

Appendix I:

Applying the five principles: examples

Directgov: 'disabled people' and 'caring for someone' sections

Background

- Directgov is the most comprehensive government website for the public – it includes a section for disabled people and another for carers.

Challenge

- To enable disabled people and carers to access public information and services in one place online.

Solution

- Information contained on the website is supported by films, downloadable leaflets, forms and interactive services. Information from the website is also provided on mobiles and digital television – **Principle 2.** ○
- The 'disabled people' and 'caring for someone' sections of the Directgov website contain comprehensive disability and carer information within one easily searchable site – **Principle 3.** ○
- Information is easy to access, and organised by themes such as 'disabled parents' or life events such as 'adjusting to disability'. Research is conducted to look at how users search and respond to information. Ongoing assessments are also conducted on feedback from users at events, conferences and by email. This helps ensure that information continues to be organised to maximise accessibility – **Principle 3.** ○

- The website also acts as a gateway to other sections of the Directgov website and has over 300 links to disability charities and organisations – **Principle 4.** ○
- A dedicated web-editorial team is responsible for researching, writing and reviewing information on the ‘disabled people’ and ‘caring for someone’ sections to ensure that they are accessible, topical and up-to-date – **Principle 5.** ○

Outcomes

- Year on year, the number of site visitors increase. There has been a 1,300 per cent increase in visitors between October 2004 and November 2006.
- The ‘disabled people’ and ‘caring for someone’ sections are now the fifth most visited on the Directgov site (there are 18 sections in total).
- Feedback on the range, quality and accessibility of information from users has always been, and remains, positive.
- The number of links with user-led charities and independent organisations continues to grow.

For further information go to www.direct.gov.uk/disability and www.direct.gov.uk/carers



London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

Challenge

- A best value review of services for children highlighted that information was very disparate and a need for more accessible information. Service users said that they wanted to be able to get joined-up information on services all in one place.

Solution

- An Information and Development Officer was appointed to coordinate the production of a directory of services for families of disabled children and carers and a range of service information. The post was funded by the Hammersmith and Fulham Children's Fund partnership (2002–06) which aims to support vulnerable children aged 5–13 years – **Principle 5.** ○
- The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham produced a guide for families and carers. The guide was developed with involvement from parents and carers of disabled children and representatives from the local education, health and voluntary sectors – **Principle 1.** ○
- Information was focused on the needs of the user and was organised by themes such as 'your rights', 'pre-school', 'school age' and 'leaving school' making it easy to access – **Principle 3.** ○
- The guide was made available in print (hardback booklet) and online. In both formats other services and information for disabled children, parents and carers are signposted – **Principles 2 and 4.** ○○

Outcomes

- Demand for the booklet was high and all 600 copies, printed as part of the first print run, were distributed on request.
- An updated version is planned in 2007.

Further information is available at www.lbhf.gov.uk

Surrey Adult Linked Disability Registers

Challenge

- Following the Government's white paper 'Valuing People', Surrey County Council needed to find out how many people living in their area had a learning disability to ensure that local agencies had an accurate picture of social care, health, housing, education and employment needs.

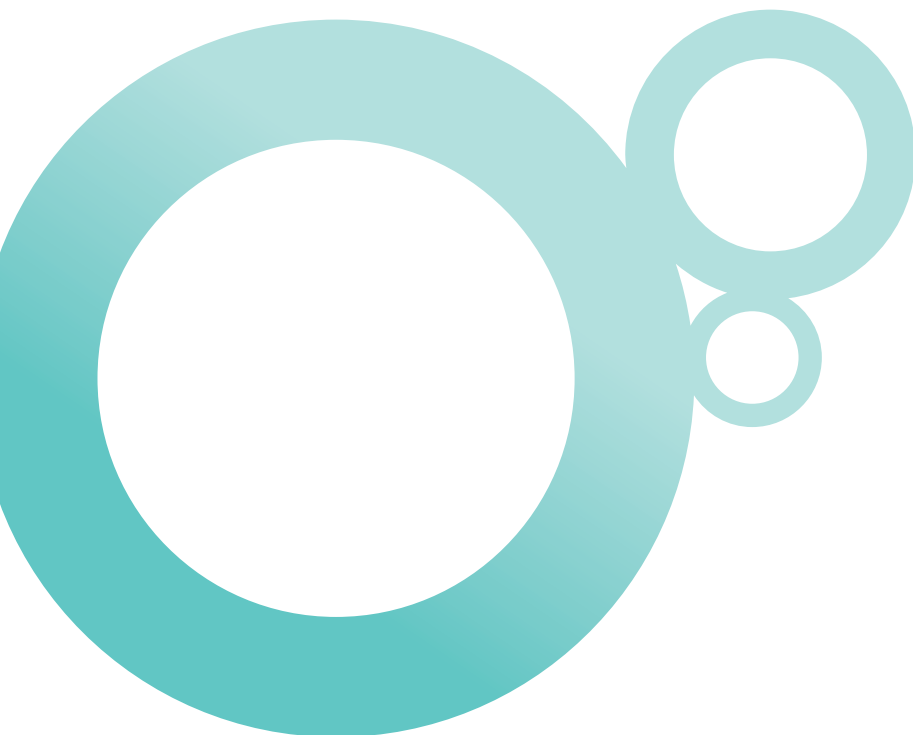
Solution

- The project engaged with service users and carried out a robust consultation with disabled people in their area to understand their needs. The consultation identified areas where there were gaps in service provision and identified that a series of registers, not just a learning disability register, was required – **Principle 1.** ○
- A series of registers for different impairment groups were set up, designed and tested by users to ensure they met their needs. Membership is voluntary and if people decide to leave or do not want to join the service it does not affect their eligibility for services – **Principles 1 and 3.** ○○
- The disability registers team provides registered local disabled people with information, focused on their needs, about services and organisations via the web, leaflets, books and CDs – **Principles 2 and 3.** ○○
- Adults with a disability who register receive a directory of support services and a registration card which makes it easier to get concessions across Surrey – **Principle 4.** ○

Outcomes

- There are over 5,000 people registered. The number of people registered has increased by 4,000 per cent between 2004 and 2006.
- A large sample of 3,000 service users' views are sought on a regular basis and the steering group (including users) continues to monitor and evaluate the service, carrying out improvements in line with good practice guidelines – **Principle 1.** ○
- The registers have provided an accurate picture to the county council's health and housing services of people's social care, health, housing, education and employment needs. This has ultimately helped these services improve their planning and provision of specialist services.

Further information is available at www.saldr.org.uk



HousingCare

Background

- Since 1985, Elderly Accommodation Council (EAC) has run a national telephone advice line delivering information and advice to around 8,000 people a year.

Challenge

- The telephone advice line was receiving a high volume of calls. With limited resources in place, EAC wanted to ensure that those users who could not get through to their advice line were able to access an alternative source of information.

Solution

- The HousingCare website was set-up to support the advice line and provide older people and their carers with an alternative source of information on housing and care. It was designed and tested by HousingCare users – **Principles 1 and 2.** ○○
- The website includes several new information databases covering topics such as sheltered and retirement housing, care homes, home improvement agencies and specialist advisory agencies. They were designed specifically to enable users to easily search for the information they need – **Principle 3.** ○
- The website supports users in making choices about their care provision – both in their own home and if they want or need to move out. There are also search facilities for individuals, advisors and providers – **Principle 3.** ○
- Information is easy to access and organised by themes such as 'Are you thinking about options for the future?' and 'Do you need answers to problems?' A 'postcode' search facility was set-up following requests by users who wanted to search for houses and services within a certain radius – **Principles 1, 3 and 4.** ○○○

- The site also hosts a Directory of Advice Services with links grouped by 'service type/problem' – **Principle 4** ○
- Users can suggest improvements to the website and provide personal feedback through the advice line. All responses are dealt with on a personal basis – **Principle 3** ○
- HousingCare will shortly be launching an 'extra care housing' website, which will focus on that subset of sheltered/retirement housing where care services are provided. There is a commitment from within the organisation to improve the way information is delivered to its users and EAC wants to ensure that it specialises in areas where there is a demand from its users – **Principles 1 and 5.** ○○

Outcomes

- Around 2,000 people a day now use the HousingCare website. This figure doubled during 2005–06 and January 2007 saw an average increase of 25 per cent.
- Users of HousingCare also include staff in other specialist advisory services, who browse the site in order to assist their customers.
- Feedback received is positive and users have described the website as 'excellent', 'invaluable' and 'extremely useful'. Several housing providers and the Scottish Executive have commissioned EAC to deliver content from HousingCare into their own websites.

Further information is available at www.HousingCare.org

Cheshire Older People's Network

Challenge

- One of Cheshire County Council's (CCC) priorities is to provide services that meet the needs of and improve the quality of life of its older citizens and carers. In order to prioritise the development and delivery of key services, CCC needed to ask older people about the support and services they need now or might need in the future.

Solution

- The Older People's Network (OPN) was set up by CCC Social Services (now CCC Community Services) to involve Cheshire's older citizens in service delivery and planning. Membership is open and free to any interested individual and the network currently works closely with a broad range of services including health, social care, the police, fire service, transport co-ordination, housing providers and local voluntary organisations – **Principle 1.** ○
- OPN is publicised through a variety of channels including CCC publications, CCC website, relevant events, conferences and workshops – **Principle 2.** ○
- Local OPN subgroups are developing and hold regular meetings to discuss and address local issues. These groups are encouraged to elect representatives on to the OPN core group who volunteer themselves to work in a more participatory way. There are currently 25 core group members, some of whom are disabled – **Principle 1.** ○
- The OPN is highly regarded by elected members and officers from both the county and borough councils. Core group members:
 - regularly engage at a strategic level with senior managers within older people's services. The 'core group' members also meet with the county council's chief executive and management board – **Principles 1 and 5;** ○○
 - form part of the editorial team for the quarterly OPN newsletter

which updates all members on the previous quarter's activities and any local or national issues that are relevant to older people –

Principle 3; ○ and

- are currently involved in working with older people's services' managers to develop an older people's information strategy. The first outcome of this work will be an information booklet aimed at those aged 50+, which will signpost readers to a wide variety of locally provided services – **Principles 3, 4 and 5.** ○○○

Outcomes

- Originally formed in 2000, OPN now has over 500 members.
- Working closely with Cheshire County Council, OPN has an influential voice in initiatives and decisions that the local authority takes, for example, OPN has:
 - challenged the county council on the cost of social care, resulting in the lowering of the social care charges that were originally proposed;
 - campaigned to improve public and community transport – OPN is currently making recommendations to improve the 'Dial-a-Ride' service;
 - campaigned for new road crossings, levelling kerb stones and pavements, drop pavements for wheelchair/scooter users. Thanks to their work, visitors to the centre of Frodsham have a new puffin crossing; and
 - been actively involved in discussions with professionals and other volunteers across Cheshire in deciding what outcomes for older people can and should be achieved as part of the local area agreement for healthier communities and older people.

Further information is available at www.Cheshire.gov.uk

Appendix 2: organisations who contributed to this document

- Cheshire County Council
- Directgov
- HousingCare
- Surrey County Council
- London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham



Appendix 3: further reading

Department for Work and Pensions, '**Review of disability estimates and definitions**', 2004 (www.dwp.gov.uk)

Office for Disability Issues, '**Improving Information for Disabled People**', 2007 (www.officefordisability.gov.uk)

Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, '**Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People**', 2005 (www.strategy.gov.uk)

Office of Communications, Media Literacy Audit: '**Report on media literacy of disabled people**', 2006 (www.ofcom.org.uk)

The majority of national voluntary organisations can provide a wide range of advice on making information accessible and their websites are a good place to start. For example, you may want to look at:

- RNIB's See it Right and Web Accessibility guidance at www.rnib.org.uk:
- Mencap's accessibility guidance at www.mencap.org.uk; and
- The United Kingdom Disabled People's Council's transcription services at www.bcodp.org.uk.

Glossary

Channels – the ways information is communicated (for example, leaflets, the internet and helplines).

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) – The Disability Discrimination Act is a Government measure intended to reduce discrimination against disabled people. For further information go to www.drc-gb.org

Disability Equality Duty (DED) – the Disability Equality Duty requires all public bodies to pay ‘due regard’ to the promotion of equality for disabled people in every area of their work. For further information go to www.drc-gb.org

Disabled people – refers to all people with any physical or mental impairment. Although recent research⁷ has found there is no single ‘gold standard’ measure of disability, the definition used in this document is consistent with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 – ‘physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on (a person’s) ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

Provider(s) – anyone who provides a service(s) for disabled people (including management and front line staff); or information about that service.

Service – any public service (including those sub-contracted), programme, scheme or benefit.

Signposting – information which points service users to other related services, or services which might be of use to them; including contact information or a description of the service.

Transitions – life events, which involve a change in circumstances or ‘life stage’ over time, such as moving from secondary education to higher education or employment; or moving from the family home to personal accommodation.

Footnotes

¹ONS Omnibus 2005

²Family Resources Survey 2002/03

³Findings are based on a review of available evidence on the accessibility of information for disabled people in the public sector. The full findings are available in: Office for Disability Issues, *Improving Information for Disabled People*, February 2007

⁴The Connexions service is aimed at all of those aged 13–19, including disabled people (www.connexions.gov.uk)

⁵Office for Disability Issues, *Improving Information for Disabled People*, 2007 www.officefordisability.gov.uk

⁶Office for Disability Issues, *Improving Information for Disabled People*, 2007 www.officefordisability.gov.uk

⁷Department for Work and Pensions, *Review of disability estimates and definition*, 2004 www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/ih2003-2004/IH128.pdf



Office for Disability Issues

HM Government

A copy of this report is also available in audio and easy read. If you would like a copy in either of these formats, please contact the Office for Disability Issues on 020 7962 8799. People with speech or hearing problems using a textphone can dial 020 7712 2332. Or you can email us at: **office-for-disability-issues@dwp.gsi.gov.uk**

You can also download the report from our website in English, Welsh or easy read.

If you would like to let us know what you think about this document please email: **office-for-disability-issues@dwp.gsi.gov.uk**

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