

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Committee 23rd June 2005

Report Title Review of Dyslexia Issues

Summary A report outlining the outcomes from two dyslexia meetings held in the 2004/05 municipal year.

For further information please contact:

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No.

Background papers Agenda and Notes from the Employment and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Meetings (19.10.04 and 16.03.05)

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

- Other Committees .Councillors Grant, Tooth, Dill-Russell, Dodd, Haywood and McCarthy.
- Local Member(s)
- Other Elected Members Councillors Jones, Forwood, Barnes, Morris Jones
- Cabinet Member Councillors Saint, Burton and Hayfield
- Chief Executive
- Legal
- Finance
- Other Chief Officers Judith Coote/Bob Perks (Human Resources), Bethan Alper/Janet Fortune (Economic

Development), Pat Tate (Education), Kushal Birla (LTHS)-comments incorporated within report.

- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION NO

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation Corporate Disabilities Group

Agenda No

Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 23rd June 2005

Review of Dyslexia Issues

Report of the County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive

Recommendation

1. That the report be noted.
2. That, subject to any comments made by the Committee, the report be passed onto the Warwickshire Disability Forum for information and consideration.
3. That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee be recommended to examine issues relating to the diagnosis of dyslexia within junior schools and the quality of publicity on the help and support available to children with dyslexia with a view to making improvements where necessary.
4. That the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee be recommended to examine the issue of raising awareness and accessibility of information to people with dyslexia within county libraries.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In the 2004/05 municipal year, the Employment and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee chose to focus on dyslexia issues as an ongoing scrutiny topic. This decision to focus on dyslexia issues led to two single issue meetings being held on 19th October 2004 and 16th March 2005.
- 4.2 This report seeks to consolidate the key findings as a result of the two meetings and seeks to propose a way forward that ensures that the issues that were raised are addressed.

2. Background

- 2.1 Two meetings were held by the Committee during 2004/05. Prior to this, initial investigations were conducted through a member sub-group which consisted of the Chair and Spokespersons for the Committee (Councillors Cockings, Saint, Forwood and Holman).
- 2.2 At a meeting of the sub-group in June it was agreed that the background information collated indicated there was a lack of understanding about the

issues facing people who have dyslexia and that further work was required to identify and support people who have dyslexia -particularly in the workplace.

- 2.3 In recognition of these issues it was decided that two special meetings would be held to focus on dyslexia. The first meeting would be set aside as an information session which would set the background and context for the condition. The second session would then focus on dyslexia issues within the context of employment and inclusion. The brief and participants for both meetings is outlined in Appendix 1.

3. Key Findings and Recommendations

- 3.1 As mentioned above, the initial meeting was principally for information and sought to prepare the groundwork for the more detailed and focussed meeting in March. The notes for both sessions are attached as Appendix 2 and 3 respectively.

Key Findings

Dyslexia

- 3.2 Dyslexia (derived from the Greek 'difficulty with words') is a condition that affects approximately 10% of the population. Of this number around 4% of the population are severely dyslexic whilst a further 6% have mild to moderate problems.
- 3.3 The condition affects the brain area that deals with language. As a consequence it affects the under-lying skills that are needed for learning to read, write and spell. Medical studies using brain imaging techniques have corroborated this and have demonstrated that people with dyslexia process information differently.

Individual

- 3.4 Dyslexia occurs in people from all backgrounds and of all abilities, from people who cannot read to those with university degrees. Such individuals of all ages, can learn effectively but often need a different approach. The condition can provide individuals with both difficulties and strengths and often varies in degree from person to person as illustrated below.

Possible Strengths	Possible Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative thinkers. • Excellent trouble shooters. • Intuitive problem solving. • Creative in many different ways. • Lateral thinkers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading hesitantly. • Misreading, making understanding difficult. • Difficulty with sequences, e.g. getting dates in order. • Poor organisation or time management. • Difficulty organising thoughts clearly. • Erratic spelling.

3.5 Dyslexia, in common with other non physical conditions is often referred to as a 'invisible disability' and at both sessions the importance of early identification, diagnosis and help was emphasised in overcoming some of the weaknesses that are associated with the condition.

Employment

3.6 An understanding of the condition and the manner in which it affects individuals was, for committee purposes, a precursor to the key aim of seeking to understand the difficulties that are experienced by people with dyslexia in both accessing employment and the help and support that they received in the workplace.

3.7 In examining this issue at the second meeting, the Committee were informed on a number of occasions, by the speakers, that dyslexia as with other non – physical impairments is regarded as an 'invisible' disability. As a consequence, the onus is on the person with dyslexia to disclose their disability in order that reasonable adjustments can be made. In the absence of such adjustments, symptoms of dyslexia are often explained negatively-such as laziness or lack of intellectual capability.

3.8 On the issue of disclosure, it was noted that two key factors presented barriers to disclosure. The first and most fundamental is the issue of diagnosis. Examples were given of people who, through not being diagnosed, had experienced difficulties in both accessing jobs and obtaining help in the workplace. The issue of help in the workplace became particularly pertinent as often the first signs that dyslexia is an issue is changes in an individuals' work circumstances (restructuring/promotion etc).

3.9 The logical consequence of these problems is that without diagnosis, there can be no disclosure. If there is no disclosure there can be no reasonable adjustments by the employer.

3.10 The other barrier to disclosure is the hesitancy on the part of the individual with dyslexia to inform employers or prospective employers about their disability. The reasons for this are often two fold and based on the past experiences of the individual; and the awareness and culture of the employer and his/her organisation. Negative experiences in the past together with low self esteem often result in reluctance to disclose the disability. The awareness and culture of the employer/organisation is also important as a positive environment may increase the likelihood of people disclosing their dyslexia. Conversely a negative environment may decrease the likelihood of people coming forward and negate any possibility of reasonable adjustments being made.

3.11 Aside from the most obvious difficulty relating to literacy, the absence of reasonable adjustments would mean that the weaknesses associated with dyslexia presents itself in a manner of ways. Typical examples would be:

- Problems filling out forms, writing reports, long text
- Processing information in the wrong sequence
- Timekeeping, getting to work, deadlines
- Coping with change and interruptions

3.12 The results of such weaknesses is demonstrated by the difficulty faced by individuals in both accessing employment and pursuing a successful employment career. In order to overcome such weaknesses, adequate diagnosis, support and intervention are required and it was noted that the presence of such support could ensure that most of the problems highlighted above could be overcome and the particular strengths associated with dyslexia could be realised.

Support

3.13 To overcome the problems and weakness associated with Dyslexia, the Committee investigated the various support mechanisms that are available to help individuals overcome their weaknesses and enable employers to make reasonable adjustments.

3.14 The principal method of assistance is through the British Dyslexia Association and local dyslexia organisations. Both the national and local organisation were engaged in an employability campaign which seeks to:

- Develop ways in which many more dyslexic people can enter employment.
- For those already in work, to ensure there is a closer fit between their skills and the job of work that needs to be done.

3.15 Although the Association exists for the benefit of people with dyslexia; the campaign was targeted at employers also with advice, literature and training available to raise awareness and offer practical help and guidance on making reasonable adjustments. Practical examples of reasonable adjustments, as outlined by the BDA on their website are attached as Appendix 4.

3.16 Another major source of assistance is the Dyslexia Institute, which through local centres (such as the one based at Coventry) provides specialist training and assessment to both individuals and employers. Also based in Coventry are mentoring schemes (in operation at Coventry University) which, together with robust procedures, demonstrate that compensatory strategies could work effectively in helping to maximise performance.

3.17 In addition to the key organisations listed above, there are also many companies and organisations that offer practical help and support in the workplace. Organisations such as Ability Net (IBM) based locally in Warwick outline many technological advances and adaptations which could make computers and workstations accessible to people with dyslexia. Another company Right2Write provide assistance to employers and employees either directly or indirectly through JobCentre Plus.

3.18 The existence of such support mechanisms demonstrates that with appropriate assistance, problems related to dyslexia can be overcome and the benefits of employing people with dyslexia realised.

The role of the Council

3.19 In keeping with the remit of the Committee, examination of the Council's role was confined to being a major employer and as an agent promoting social inclusion. Notwithstanding this focus it was acknowledged that due to the cross cutting nature of the topic, other aspects of council services would be raised and it was agreed that these would be referred onto relevant committees/bodies where appropriate.

Employer

3.20 With a total workforce of approximately 17,000 (60% of which are employed in schools), the County Council is the largest employer in Warwickshire. On closer examination it was established that since 1985 the Council has provided a dedicated support programme to employees, and prospective employees, with disabilities, and employed staff specifically to support this programme.

3.21 The major forms of support have been a 'supported employment programme' (now known as Workstep) that utilises government grant and County Council funding to support those whose disabilities might otherwise prevent them from being fully effective in their jobs, plus financial support for aids, adaptations and adjustments and (Access to Work) to assist employees at work with any form of disability.

3.22 The existence and implementation of these programmes has resulted in the County Council being awarded external recognition throughout this period for its approach on this issue.

3.23 The Council's support to employees with disabilities is made known to prospective employees through its advertising and recruitment processes, which includes a guaranteed interview to all candidates who declare themselves as having a disability and meet the essential requirements of the job. Assistance is offered explicitly to those who may have difficulties with any part of the recruitment process – for example, additional support may be offered to someone (and has been made available) with dyslexia in completing any written part of the selection process.

3.24 In terms of assistance in the workplace, the Council is able to provide help and support through reasonable adjustments provided that details of the dyslexia are disclosed. The issue of disclosure is crucial in this case given that national estimations as to the level and nature of dyslexia are not borne out by the number of employees who have disclosed their dyslexia to the Council. In the absence of such disclosure, reasonable adjustments cannot be made but the disparity in statistics may also suggest that many individuals have developed successful 'coping strategies' to an extent where they do not feel they need any assistance or support in carrying out their jobs or pursuing their careers. Others may not have disclosed their dyslexia due to non-diagnosis.

Social Inclusion

3.25 In terms of promoting social inclusion, although the County Council does not have a specific duty to support people from disadvantaged communities into

employment, there is a power under Section 2 of the Local Govt Act 2000 to promote economic and social well-being and a duty to prepare a strategy saying how this will be done. People with dyslexia are supported indirectly through this process.

3.26 The Planning Transport and Economic Strategy Department, mainly through the Employment Link team, has a well established role within this agenda. The team works with organisations such as Connexions and Coventry & Warwickshire Guidance, sub regional partnerships such as Coventry & Warwickshire Job Strategy Group and C&W Health and Regeneration Forum and also direct with community and voluntary organisations. Involvement can range from delivery of contracts, direct funding, facilitating bids for external funding the strategic management and advice. Such activities clearly reflect the corporate priority of developing and maintaining *'a vibrant local economy which promotes employment and prosperity for all'*.

Other schemes that the department is engaged in are attached as Appendix 5.

Other Issues

3.27 Given the remit of the Committee it was deemed appropriate to focus on the above two roles. However during the course of investigations it became apparent that dyslexia impacts upon other organisational issues. The key issues raised were accessibility of information provided by the Council both in hard copy and electronically on the website. The importance of dyslexia awareness was also emphasised.

3.28 Subsequent investigations with regard to the website have established that the County Council has signed up with "Text Alert" and "Browse Aloud" systems. The British Dyslexic Association supports both initiatives.

3.29 On a service provision level, key areas of importance, awareness and improvement are:

- (Education)-The importance of early intervention and diagnosis in junior schools was stressed. This not only ensures a greater chance of educational attainment but also reduces the likelihood of some of the problems experienced by people with dyslexia in adult life. On a more general note it was noted that work was required on publicising help and support that was available to dyslexic schoolchildren.
- (Libraries, Heritage and Trading Standards)-It was felt that more work could be done on improving dyslexia awareness and accessibility of information within county libraries.

3.30 In relation to issues raised in the sphere of education, subsequent consultation during the production of this report has revealed that the county has a forum that includes representatives from each of the local dyslexia associations, the Dyslexia Institute and Parent Partnership. The forum supports the Learning and Behaviour Support Service in promoting the Dyslexia Quality Mark for Schools. Dyslexia Support Centres have also been established in each area of the county and provide a drop in advice and support facility for parents. From September these centres will also be providing a rolling training programme for schools with

publicity material going out in that month. In addition, many Infant and Junior Schools subscribe to a specialist teacher with MA level qualifications in Dyslexia who assist schools in the identification, assessment and provision for pupils with dyslexia. Notwithstanding this level of support, it was felt that, and research supports, the need to identify and ensure appropriate additional programmes prior to children commencing junior schools.

3.31 In relation to libraries, consultation with the department has revealed that the libraries service is currently promoting social inclusion through the following initiatives:

- Concessionary rates on audio books and other book loans
- A wide range of information for parents and carers
- Touch Type Read and Spell software on some Peoples Network computers
- Access to information on the web and screen reader software JAWS, IBM Homepage Reader, Browsealoud
- Access to magnification software - large print is useful aid to understanding books and text
- Vital Link collection
- Large print collections
- Audio Book collections in cassette and CD
- Essential Skills material providing access to amended fiction in clear English

Notwithstanding these initiatives, the department welcomed the fact that dyslexia awareness and accessibility had been drawn to their attention.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Through the course of two meetings, the Committee received information from a variety of sources on both dyslexia as a condition and the impact it has on employment issues. From the range of evidence gathered it is obvious that support mechanisms are in place to negate or minimise the impact that dyslexia can have both in accessing employment and being able to function effectively in the workplace.

4.2 These support mechanisms are available from a number of organisations, both at a national and local level, to individuals with dyslexia and employers who are either seeking to raise awareness or make reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

4.3 The continuing difficulties of the dyslexic community that were reported and discussed by the Committee suggest that such support mechanisms are not being accessed. Several factors account for this. The more simple and direct reasons are a lack of awareness of issues relating to dyslexia to an absence of knowledge on the support mechanisms that are available. More complicated and pertinent are issues around diagnosis and disclosure which may prevent reasonable adjustments being made and also exacerbate the problems experienced by the dyslexic community where performance and behaviour is wrongly and negatively attributed.

4.4 In examining the role of the Council as a major employer and promoting social inclusion, the Committee found much evidence of good practice. The

recommendations made in Paragraph 5 seek to highlight issues that were raised at the meeting (some of which did not fall directly within the remit of the committee) and ensure that issues are addressed appropriately.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That the report be noted.
- 5.2 That, subject to any comments made by the Committee, the report be passed onto the Warwickshire Disability Forum for information and consideration.
- 5.3 That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee be recommended to examine issues relating to the diagnosis of dyslexia within junior schools and the quality of publicity on the help and support available to children with dyslexia with a view to making improvements where necessary.
- 5.4 That the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee be recommended to examine the issue of raising awareness and accessibility of information to people with dyslexia within county libraries.

6. Acknowledgements/Useful Links

- 6.1 During their consideration of the topic the Committee were assisted by the following individuals and organisations and would, therefore, like to thank the following:

Bernard Quinn and Jane Myers (British Dyslexia Association), Liz Mackenzie (Connexions), Mary Dunleavy (JobCentre Plus), Helen Boyce (Coventry Dyslexia Institute), Patrick O'Donnell (Ability Net), James Phillips (Right2Write), Sarah Williams (Coventry University).

A copy of this report will be sent out to the participants and those who attended the sessions during the despatch of this agenda.

- 6.2 During the production of this report, a balance has been sought between seeking to bring together the information that was gathered and avoiding the duplication of information that is contained either in the appendices or elsewhere. Accordingly, at Appendix 6, links and references have been provided for those who wish to obtain a more detailed understanding of dyslexia and for more information on dyslexia and employment issues. When accessing the information please note that the list is not exhaustive on issues relating to dyslexia and relates primarily to information that was gathered in preparation for the meetings that were held:

DAVID CARTER
County Solicitor and Assistant
Chief Executive

Shire Hall
Warwick

June 2005

REVIEW OF DYSLEXIA ISSUES

Meeting 1- Setting the Context-19th October 2004

Brief

- General outline of dyslexia as a condition
- Issues that face people with dyslexia
- Education and Youth context

Participants

- British Dyslexia Association
- Education Department
- Connexions

Meeting 2- Employment and Dyslexia-16th March 2005

- People
- Support
- Outcomes

Participants*

- British Dyslexia Association
- Job Centre Plus
- Coventry Dyslexia Institute
- Ability Net
- Right2Write
- Coventry University
- HR and Economic Development Departments

*In addition to invited participants, the second meeting was supported by publicity which sought to invite local dyslexia organisations to the event and encourage public attendance at the meeting.

Note of a Meeting of the Employment and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and to which all Members of the County Council were invited, held on 19th October 2004 – Event “How can we unlock the potential of people with dyslexia?”

Present: Councillor Ron Cockings (Chair)
" Chris Holman (Vice Chair)
" George Atkinson
" Sarah Boad
" Martin Brassington
" Josie Compton
" Anne Forwood
" John Haynes
" Katherine King
" Joan Lea
" Bryan Levy
" Helen McCarthy
" Chris Saint
" John Vereker
" Dot Webster
" John Wells

Officers: Greta Needham, Deputy County Solicitor, Chief Executive’s Dept.
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Chief Executive’s Dept.
Isobel Hills, Corporate Review Team.

1. Welcome and Introduction by the Chair, Councillor Ron Cockings.

2. British Dyslexia Association – Bernard Quinn

Bernard Quinn set the scene and gave an insight into the experiences of people with dyslexia. (Presentation material attached)

3. Warwickshire County Council Education Department – Pat Tate, Head of Learning and Behaviour. (on behalf of Elizabeth Featherstone).

Pat Tate talked on the strategies within schools, the numbers of Warwickshire pupils with a statement for Special Educational needs (including dyslexia) and the LEA’s sign up to the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark pilot. (Presentation material attached)

4. Connexion Service – Liz McKenzie

Liz McKenzie explained how Connexions demonstrated their support for young people with dyslexia in further/higher education and training. (Presentation material attached)

Next Stage – Follow-up event to be scheduled to take place in March.

Note of a Meeting of the Employment and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and to which all Members of the County Council were invited, held on 16th March 2005 – Event “How can we unlock the potential of people with dyslexia?”

Present: Councillor Ron Cockings (Chair)
" Chris Holman (Vice Chair)
" Martin Brassington
" Phillip Morris-Jones
" Anne Forwood
" Chris Saint
" John Vereker

Officers: Bill Basra, Corporate Review Team
Greta Needham, Deputy County Solicitor, Chief Executive's Dept.
Sarah Boyce, Corporate Human Resources
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Dept.
Martyn Thompson, Corporate Human Resources
Bethan Williams, PTES
Nick Philp, PTES

Also present: Helen Boyce (Dyslexia Institute), Stephen Duffy (Birmingham Association of Dyslexics Group (BADG)), Mary Dunlevy (Jobcentre Plus), Adriane Edgington (Manor Park Community School), Tracey Emery (Warwickshire Police), Andrew Goodman (Warwickshire Fire and Rescue), William Ford (BADG), Sarah Hunt (Warwickshire Police), P Hearth (Right2write), Jane Myers (British Dyslexia Association), Kristie Naimo (Chief Executive's Dept.), Patrick O'Donnell (Ability Net), James Phillips (Right2write), Ian Simcox (SWDA & BDA Helpline), R.J. Watson (Write2write), Sarah Williams (Coventry University)

1. Welcome and Introduction by the Chair, Councillor Ron Cockings.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He referred to the previous meeting on the issue of dyslexia held on 19 October 2004. Today's meeting would focus on dyslexia and employment and examine the support mechanisms that are in place. The Committee would then make recommendations for improvement to the Council where identified as an employer and with a view to promote social inclusion.

2. Mary Dunleavy – Jobcentreplus

Mary Dunleavy outlined the support given by Jobcentre plus for people with disabilities (power point presentation material attached).

Question and Answers

Q. 1. - How many of those people helped to obtain work and to retain employment were self-diagnosed dyslexic?

Reply - Increasingly the jobcentre was dealing with more people with learning difficulties. Jobcentre worked closely with people with learning difficulties to identify suitable support/coping mechanisms and with employers to identify suitable employment.

The Jobcentre dealt with employment – but worked closely with clinicians in the medical field and with G.Ps.

Q. 2 – If a persons failed to declare a disability on being appointed to a job and an accident occurred because the necessary employment support had not been put in place would the employer be liable if litigation was brought against the company?

Reply –Jobcentre plus’ policy was for employee’s to declare their disability at the outset of their employment. If an employee did not declare a disability at the outcome of his employment the employer could not make reasonable adjustments to the workplace.

Comment - William Ford (BADG) – Felt that there was a “cop” out between the different organisations – he represented a large number of people who considered that the main issue was not being diagnosed at an early age – at school – for those who left school without being diagnosed all other offers of help were a complete waste of time. If the dyslexic person had hidden the disability they would not be willing to ask for help. The helpline was failing some people also.

Reply – Coventry Jobcentre plus worked with Birmingham Jobcentre plus but was a smaller organisation and covered a smaller area. The Jobcentre plus did not carry out diagnosis but it did, however, work very closely with the NHS and GP’s. Mary Dunleavy acknowledged William Ford’s concerns.

Q. 3 –Did Jobcentre plus check that the organisations advertising the “Positive About Disabled People” symbol maintained their standard.

Reply – An annual check was carried out to ensure that organisations met the Symbol commitments. Occasionally there were complaints – three in the current year – 2 unfounded and 1 upheld.

Comment - William Ford welcomed the acknowledgement by Jobcentre Plus of the issues he raised and welcomed the groups and people attending the meeting – it had been a long time coming. As an organisation he suggested that the WCC looked at how it produced its information – also looked at the issue of dual

diagnosis? At the previous event it had been said that dyslexia should be recognised in years 8 and 9 but he suggested that diagnosis was needed in junior school.

3. Presentation by Jane Myers, British Dyslexia Association.

Jane Myers outlined the work of the British Dyslexia Association. (Details of the work by the Association can be found attached to the agenda).

Q. 4 – Do you know how many people are dyslexic?

Reply - It was estimated that 10% of the population had dyslexia to a higher or lower degree – no research had been done.

Q.4 – Do you think that the number of people with dyslexia would increase – now that it was being acknowledged.

Reply – As awareness grows it was likely that the 10% will stand – there were still many people who do not want to talk about it.

Q. 5 – There was an economic issue in that it cost £600 for a diagnosis.

Reply – If a school were BDA friendly then it would be cheaper to train a teacher. The Government was also making funding available to employers.

4. Presentation by Helen Boyce, Dyslexia Institute

Helen Boyce outlined the service of the Dyslexia Institute (power point presentation material attached).

5. Presentation by Patrick O'Donnell, Ability Net.

Patrick O'Donnell outlined the services and low/high technology provided by Ability Net to people with disabilities including those with dyslexia.

Q.6 – What facilities are available in the libraries for dyslexic people – information is made available in leaflet form when oral information on a CD would be better and cost effective.

Reply – Ability Net was currently working with Warwickshire Library Service.

6. Presentation by James Phillips, Right2write.

James Phillips outlined the work of Right2write with the unemployed through Jobcentre plus and in delivering “Access to Work”. Details of the “Spark Space” programme CD were circulated.

7. Sarah Williams, Coventry University

Sarah Williams outlined the support given by the University to prospective students with dyslexia and during their studies and examinations. Undiagnosed

dyslexics were often found during their placements by their tutors because they did not have their usual aides or coping mechanisms. Financial support could be provided through the Disability Students' Allowance from the local Education Authority.

8. Presentation by Martyn Thompson, Human Resources, Warwickshire County Council

Martyn Thompson outlined the County Council's approach to disability in employment. (briefing paper circulated with the agenda papers to Members.) and introduced Sarah Boyce Workstep support worker.

9. Presentation by Bethan Williams, Planning Transport and Economic Regeneration Dept, Warwickshire County Council

Bethan Williams outlined the work carried out by the County Council's PTES department through the Employment Link Team, in promoting economic and social well-being and its work, in particular, with its partners. (briefing paper circulated with the agenda papers to Members.) PTES main role on the disability agenda was highlighted with regards to co-ordinating employer linkages and job brokerage with partner organisations, promoting the recruitment and retention of disabled people and the support available to take forward the broader agenda of helping the hardest to reach into work. Reference was made to the video CD launched in November 2003 entitled "Why not? Disability, employment and you" which was a partnership production with Coventry University (filmed by students).

The Chair declared an open Question and Answers/comment session

Q. 6. How many people were found jobs through Focus on Ability and RAMP.

Reply – This project is not about the number of people gaining access to employment but looking at skills, aspirations and training. The information can be provided.

Q. 7 – Can the County Council ask a dyslexic person to give a view on the Council's website?

Q. 8 - Why is the Committee room not fitted with the hearing loop?

Comment – Disabled (dyslexic) people have problems applying for Government grants if they are employed (cannot apply for University Grants)

Comment – William Ford - Suggested that people with dyslexia be asked to check out the ease of access for the Council's website. He considered himself to be an expert on dyslexia – he was a user of Council's services but his voice was not heard – this was not a criticism but this made him angry, upset and frustrated.

He said that young children were not getting the assessment they needed and that there were many issues around cost and funding. If dyslexia was not diagnosed at an early age then there were additional consequent mental health costs. Statistics showed that 40% of people in prison were dyslexic and on

release were angry. It was too late at 25 years of age to diagnose dyslexia - so long term – it was cost effective to diagnose early.

He had heard positive feedback about Coventry University but all information was paper orientated – there was a need for information that could be downloaded onto a PC and to develop pictorial information. In Birmingham there was 50 different languages – people could speak English but they could not write – so pictorial information would help these people as well as those with dyslexia.

Q.9 – What type of assessment was required to enable support for work – what was available in North Warwickshire.

Reply – Right2write has a representative in NW – anywhere there was a Jobcentre.

William Ford – commented that a barrier existed for the dyslexic who did not have a psychological assessment and it made life harder.

Q 10 – Reply (Bethany Williams) Disabled unemployed people were reluctant to access help to return to work through Jobcentre plus because they feared that this would lead to them losing their benefits.

William Ford – confirmed this statement and said that this issue was a particular difficulty for those people who could not read or write.

Q. 11 – grammar and spelling still seemed to be issues in schools – the report from the University gave a different picture.

Reply – Sarah Williams – help with spelling and grammar would be provided when the student did not have access to their normal support and aides but the written text would have to make sense. This would not apply to literature courses.

Reply – Helen Boyce said that only 5% of marks were docked in examinations because of spelling – all subjective – except English language.

Q. 12 – How successful was the Council in pro-actively identifying those who needed help.

Sarah Boyce said that there was a need to create an environment so that there were no barriers – she was diagnosed after school days were over – there were paths to be directed to the right route.

Reply James Phillips – often line managers had not put in place processes for agreeing payment of invoices for equipment needed to help an “Access to Work” disabled employee.

Bethan Williams – pointed out that the Corporate Disability Group was looking at what more the County Council do with regard to improving current practices with regard to the employment of people with disabilities.

Jane Myers referred to the extensive work that had been done with Liverpool City Council to gain BDA Accreditation. Work was also being undertaken by the BDA with Coventry City Council. Jane Myers offered to work with the County Council also.

William Ford suggested that the Committee should –

- Fund the release of Education (teaching) staff for dyslexia training
- Ask Teacher Training Colleges to acknowledge dyslexia.

In reply Helen Boyce - said that progress was being made on Warwickshire Education Department gaining dyslexia friendly accreditation.

Comment from Warwickshire Police representative about the use of “buff” coloured paper, which they considered would have helped in a recent recruitment exercise. Of 500 applications received only 1 person declared that themselves to be dyslexic.

William Ford suggested that “buff” colour should be used for charge sheets for prisoners. People arrested were currently given a leaflet of rights. He suggested that a CD could help those people who could not read or were dyslexic. In his view the Government’s promotion of the 3R’ was abusive. He also suggested that the County Council should ask a dyslexic person to test its website for accessibility.

Sarah Williams said that at Coventry University dyslexic students gained more 1st and 2.1’s than non-dyslexics.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting and said that he and the officers would be considering the way forward.

Proposals - Pass on findings to the Corporate Disabilities Group and suggest scrutiny by the Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reasonable Adjustments in the Workplace.

Many people with dyslexia require little in the way of support beyond the acceptance that they will need to approach some task differently.

When dyslexic people understand their dyslexia they are more able to participate in their continuing education and succeed in their areas of choice.

Experience suggests that the majority of dyslexic adults are relieved to discover their dyslexia. It enables them to understand their educational history and put past experiences into context. As the severity of dyslexia varies so do the strategies that help people overcome problems in employment. The majority of these are inexpensive and uncomplicated. However, should additional costs be incurred, for example a voice activated computer or reader the employer can apply for funding through the Government's Access to Work scheme.

Assessment

A professional assessment may be required to identify specific work needs.

It is important to brief the specialist (usually an occupational psychologist) on your requirements from the assessment. For example you need to know how this will affect their work and what sort of adjustments may help the employee perform more effectively at work.

Suggested Strategies

The following have proved successful for many. Any individual may require none, one or several of the strategies. Within each category are a number of suggestions. The person's pattern of dyslexia may make some of these inappropriate.

Written Communication

General difficulty with reading:

- Give verbal rather than written instructions.
- Highlight salient points in documents.
- Use voice mail as opposed to written memos.
- Use speech to text software.
- Supply/use a reading machine – or allocate someone else to read aloud.
- Provide information on coloured paper (find out which colour helps the person to read best).
- Set up a computer screen with a coloured background to documents.

Difficulty with reading and writing:

- Allow plenty of time to read and complete the task.
- Examine other ways of giving the same information to avoid reading.
- Discuss the material with the employee, giving summaries and/or key points.

- Utilise information prepared in other formats for example audio or videotape, drawings, diagrams and flowcharts.
- Use tape recorders.
- Use speech to text software.

Spelling and grammar errors:

- Proof read work.
- Instant spell checker on all computers.

Verbal Communication

Difficulty remembering and following verbal instructions:

- Give instructions one at a time.
- Communicate instructions slowly and clearly in a quiet location.
- Write down important information.
- Demonstrate and supervise tasks and projects.
- Encourage the person to take notes and then check them.
- Ask instructions to be repeated back, to confirm that the instruction has been understood correctly.
- Write a memo outlining a plan of action.
- Use a tape recorder or dictaphone to record important instructions.
- Back up multiple instructions in writing or with diagrams.

Difficulty with hidden meanings in conversation:

- Give clear concise and direct instructions; do not hint or make assumptions that you have been understood.

Time and Work Planning

Concentration difficulties/distractions:

- Make sure the workplace is quiet and away from distractions for example away from doors, busy phones, loud machinery.
- Allocate a private workspace if possible.
- Where feasible allow an employee to work from home occasionally.
- Provide a quiet working environment for a dyslexic employee by allocating libraries, file rooms, private offices and other enclosed areas when others are not using them.

Coping with interruptions:

- Use a “do not disturb” sign when specific tasks require intense concentration.
- Encourage co-workers not to disturb the person unless absolutely necessary.
- When interrupting, allow the person to pause and write down what they are doing to refer to when resuming work.
- Ensure that each task is completed before starting another.
- Encourage outgoing rather than incoming calls. Offer training in how to use the telephone effectively for example jotting down key points before making the call.

Remembering appointments and deadlines:

- Remind the person of important deadlines and review priorities regularly.
- Hang a wall planner that visually highlights daily/monthly appointments, deadlines, tasks, and projects.
- Supply an alarm watch.
- Encourage the employee to use the daily calendar and alarm features on his/her computer.

Organisation of property:

- Ensure that work areas are organised, neat and tidy.
- Keep items where they can be clearly seen for example shelves and bulletin boards.
- Ensure the team returns important items to the same place each time.
- Colour code items.
- Ensure work areas are well lit.

Organising workflow:

- Supply and use a wall planner.
- Prioritise important tasks.
- Create a daily, dated “To Do” list.
- Use diaries.
- Write a layout for regular tasks with appropriate prompts for example for meetings or taking notes.
- Allow extra time for unforeseen occurrences.
- Build planning time into each day.

General difficulties

Reversing numbers:

- Encourage the person to say the numbers out loud, write them down or press the calculator keys and check the figures have been understood.
- Supply a talking calculator.

Directional difficulties:

- Always try to use the same route.
- Show the route and visible landmarks.
- Give time to practice going from one place to another.
- Supply detailed maps.

Short term memory problems especially names, numbers and lists:

- Use mnemonic devices and acronyms.
- Organise details on paper so that they can be referred to easily using diagrams and flowcharts.
- Check back understanding.
- Use multi-sensory learning techniques such as reading material onto a tape machine and then playing it back whilst re-reading.
- Use computer software; sometimes well developed programme menus and help features are useful.
- Use a calculator.

Social Inclusion-PTES Scheme

a) Disability Links

The County Council are partners and cash contributors to the Focus on Ability Project operating in the Coventry & Nuneaton Regeneration Zone along with Coventry & Warwickshire Connexions and voluntary sector groups such as DIAL (Disablement Information and Advice Line), the Council of Disabled People and the Rowan Organisation. A similar initiative operates in Mid and South Warwickshire called RAMP (Raising Awareness through Mentoring and Personal Support) which also provides mentoring support in addition to employment support. Both projects offer careers guidance, help to access training and learning opportunities, support in accessing work experience / voluntary work opportunities, help with job search strategies, skills match to local job vacancies, and promoting individual skills to employers.

PTES' main role on the disability agenda is helping to co-ordinate employer linkages and job brokerage with partner organisations, promoting the recruitment and retention of disabled people and support available and to take forward the broader agenda of helping the hardest to reach into work within Warwickshire. A corporate lead on the Welfare to Work for Disabled People Joint Investment Plan (JIP) Partnership is taken which aims to improve learning and employment opportunities for disabled people living and working in Warwickshire and the sub-region.

The JIP Partnership has created a website resource for employers giving clear and concise information about employing disabled people and the support that is available. Their research found that many local employers are unaware of what support is available or how to access it. It is also hoped that the website resource will become a valuable resource for local employers. It is hosted on an existing independent website that employers can also use to advertise their vacancies and jobseekers can use to search for vacancies (www.routewaystowork.co.uk/disability). A similar website resource for disabled jobseekers on the same web address is currently being explored.

b) PEP Employment Partnership

Provides employment support to people from disadvantaged communities, in particular those living within the Coventry and Nuneaton Regeneration Zone.

c) Recruitment NOW

Supports people from North Warwickshire into employment and training.

d) Construction Training Centre (s)

The Regeneration Zone Opportunities Centre on the Stockingford / Camp Hill Industrial Estate is a community based adult vocational training centre in the most disadvantaged area of the county. The project provides training to accredited standards in construction – woodwork, plumbing and bricklaying – and ICT.

Appendix 6

Agendas for the meetings of the Employment and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19th October 2004 and 16th March 2005.

Provides additional information on the role of the council and also details of the employability campaign. Also include presentational material.

Employers Forum on Disability-Employers Briefing Paper 6-A practical guide to employment adjustments for dyslexic people

Briefing paper highlighting practical adjustments that can be made. Also contains examples of organisations that have adapted to meet the needs of employees who are dyslexic.

<http://www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk/main/campaigning/dwe.asp>

Full details of the employability campaign that is being run by the British Dyslexia Association. Links to home page and details of local associations can be obtained from here.

<http://www.right2write.co.uk/index.htm>

Right to Write Limited provide solutions to people with hidden disabilities in employment (Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADD and mild autism) seeking to equip them with the skills to gain and retain employment.

<http://www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk/>

Information on the Dyslexia Institute plus links to the Coventry Dyslexia Institute

<http://www.abilitynet.co.uk/>

Charity providing assistive technology to people with disabilities

<http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/cms.asp?Page=/Home>

General website on work and advice

<http://www.connexions.gov.uk/>

Connexions homepage offering help, support and advice to 13-19 year olds

<http://www.corporate.coventry.ac.uk/cms/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=373&a=1718>

Details of the help and support that is available for people with dyslexia at Coventry University.