

Looking Forward Days – are young people ready for adult services?

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This session discussed the 'Looking Forward Day' project in order to assist with transition into adult care.

This project aims to look at a few areas such as increasing autonomy, knowledge and problem solving. Fighting stigma and the provision of social support (peer support). The team planned on using specific organised days to discuss these issues. The decision was made to hold days on the weekend or during school holidays as this could allow for better attendance.

The days are as they state a 'day' where group based workshops are held outside of the usual setting. Discussions had been held between individuals and it was felt that these days would be better situated outside of the usual clinical environment. Mention was also made as to the location of such a venue and the need for these to be quite central in order that individuals could access them via transportation links. The team managed to identify free venues thus keeping costs down. The matter of paying travelling costs was also mentioned as was a brief discussion around assistance in enabling patients attend.

Funding was sought from a number of charities including St Georges and St Evelina's. These funds were used to pay for travel, refreshments and other sundries required for the day. How these days will be funded long term was an area for concern and one mentioned by the audience.

Again the funding issue of venue hire was mentioned which brought the conversation back around to the possible use of the clinic. A benefit of this could be that the attendees could book into their clinic appointment after the session. Many of the participants who actually attended the day however expressed time away from clinic and felt that this would be more beneficial, a day to forget their problems.

One of the aims of the day was to ascertain the ideas and wishes of those attending in order to engage young people to attend future events.

The speakers reported that individuals did attend but also mentioned the use of incentives including free lunch, prizes, goody bags or outings in order to encourage attendance.

Discussion continued around possible plans for further days and the possibility of there being two sessions available.

The audience raised a number of queries in relation to such days, the speakers themselves agreeing that funding was an issue. Concerns were raised regarding where funds could be sought when the present charitable funds dry up. The speakers agreed that keeping the venue out of a hospital setting would be difficult and acknowledged that this would be a cheaper option by way of venue hire.

The audience also queried how and where such days would take place in the more rural areas of the country where numbers were very low and transportation links limited. The matter of seeking assistance transporting patients to and from venues was mentioned. The speakers recognised the barriers already in existence and sought advice and thoughts from the audience with regard to the future and how to sustain the Looking Forward Days long term.