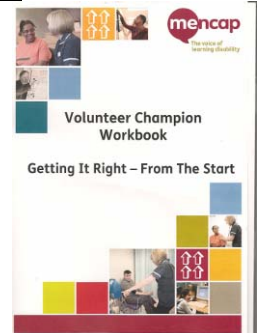


# Getting It Right - From The Start

## Project newsletter

**This is our first newsletter for everyone who is involved with and interested in the Getting It Right – From The Start project. The newsletter is a way to keep everyone informed about progress in the 4 project pilot areas. We plan to produce this newsletter four times a year.**



### What is Getting It Right – From The Start?

It is a Mencap health project. The project is about training volunteers so that they can advise, support and train GPs (family doctors) and their practice staff about the needs of people with a learning disability.

### What are the aims of Getting It Right - From The Start?

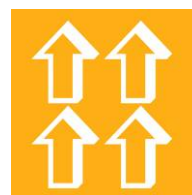
- To make sure that people with a learning disability find it easier to know about and use primary healthcare services.
- To help people with a learning disability have a better

experience when they use health services.

- To share information across England so that all primary health care services plan properly for people with a learning disability.

### Volunteer Workbooks

All signed up volunteers have now been given a workbook with information about the project and some of the activities they will be involved in. There is also information about things like the reasonable adjustments that health care services can make for people with a learning disability. Volunteers will use their workbooks to record their volunteering activities and experiences.



## Questionnaires

A big part of our project is collecting evidence about the changes that are needed for health care to be better for people with a learning disability. The questionnaires will help us to show how our project is making things better in primary health care for people with a learning disability.



We will ask the questions three times during the project so that we can find out where we are starting from and whether things are changing.

The groups to be surveyed are:

1. People with a learning disability
2. Volunteers
3. GP surgery staff
4. Clinical Commissioning Groups
5. Practices

The information we will gather from about **60 people with a learning disability** in each locality is designed to get a picture and understanding of some of the issues and problems in using health care.



The **volunteer questionnaire** is designed to help us to understand what the volunteers can contribute to the project and how we can help the volunteers to achieve their goals.



The **GP surgery staff** will be asked questions to find out what their individual knowledge is and how we can support them to make small

changes to their practice that will make big improvements for people with a learning disability.

The **Clinical Commissioning Groups** (CCG) will be asked questions that will show how the CCG is performing for people with a learning disability now. We will ask these questions again to check whether the project has helped to improve performance.

The **practices** that are participating will be asked questions that will help us to understand what their needs are and how we can help them to improve access to and experience of healthcare for people with a learning disability. The answers will also help us to provide individual advice and training or workshops for the practice staff that will be delivered by the project volunteers.

**Jocelyn Cole,**  
**Health project manager**

# Getting It Right - From The Start

## East Surrey update

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**Lucy Darlow, Locality coordinator**



**Dr Jill Rasmussen, Lead GP**



We are making good progress with **Getting It Right – From The Start** in East Surrey!

### **Our Volunteer Health Champions and Mentors**

We have a wonderful group of volunteers – 8 Champions and 9 Mentors. They are all looking forward to ‘getting started’, ‘getting it right’ and working with local GP Practices and staff.

The Champions and Mentors have met together as a group 4 times. They have taken part in an induction session and have now agreed which Champion will partner with which Mentor. Each pair will work with 2 or 3 GP surgeries, starting with a visit to the surgery when they can introduce themselves to the Practice Manager. We will then be starting to do site visits to each practice during May.



### **Thank you!**

We would all like to say a big ‘Thank You’ to the staff and the people who go to Colebrook Day Centre in Redhill. Our special thanks go to Martin and Diego and the clients on reception, who always make sure we have what we need. Being able to hold our group meetings in the centre is really helpful – Redhill is good for transport links and many of our group know Colebrook well. It is a safe place for people and we have been made very welcome.

# Getting It Right - From The Start

## East Surrey update

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### Getting In Touch With the GP surgeries

Lucy has been to visit every surgery and talked to the Practice Manager about the project. They have all been very welcoming and want to help us make the project work well. Each surgery is very different, so it is important that we all work together in a good way and everyone feels supported.

### The Project Steering Group

In the same way that it is important to 'steer' a car down the road in the right direction, the Steering Group for the project will help to 'steer' the project in the right direction! East Surrey is lucky to have some very strong people who have a lot of experience of working within learning disability services. The Steering Group meets every month. We now have two volunteer Mentors – Jen and Bernadine - on the group and in May the volunteer Champions will decide if there are two of them who would like to start coming along and how they would like to take part in the Steering Group meetings.



Bernadine



Jan

### Health Champions - Sedley

Sedley has been a volunteer with Mencap on different projects for the last 2 years.



Sedley

Stuart

This has included the Changing Places Toilet Campaign and the Disability Hate Crime Campaign. He lives in Croydon and is active in various involvement activities – which include Better Understanding Group (BUG) in Croydon, Croydon People First, Croydon Disability Forum and the Mobility Forum.

Sedley is also a member of the Croydon Learning Disability Partnership Board. He is now really pleased to be involved in this new Mencap project as a Health Champion. He says; *The whole project sounds really interesting and I am looking forward to getting started!*



# Getting It Right - From The Start

## East Surrey update

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### Health Champions - Stuart

Stuart lives in Redhill and, like Sedley, has been involved in a number of different projects connected to disabilities.

This includes the SAMS group, supported by Voiceability, promoting the Boccia sport – which is like bowls and the YMCA Boccia 2012 Event, working with Coachability on a sports leader's course and being a Young Health Champion with Reigate and Redhill YMCA on a different Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund Project.

Stuart has also worked at Colebrook Day Centre in Redhill supporting someone with more complex needs. He says; *I like to meet new people and the project group members are really getting on well together. I am looking forward to working with my mentor, Bernadine.*



### Champion and Mentor meetings

Lesley Wilson, Community Learning Disability Team Manager

Lesley Wilson is the manager of the two Community Teams for people who have a learning disability in the ESyDoc area. She is also a member of the project Steering Group.

Lesley came to the April Champion and Mentors Group meeting to meet everyone. After the meeting, Lesley said;

*It was amazing to see how supportively and professionally people worked together after such a short time. They are a great group and I really enjoyed myself!*

# Getting It Right - From The Start

## North Tyneside update

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**Locality Coordinator – Helen King**

**Dr Clare Scarlett is the Lead GP** for the project and also has a lead role for people with a learning disability in North Tyneside. She is very passionate about making sure that people with a learning disability are healthy and receive good and appropriate treatment when it's needed.

### Volunteer update

A lot of the work we have been doing since October is recruiting volunteers.

We have managed to get 7 Mentors and 5 Health Champions so far, and we are still looking for more.

If you would like to get involved in the project, please get in contact with Helen King using the information at the end of this newsletter.



One of the volunteers is a woman called Suzie Fothergill. She has been volunteering for the project since January. She is a Health Champion.

Suzie has a lot of experience in talking about her experiences of health care. She is also a Health Checker with Skills for People. She is also a valued member of the project's Steering Group.

Suzie says;

*I'm really enjoying going to meetings with professionals and talking about health because it's very important. The professionals are friendly and very good. I'm looking forward to going to talk to GPs about how to treat us when we have a health problem.*

# Getting It Right - From The Start

## North Tyneside update

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Carly Steven is another volunteer. She volunteers as a Mentor.

A Mentor's job is to support a Health Champion in their role on the project.

Carly is currently studying at university and in the future wants to become a social worker.

*Carly says; I am passionate about helping others and I'm intrigued by working with a diverse range of people. I believe that volunteering for this role will give me the ability to work alongside those trying to make a difference and I will therefore be able to help aid this change.*

*I'm really excited to meet new people and build relationships with others of diverse backgrounds, whilst learning new skills in communication and gaining confidence through the whole process of doing so.*

*Volunteering will be a major benefit to me in the future as it will give me a lot of needed experience which will aid me in my applying to do a Masters in Social Work. I believe I will gain key skills which I will use in the future due to the career path I am passionate to take.*

## Doctor's surgery involvement

In April, we will be talking to Practice Managers at GP surgeries to tell them about this project.

We will be trying to get 20 GP surgeries to work with the project and have the volunteers work with their staff (doctors, nurses, health care assistants, receptionists).

We are very hopeful that Practice Managers will want to be involved in the project. We will be able to give more of an update in the next newsletter.



# Getting It Right - From The Start

## North Tyneside update

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### Steering Group



The North Tyneside steering group has been meeting every month since January and will continue to meet to make sure that the project is doing what it's supposed to.

The group is made up of health professionals, commissioning leads and volunteers.

The group still needs to have someone to represent family carers, so if you are interested, please get in touch with Helen using the information at the end of the newsletter

### Thank You!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our volunteers for wanting to get involved with the project. We are really looking forward to working with you all.

We would also like to thank the members of the Steering Group for committing their time to help make sure the project is a success.

Finally, we would also like to thank the staff and service users of The Blue Door Project, the Community Learning Disability Team, staff at New Prospects and Skills for People for their committed support of the project.





# Getting It Right - From The Start

## Mid Devon & Exeter update

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**Dr Guy Bradley Smith, Lead GP**



**Pam Hogan, Locality coordinator**



Welcome to Getting It Right -From The Start in the South West. Over the past 6 months 20 volunteers have come forward to play an active part in this exciting project and many others have offered their support and experience to make sure we set off on the right foot. An enormous thank you to everyone.

### Devon Project Plan

Because the Devon project covers such a large rural area, the team will now divide into 5 smaller groups to prepare to work with their local surgeries.

There will be three groups of volunteers in Exeter, one covering Tiverton and Crediton and another in Okehampton.

### Volunteer update

In February we held a Mentor's Induction Day.

The 10 Mentor's present:

- learnt more about Mencap
- explored the causes, conditions and impact of learning disability
- explored changing attitudes to disability
- thought about what it means to be a volunteer mentor
- learnt more about the project in Devon



# Getting It Right - From The Start

## Mid Devon & Exeter update

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### **Mentors Induction Day – by Miriam Guard, Volunteer Mentor**

Miriam Guard, whose many contributions to the support of people with a learning disability includes being the driving force behind an accessible play park in Exeter, was at the induction day. *On 21 February we met in Exeter and enjoyed a very informative induction day.*

*In the morning we learned about Mencap and our role as volunteers within this organisation.*

*We then took part in a group activity to create a time line from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. This showed how Mencap had been involved in trying to improve conditions for people with learning disabilities over many decades but that progress had come about very slowly. However, the activity did highlight for us the progress that had been achieved over the years.*

*In the afternoon Dr Guy Bradley-Smith outlined the project to us from a GP's perspective. He explained that any suggested changes, would have to be 'reasonable adjustments' to what is already being done.*

*He highlighted the sensitivity in relationships that this project will require – on the one hand, GP's being aware of the issues affecting people with learning disability and on the other hand, realising the constraints which GP's are under, but all of us working together in a creative, respectful way to achieve beneficial outcomes.*



### **Mentors and Champions Induction Day**

In April the Mentors and Champions came together for a Champion's Induction Day.

The group took part in activities led by Sam Morris and Kate Salter of the Mencap volunteering team.

One of their biggest concerns was how this project can help to encourage doctors to really listen to patients with a learning disability and how patients can be supported to speak up for themselves.

# Getting It Right - From The Start

## Mid Devon & Exeter update

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Dr Guy Bradley Smith and Julie Wilkins, talked about the best way volunteers can work with GP surgeries.



A group of Champs in Cornwall have been working to improve health services for people with a learning disability for 3 years. Rhiannon, David and Toni travelled all the way to Devon to inspire the Champions by talking about their experiences.

## GP Surgery update

Dr Guy Bradley Smith, the lead GP with the project in Devon, and Julie Wilkins, learning disability liaison nurse in Mid Devon, spoke to Exeter and Mid Devon GPs and practice managers during March. They had a very positive response to the project.

Definite invitations have been received for the Champions to visit 16 surgeries in Exeter and Mid Devon so far. Pam will be meeting practice managers throughout May before the champions begin their visits in June.

## Steering Group update

The Devon 'Getting It Right – From The Start' steering group is chaired by Dr Guy Bradley Smith and has 9 members.

The project Champions are represented by Robert Hawken, also co-chair of the Learning Disability Partnership Board, and the project Mentors by Miriam Guard. Representatives also attend from Devon County Council, NHS Devon, family carers and the learning disability liaison team. This dedicated group has been at the heart of the project since its very beginning and provides invaluable guidance, support and hands on involvement. Thank you.

# Getting It Right - From The Start

## Northamptonshire update

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**Jo Rattray, Locality coordinator**

**Dr Tom Howseman, Lead GP**



### Our Volunteers

We have been incredibly lucky to meet up with 5 Champion Volunteers who all access the outreach day service run by Olympus Care services, in small town called Burton Latimer just outside Kettering. These Champions are keen to get involved as part of their community activities and are looking forward to getting started.

All 5 Champions have now had an induction. Kate Salter and Sam Morris from Mencap's Volunteering Team came over to meet the group and talk about Mencap and of course the project.



In this photo are the Champion Volunteers at Olympus Care Services, in Burton Latimer. Picture taken at the induction with Andy (staff) and Jo (Locality coordinator).

We currently have 9 Champions and 5 Mentors. We are still looking for Mentor volunteers, particularly around Kettering.

After the second Induction we can start to decide who will be working together. This will depend a lot on where people live.

### Getting in touch with Practices

Jo has been working with Rose and Sally who are 'Health Check Reviewer's'. Rose and Sally have been working very hard on increasing the number of people having an annual health check and improving how the checks are being done. The 30 GP practices we have shortlisted have been picked because they are near to our volunteers and also, they represent a variety of rural practices and those in towns. The next stage is a joint email from Dr Tom and Jo that will introduce the project and pave the way for this important work to begin.



# Getting It Right - From The Start

## Northamptonshire update

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### The Project Steering Group

The Steering Group has met 3 times. The Steering Group meets every other month. We try to arrange dates around important things happening with the project. Our Steering Group is a really good mix of people. We have Champions, Mentors, Parent Carer's, a Partnership Board Manager, a Strategic Health Facilitator (Liaison Nurse), LINKs, Mencap Partnership Officer and the Lead GP.

One of our Champion representatives is called Dave. Dave has been particularly helpful making suggestions for our project paperwork, such as role descriptions and the project summary. Dave has made sure that our information ensures that people can understand what the project is about and what the volunteers will be doing.

We also have Chris who is employed by Kettering General Hospital as a Learning Disability patient supporter. Chris works on the ward and makes sure that patients with a learning disability are being cared for in the best way and that they are happy and understand what is happening. Chris also makes sure that staff are using the tools that they have to help them.

I would like to say a big thank you to all of our Steering Group members for giving their precious time for the project. We really could not do it without your help.

### Publicity

The Project has been advertised in lots of different places from the University, Volunteer Bureaus and the Partnership Board. We have also had an article in the LINKs Newsletter, the One Health group joint briefing, and the GP Bulletin.

## Contact information:

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