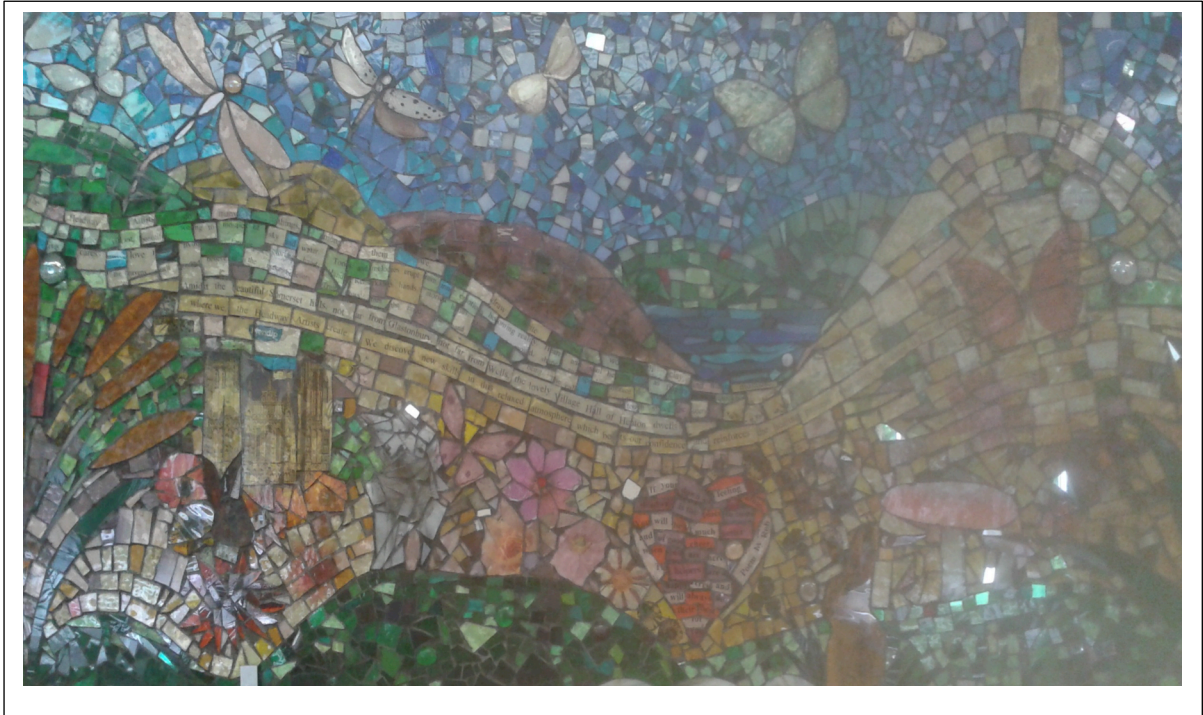


Enter & View Report.

Headway Somerset.

25th April, 29th April & 7th May 2014.



Acknowledgments.

Healthwatch Somerset would like to thank Headway Somerset for their support and commitment to the Enter and View visit. Particular thanks must go to members of the Healthwatch Somerset Enter and View team and to the staff, volunteers and clients of Headway Somerset.

Introduction

What is Healthwatch Somerset?

Healthwatch Somerset is a government funded project, set up to give local people a say in how health and social care services are designed and delivered within Somerset. Healthwatch Somerset is one of 152 local Healthwatches set up across the country. The work of local Healthwatch is used to inform service providers and commissioners and Healthwatch England (The national body for all local Healthwatches)

In Somerset, Healthwatch is provided by 'The Care Forum', a charity providing a variety of services across the South West of England. www.thecareforum.org/

What is Enter and View?

People who use health and social care services, their carers and the public generally, have expectations about the experience they want to have of those services, and want the opportunity to express their view as to whether their expectations were met. To enable local Healthwatch to carry out their activities effectively there will be times when it is helpful for authorised representatives to observe the delivery of services and for them to collect the views of people who are directly using those services. It is important that those who carry out Enter and View have an appreciation of what is good about services as well as what is not so good.

Project Overview

Headway Somerset and Healthwatch Somerset met to discuss the services that they provide and some recent changes that they have made or plan to make soon to the three Headway centres provided in Bridgwater, Henton and Yeovil. It was decided that it would be valuable to collect and share the views of clients, staff and

volunteers during the time when these changes were being implemented or planned. Three subsequent Enter and View visits were planned on the following dates.

25th April 2014 10am-2pm Headway Bridgwater Centre

29th April 2014 10.30 am-2pm Headway Henton Centre

7th May 2014 10.30am -2pm Headway Yeovil.

Project Aims.

- to identify examples of best practice that can be shared between centres
- to identify how changes in provision have been managed including any areas that could be improved.
- to listen to and record any issues relating to Brain injury diagnosis, treatment, information and support.

Methodology

Three members of the Enter and view team participated in the visit. They were Cliff Puddy, Val Banister & Elaine Hodgson. They were supported by Healthwatch Somerset Development officer Jonathon Yelland.

At each visit the Enter & View team introduced themselves to the group and then spent the day observing activities and speaking with clients volunteers and staff. The team ate lunch with the clients which proved a social time to further conversations.

It was agreed that the report should structure information given into the following headings.

- The Premises and Resources
- Dignity.
- Choice.
- Communication.
- Support.
- Staff
- Management of changes
- Issues and concerns relating to treatment and support from other services.
- What people told us

The Premises and Resources.

Bridgwater Headway Centre.

This centre has only recently moved to new premises at the Victoria Park Community centre. The old premises were at the Sea Cadets Centre in Bridgwater. The Centre is a large modern building with good parking facilities. It has a large foyer area and dining room which clients can use in addition to the one large room hired by Headway. In this room activities and tea and coffee are provided.

We asked several of the clients how they found the new premises and the response was mixed. Some people told us that they preferred the old premises as they had exclusive use of the building and therefore had more rooms to use if they wanted to speak quietly. One person also said that they felt less comfortable eating in the community centre's dining room as it was shared with other groups of people, and this made them feel uncomfortable. Others told us they thought the new premises was more airy and lighter than the sea cadets centre.

The Enter and View team observed that clients who did not want to participate in the group activity went to the foyer area. One person told us that this made them feel uncomfortable. After the group activity on memory, tables were placed in the room to run various games/activities we observed that most people seemed happy with the set up and seemed able to mingle if they wished.

There was a separate office available for staff to work in or clients to speak to staff in private if they wished.

Henton Headway Centre.

This Centre is a large modern community Hall. This centre also had good parking facilities. As well as the large hall there was a separate smaller hall, kitchen (where lunch was prepared) and garden at the rear. There is also a side office where clients were observed talking to staff.

The Enter & View team observed that good use of all spaces was made by clients, staff and volunteers. A variety of activities was taking place and clients were able to find quiet areas to chat if they wished.

Clients we spoke to said they liked the environment.

Yeovil Headway Centre.

Headway uses the Yeovil Salvation Army premises for this centre. Parking is limited to a few cars. The building is older than the Bridgwater and Henton centres but provides a good size space. There is a kitchen that lunch was cooked in by volunteers. Clients wishing to speak in private used the Entrance Foyer or found a space in the main hall. No-one we spoke to raised any concerns about the environment.

Dignity

The Enter and View team observed that during the visits clients were treated and spoken to by staff in a dignified and respectful way. Most of those we spoke to spoke highly of the staff and volunteers. One person told us that the staff are always respectful but that they have a good friendly banter. This view was shared by most people we spoke with and was observed by the Enter & View team.

Choice

At the Bridgwater Centre we noted that at least one person was being supported to go shopping and staff explained that sometimes people choose to receive support at home with a specific activity or task. Several people told us they valued the one to one support and two clients told us they would like to receive more of this as they found it really helped them to do something they would otherwise find difficult and stressful.

A list of the day's activities was written on the board at all three centres and people told us they were free to pick and choose from these as they wished.

Many if not most people who have had a head injury are likely to suffer with memory problems. While visiting the Bridgwater centre, a trainee psychologist provided a session for the group on 'Memory' and many of the group were keen to share experiences and learn more about techniques to aid memory. This had been the third session given to the group by the psychologist and everyone that we spoke to thought they had been very informative and helpful. Many were keen to join in and share their experiences. Those we spoke to said they had not had their memory difficulties explained to them before in such detail.

Recommendation 1.

Headway Somerset to consider seeking to provide similar psychological information sessions at Henton and Yeovil, following consultation with clients as to their desired topics.

Those attending the Henton centre appeared to enjoy a choice of more varied activities, which in part, was due to the environment providing more separate spaces and outside space. Clients told us they enjoyed gardening in a small veg plot at the back of the centre. It was noted however that they were running short of space in the garden.

Recommendation 2

If gardening proves to be popular activity Headway may wish to consider renting an allotment to provide more space and suitable environment for this activity for each centre.

The Enter and View team noted that all three centres had computers with internet access available and that these were well used.

At the Henton Centre Clients were involved in preparing the lunch and some of those involved told us that helping with the lunch helps them to feel valued.

We spoke with clients at the Bridgwater centre about their choice of activities and whether this was part of a written plan individual to them and their needs. No-one we spoke to was aware that they had an individual plan. Some of those spoken to at Henton and Yeovil said they did have a plan or were going to look at writing one soon.

Recommendation 3

We would recommend that individual plans are discussed with clients at each centre. What they are, how they can be used to help everyone. We would also recommend that regular group consultation on future activities is held at each centre.

A broad range of activities was observed across the three centres and we have listed those we observed at the end of this report (*Please see appendix 1*)

Recommendation 4

A varied and changing activities list should be compiled by clients at each of the centres and shared with all three centres.

Communication

At the Henton centre a session was being held on signing which many of the clients participated in and seemed to enjoy. In part this was being facilitated by a client who used to be a teacher. This was just one example observed where the skills and knowledge of those attending is put to good use to benefit others. Several clients we spoke to said that helping others by sharing their skills and experience were some of the ways that attending the centre had helped them to feel valued.

The notice board of activities, programme for the day and menu was observed to be useful to clients and well used. One of the centres also used a picture board of staff and volunteers and their names to aid memory and the Henton centre had a scrap book of pictures of past events and clients on display.

Several people we spoke to found it hard to hear the conversation due to background noise and several people struggled to hear a presentation being given at the Bridgwater Centre. The Enter and View team did not observe any hearing loop system at any of the centres and therefore make the following recommendation.

Recommendation 5

Headway Somerset to seek advice from 'Action on Hearing Loss' Re. installation of fixed or portable hearing loop system.

Support

Clients were observed to be well supported by staff and volunteers and support was given to partake in a range of activities both individually and as a group.

Many people told us that they value the support they receive from volunteers and in particular other members of the group. We were told that the centre provided a place where they felt accepted and understood and free to talk about their experiences difficulties and needs. Two people told us that Headway had saved their life and that they felt emotionally supported. Several people also told us that they valued the opportunity to share their experience to help others. One person told us that he had received support from other clients and volunteers that had not been given by professionals who could not understand his needs or experiences.

Staff and Volunteers

The vast majority of clients spoken to said the staff were great. Staff were described as being committed, helpful and supportive. Some of the staff have been doing the job for many years and clients told us it was great that they were able to have that continuity of support. Staff were observed to be respectful and supportive to clients during all of the visits we carried out.

The help from volunteers was also valued and several clients told us that some of the volunteers have previously attended as a client and that this meant they understood their issues in greater depth and were able to use their experience to support them. A volunteer told us that it made them feel valued in that they were able to give something back and use their experience to help others.

Management of Change

Headway informed us that they are planning to provide services on more days. At present all three centres run on a Tuesday and a Friday. Headway planned to vary each centres opening days so as people had a choice of attending activities at other centres. Most people we spoke to seemed happy with the idea of days changing although two people expressed some concerns asking; 'Why can't they leave things as they are?' One person said they were very unhappy that a member of staff at the Yeovil centre was now going to be working at the other centres as well. They thought that Yeovil was treated as a 'third class centre compared with Bridgwater and Henton!'

Recommendation 6

Time should be taken to further explain the reasons for each of the changes to each group as it was apparent that some people were anxious about this and did not fully understand the reasons for the changes.

Direct Payments

Three people we spoke to said that managing direct payments was a concern. They felt that their head injury made it difficult for them to understand and manage their direct payment and that they felt that this placed them under additional stress and had anxieties about this. They told us that they did not believe they have the cognitive skills or memory to retain and understand information to enable them to

manage a direct payment. Those we spoke to about this felt that they should be given the choice as to whether or not they went onto direct payments.

Recommendation 7

7.0 Headway Somerset to consider if the issue about the appropriateness of allocating direct payments to those with a head injury; and whether it would be appropriate to flag up with Headway (national organisation and Somerset County Council)

7.1 Headway Somerset to consider if there is further research that could be done to gather information on this issue.

7.2 Headway Somerset to consider sourcing or providing information sessions to all three centres about direct payments.

Hospital Discharge and Availability of Information on Head Injury.

Several clients also told us that they had not been given information about Headway or support services when they were discharged from Hospital. We were also told that often information about how their Head injury and how it may affect them was not communicated when they were discharged from hospital. Several people felt that their social worker or carers did not understand their condition and how it affected them and therefore felt they did not receive the support they required.

Recommendation 8

8.0 Headway Somerset to consider raising this with Headway National Organisation and explore whether any research has been done or is needed into this area.

8.1 Headway Somerset to contact the Patient Engagement leads in each of the main acute hospitals in Somerset to ensure that information leaflets about head injuries and Headway's services are given to head injury patients when they are discharged.

What people told us...

"Headway saved my life!"

"Coming here has made me realise I still have lots to offer. It makes me feel valued using my experience to help others."

"I have learned more from the others who come here than from any social worker GP or carer."

"Most of my old friends have drifted away since my accident. They didn't understand how I'd changed. I feel understood and accepted here; I have made friends and got my social life back."

"Having one to one support to go out makes a real difference to me."

"I don't understand why they keep changing things. Why can't they just leave things alone?"

Summary

The Enter and View team were welcomed by staff and clients at the centre and many spoke openly to us about their experiences. The Enter and view team heard that a head injury whether it be from an accident or aneurism, a stroke or tumour, often presents as an invisible disability that affects not only a person's cognitive ability but often their whole emotional state, social life and wellbeing. Clients' at all three centres told us how much they valued attending the centres. They said that they felt Headway Somerset provided a place where they felt accepted, understood, supported and most of all valued.

Clients gained a lot from receiving and giving support to each other and plenty of time and encouragement from staff and volunteers was given to enable this.

It was clear that many people felt that attending the centre had prevented them from developing other health conditions such as depression and that it helped maintain their sense of wellbeing.

The outreach one to one support was particularly valued by those who received it and we would encourage Headway Somerset to continue to seek the funds to develop this aspect of service.

We look forward to hearing the response to the recommendations we have made from Headway Somerset and will publish the responses with this report.

This report highlights several areas of good practice that can be shared among all three centres which we would encourage each centre to look at with staff, volunteers and clients to see what could be implemented.

We have been made aware of several issues regarding Direct Payments, hospital discharge and a gap in knowledge and skills for professional workers and GP's. We have also observed and heard from people about the value of peer support and the provision and support from staff & volunteers who enable this to happen.

A past client of Headway Somerset Henton Centre created the mosaic featured on the front cover of this report and the Enter and View team felt that the words depicted on it summed up the centres visited...

“ We discover new skills in this relaxed atmosphere which boosts our confidence and reinforces the healing process. Our work we share is full of colour, joy and emotion”

Appendix 1

List of Activities observed during the visits.

Using Computers for various activities and internet.

Board and card games

Newspapers, crosswords, puzzles on table for anyone to pick up as they came in, -

Gardening, and plant sales.

Quiz/puzzles – group activity.

Board with word puzzle, that anyone could contribute to as and when they wished.

Sessions by trainee psychologist

Pool

Shopping

Signing session.

Woodwork/ DIY