst</p> <p>Salford Disability Forum since 2003 – covering all Salford, provide support, advocacy, and referrals. 20% of Salford’s population identifies as disabled and is probably higher. Hate crime – if people recognise that they have been discriminated against or abused – unlikely to report it.</p> <p>See handout – ‘He didn’t hit me’ – abuse and exploitation takes power away from people, happens to young, old, men, women, the little things that dig away at you.</p> <p>Barbara Bentham</p> <p>Salford Unemployed and Community Resource Centre support people around welfare rights. Statement: Claiming financial support is causing trauma for disabled people.</p> <p>Example of taxis – spending money on taxis as you’re struggling to walk – only when you come for help that support is made apparent. Going online to claim forms in itself is not easy.</p> <p>Reading of email received from a person looking for help – son had a life changing accident, left education due to ME and Mental Health – since education, only received PIP – the stress of an appointment is too much. Did not go to UC appointment.</p> <p>PIP questions probing, invasive e.g. how do you feed yourself.</p> <p>Claiming benefit: Have to have 8-12 points to claim disability benefit in ‘book’.</p> <p>Telephone or face to face medical appointment ‘north west’ travel, with a medical assessor who may not be a doctor, mental health specialist etc.</p> <p>Decision letters ‘brown envelopes’ are daunting and often remain unopened.</p> <p>The process can take 4-5 months from application to decision.</p> <p>Quotes from submissions: (reasons why medical professionals have said no to benefits) “My client is no longer suffering from an arrested development of the brain.” “Drives.” “Reads encyclopaedias every day.”</p>

	<p>“This person can safely cook a meal as they have never called the fire brigade.”</p>
<p>Q&A</p>	<p>Q - Speakers were an eye opener, reflected on experiences of community and digital poverty. Is there a resource or a way that information and those ‘in power’ can come down and understand the reality?</p> <p>A – The system did not use to be like this, 20 years ago it was not this bad, it is a choice and deliberate attack on disabled people. Only way to change is a change of government and a change of policy. It will take a lot of lobbying and influence. One of the assessor company is in France has been outsourced by the government overseas.</p> <p>Q – Is anything happening ‘top down’? [Comment- it has happened on purpose from the government – an attack on disabled people from the government and media]</p> <p>A – Systemic changes and introductions of technology which is restricting access to support. Filling out forms and booklets takes time and energy – have to refer in order to get specialist support. If we don’t change the system, it’s going to get harder. Trained volunteers have decades of experience and fill in this form – takes them 2 hours/half day – and they’re professionals. Families also trying to support those who need it/ adult children need to apply themselves which does not work.</p>
<p>Practical actions (2-3)</p>	<p>Campaign support and involvement in lobbying for disability access and rights with financial/support.</p> <p>Groups actively networking/linking up/referring into Salford Unemployed and Community Resource Centre services.</p>

Flip chart notes:

Issues	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation • Exclusion • Poverty • Discrimination • Capacity • Invasive & dehumanising • Digital exclusion • Digital poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give opportunity • Training • Advocacy & campaign support • Sign posting • Social prescribing • Advice centre • Clear call to action

What have you learnt today?

- Benefits system for disable people has to be changed
- The system excluding disability

What are the takeaways?

- Instant support should be available for disabled people through applications and services

