



Wokingham
Learning Disability
Partnership Board

Minutes from the Self Advocate Workshop

Bradbury Centre
Tuesday 13th December, 2011

Being a Good Co-Chair!

Introductions and Icebreaker

David welcomed everyone to today's workshop which was about how to be a good co-chair. The co-chair of the Partnership Board meets lots of new people and needs to make people feel:



Welcome



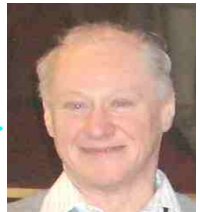
Comfortable



Included

So for today's Icebreaker, David greeted everyone by shaking their hand and said ...

Hello, my name is David.



Then each person replied saying ...



Hello David, my name is ...

What is a co-chair?

A chairperson is someone who runs a meeting, board or a committee. A co-chair is someone who shares the job of running the meetings. They are jointly in charge.

The Partnership Board has 2 co-chairs – one person with a learning difficulty and one person without a learning difficulty. The co-chairs at the moment are David Chaffe and Paul Kirwan.



David Paul

Why are we looking for a co-chair?

- The co-chairs have a very important role.
- The co-chair role lasts for 3 years.
- David has been a co-chair since April 2009.
- We need to find someone to take over from David in 2012.
- The co-chair is chosen by the Partnership Board members.



Everyone needs to choose 2 new co-chairs to support the Partnership Board from next April.



What skills do you need to be a good co-chair?

To help us think about the skills people need to be a good co-chair, we got into groups to share ideas. Each group made a poster with their own ideas and then we shared them with everyone in the room. We had some really good ideas – here are some of the skills and qualities that we thought were important:

- ✓ be a good listener
- ✓ be good at speaking up and making our voice heard
- ✓ attend meetings regularly
- ✓ welcome people
- ✓ be a strong leader
- ✓ care about people
- ✓ be organised
- ✓ be a good communicator (explaining things well)
- ✓ be committed
- ✓ be a good time keeper
- ✓ be easy to contact



One of the skills that everyone thought was important was **being a good listener**. So next we played a game called "Chinese Whispers"! Jodie whispered something to David, who then whispered it to Kathy, and the message was whispered to everyone in the room, one person at a time, until it reached the last person.








The message changed lots of times on its way round the room! It had started off as "*The Partnership Board started in 2001*" but changed to "*jam sandwiches*" and finished off with "*what are you doing?*". This showed how easy it is to pass on the wrong message, so a co-chair needs to make sure they give out the right information and that people understand what is being said.



Who do you think would make a good co-chair?

To help us think about who might make a good co-chair, Julie showed some pictures of characters from The Simpsons tv programme. We talked about their personalities and whether they had the skills to make a good co-chair!



Who?		Good points	Bad points	Votes
Bart			* not a very good listener	3
Homer		* has lots of friends and is a friendly person.	* not a very good listener	3
Marge		* organises her family well. * kind		6
Lisa		* kind and helpful * likes to learn new things * good listener * passionate about what she believes in * a confident speaker		3
Principal Skinner		* organises his school * has experience running meetings * firm but fair	* too busy * too bossy * isn't very patient	2
Otto			* listens to music all the time so wouldn't hear what people say!	0
Ned Flanders		* neat and tidy		1
Sideshow Bob			* would probably break all the rules!	0



What did we find out?

Marge had the most votes so if this was our Partnership Board election, she would be voted as the next co-chair!

When it is time to vote for our new Partnership Board co-chairs at our AGM in February, we will need to remember the reasons why we vote for people.



David's Story

David shared his experience of being the Partnership Board's co-chair for the last 3 years. He said being a co-chair is a lot of hard work, but he has enjoyed it.



David thinks the Partnership Board is important because it helps people with learning disabilities to make choices about their lives. It does this by giving people information and holding workshops that help people think about different issues. For example, helping people think about different housing options.



David also has the job of Inclusion Worker for the Partnership Board. He helps people from day services get involved in the Partnership Board. This job will carry on when David steps down as co-chair in April 2012.



David explained what he does as a co-chair:

- ✓ Introduce the Partnership Board meetings and guests speaking at the meeting.
- ✓ Help keep meetings to order by making sure everyone sticks to the agenda and finish the meetings on time.
- ✓ Make sure people stick to the meeting rules.
- ✓ Tell people about the work of the Partnership Board and bring information back to the Partnership Board.
- ✓ Writing letters to people – to stick up for the rights of people with learning disabilities.
- ✓ Representing the Partnership Board at different meetings, events and conferences.



He said it is important that you make sure everyone in the group gets their voice heard.

What do you need to do if you want to apply?

If anyone would like to apply for this role, you must remember a few things:

- ✓ You need to be sure you can **give the time** the Partnership Board needs. Most of our meetings are on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. Sometimes we have an event which lasts all day.
- ✓ You need to **make a poster** explaining why you would make a good co-chair. You will need to think what skills you have and why you would make a good co-chair and how you would help represent people with learning disabilities.
- ✓ You need to **talk about your poster** at the AGM which is on Wednesday 22nd February at the Town Hall in Wokingham.



You can have some help to make your poster, but it needs to be your words and your ideas.



If you want to find out more about the role, you can speak to David.

Be your own poster!

Jodie wanted to give candidates (people who put themselves forward) a chance to say why they would make a good co-chair and why people should vote for them. They were their own talking campaign poster! Most people said they would work hard, they would listen to what people say, and they would get to meetings on time.



If anyone would like to put themselves forward as a candidate for our next co-chair, please tell us by the beginning of February 2012. David will still be working for the Partnership Board as Inclusion Worker, and will help the new co-chair to get started.

That was the end of our Workshop!

Our next workshop will be on **Tuesday 24th January, 2012** at the Bradbury Centre, 10am-12noon where we will be talking about **Planning our meetings for 2012**

