



ARC NI supports people with a learning disability to carry out roving reports in the community. This is part of the role carried out by ARC NI's 'Telling It Like It Is' groups, part funded by the BHSCT & SEHSCT.



IMPROVING DAY OPPORTUNITIES

Make A Wish



Roving Reporters Brenda, Alex, Danny and Philip interview everyone involved with the Appreciative Inquiry Review on Day Opportunities in the Belfast Trust

Belfast TILII were asked by Mairead Mitchell Co-Director Learning Disability Services Belfast Trust, to join the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) forum to help with a review of Day Opportunities in the Belfast Trust. A lot of TILII members attend day centres and this was an issue close to all their hearts and they wanted to help to improve the service to make it better for everyone. TILII thought it would be a great idea to complete a roving report to tell everyone about all the great work that is being done.

Maire Gratton provided a training course on Appreciative Inquiry and Louise, the TILII Coordinator and TILII member Alex, went along so they could learn all about it. Appreciative Inquiry is about leading with the positive, finding out what is working, looking at people's wishes and dreams and designing the service based on these facts. Armed with this information Alex went back to the TILII group to explain all about it. TILII really liked the idea of finding out what people's wishes were for their day centres and thought how great it would be to have a magic wand.

Now it was time for everyone to join in the group and there were lots of people on the AI forum from staff, parents, carers to TILII members. Mairead Mitchell was at the helm and her co-chair was Brenda Aaroy who cares for her sister Orla, who also attends one of the day centres.

Everyone was working hard and the group met on a regular basis to plan the way forward. TILII worked with the AI Forum to help design questionnaires so we could start to collect everyone's ideas. We started by running lots of focus groups to give staff a chance to talk about the centres they worked in and all the positive things that happen there. Once this was complete, we all turned our attention to the carers, so they could attend focus groups and complete questionnaire's to make sure their views were heard. After all they support their loved ones twenty-four seven, so it was only right they got the chance to have their ideas heard and their views would be instrumental in making the centres a better place for their loved ones to go.

Now it was time for the most important people and of course you all know by now who they are – people who use the services!!!!

The AI forum had to work hard and think about how we could make sure everyone's ideas were heard. Some people need support to communicate in different ways, so we needed to make sure everyone's individual communication needs were being met. Suzanne and her colleagues, who are speech therapists, worked with TILII to make the questionnaires in an easy read format. We also decided to use 'Talking Mats' so Martina, one of the speech therapists, came to show TILII members how to use them properly to make sure our peers got their individual views and ideas heard.

At the end of the report are some pictures of the day centres we visited. We designed and delivered a presentation explaining to our peers what the AI Forum was doing and how important it was for them to have their ideas heard. We helped some of our peers to fill in questionnaires and supported them, along with the speech therapists and day centre staff, to use the talking mats to make sure we got each individual's opinion. 292 service users took part and told us what they wanted to make their day centres even better, from more lighting, wider doorways, swimming pools, football pitches, beauty salons, Wi-Fi, iPads, computers, mobile phones, Hugo Duncan and Elvis Presley!

We have already started to see changes being made which is fantastic news. TILII are pleased to say iPad and interactive white boards have already been purchased. WIFI is being put into all centres as we speak, and the websites for each of the day centres are being personalised with pictures and videos to make them accessible to everyone. There are other improvements that will be ongoing or awaiting funding. We have set Mairead Mitchell and Brenda Aaroy with the task of getting Elvis Presley in all of the centres, good luck with that one and in the words of Elvis 'thank you very much!'.

TILII roving reporters interviewed some of the people who have been instrumental in this excellent project and here are some snippets of their hopes and dreams:

Maire Grattan who trained us all in appreciative inquiry method said "When people know that what they share with you is going to lead to actions and positive change, wonderful things happen. People then start to feel excited about the future, and there is nothing more contagious than a sense of excitement! People are already seeing the results and the Wi-Fi is just the beginning! It's powerful to build on everyone's pride about work in the Day Centres to move to making them world class in the future. This isn't just a dream but a real aim and that's a great one".

Frank Toner, carer for his sister who attends one of the day centres explained why he got involved. He believes 'equality, human rights and just downright decency should be accorded to all. Overcoming inequities and unfairness, even if they are well intentioned or inadvertent, must be overcome, and a new environment of participative equality established'.

Lorraine Owens, carer, stated 'I hope by the end of this project the Trust will put in place a permanent process for the co-design of all services relating to Learning Disability. I hope that there will be no reduction in the provision of day services going forward but rather that there will be an expansion of the day opportunities provided by the Trust to enable adults with a learning disability to lead more meaningful lives'.

Aisling Curran, Belfast Trust Service Manager Learning Disability, said 'I don't see an end to this project as I feel that this way of working has been so useful. We want it across the whole learning disability service. One of my specific goals was that we get Wi-Fi into all of our day centres and I hope this will be in place by the end of the summer. I also hope that we will have a very clear plan for what our day centres should be doing and that all of our service users, carers and staff will feel both proud of and part of it'.

Neil O'Hagan Suffolk Day Centre Manager said 'I see things are changing right now as it is already working on the ground for the future. Any new buildings that may be built will have most of the ideas from everyone involved. We will have fully inclusive types of environments that will enhance service users lives and create wonderful learning experiences to provide support for all who attend and work in these centres'.

Brenda Aaroy, carer and co-chair of the AI Forum, felt 'Our day centres are great places with wonderful people and I would love to see more people knowing about the great things going on in our centres. Communication between our centres, within the Belfast Trust and out to our communities is something we can also do better, so we have plenty to work on'.

Camilla Carson, Belfast Trust Day Opportunities Manager commented that "This project is just the beginning of a journey that we will all make together to continue to develop our day services. It is an exciting time as this project has certainly generated a "buzz" across learning disability services throughout the City".

Mairead Mitchell, Co-Director Learning Disability Services Belfast Trust "Our Learning Disability Day Service Forum was a journey that service users, parents/carers and staff took together to co-design Day Services for the future. This has resulted in shared values, shared vision and shared experiences across Learning Disability Day services throughout Belfast. As a result, our service users, carers and staff are motivated and re-energised to move forward in shaping future services. the Belfast Trust is fully committed to co-production and co-design work that we have already done and to further extend this within Learning Disability Day Services".

Because everyone had worked so hard we had a celebration on the 29th of June at the Innovation Factory. TILII completed a presentation showing the work they had completed and the results that it has achieved along with our other Appreciative Inquiry Forum members.

We were lucky enough to finish with a party where everyone was thoroughly entertained by Equal Notes Choir and we were really proud as Mary, a fellow TILII Belfast member, not only completed the presentation but then took her place in the choir.

TILII have not only had a great time taking part in this project but are extremely proud that we are making a difference for ourselves and our peers by improving day centres and opportunities. TILII is all about speaking out and this project proves if you speak out and let your views and opinions be heard, you can affect change

Finally, the Belfast Trust decided to enter the work completed by TILII on the AI Project into a regional competition. The award is for 'Achievement in Co-production'. How great is that? TILII are delighted and want to say a well done to everyone from the AI Forum, and a big thank you to staff and service users from all of the centres for their hard work in helping to make this magic happen.



WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED OUR ROVING REPORT