Health & Community Directorate

Transforming Adult Social Care

Information, Advice and Advocacy Strategy 2010 – 2015

DRAFT @ 9/4/10

HALTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Strategy details

Contents

1 Introduction and Context

1.1 "Information, advice and advocacy are essential for all adults and their relatives and carers who need, who may need, services and support in order to lead their lives." *(Improvement and Development Agency [I&DEA] Transforming adult social care; access to information advice and advocacy report).*

1.2 In Halton the aims of personal wellbeing are underpinned in our strategic priorities:

- A Healthy Halton

- Halton's Urban Renewal.

- Halton's Children and Young People.

- Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton.

- A Safer Halton.

- Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency.

1.3 This Information, Advice and Advocacy strategy lays out how we intend to develop these areas to enable our residents to participate in our local society, support the choices they want to make in their lives and assist in improving their wellbeing.

1.4 The strategy will recognise the changing face of social care, with greater integration with wider health and social wellbeing of individuals through accessing universal services.

1.5 It will also reflect the likely impact that Personalisation and Self Directed Support will have on the choices that people may want to make about the care they receive and other choices they want to make about how they live their lives.

1.6 A common and essential thread throughout will be the principles of Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults so that, whatever choices people make, they should have access to information and advice on how to remain safe and free from abuse.

Definitions

1.7 The terms in this strategy mean the following

- **Information:** 'the open and accessible supply of material deemed to be of interest to a particular population. This can be either passively available or actively distributed.'

- **Advice:** 'offers guidance and direction on a particular course of action which needs to be undertaken in order to realise a need, access a service or realise individual entitlements.'

- **Advocacy:** 'the provision of support and encouragement, or representation of individuals' views, needs or rights. It is fundamental that advocacy recognises the centrality of the service user.'

1.8 Key local partners have been consulted in the development of this initial strategy, but this and the resulting actions will evolve as further consultation takes place. Key partners will be:

- Users, carers and the wider local population

- Various User Led organisations (including LINk)

- Halton Information and Advice Providers (HIAP) group

- Other Council service areas and Members

- Other local partners across all sectors

Focus of the strategy

1.9 The focus of the strategy will be on:

- **Managing information** – what information to hold, who owns it and how it is structured and accessed

- **Enhancing knowledge of how to access information, advice and advocacy** – so that people are aware of what is available to assist them.

- **Delivery mechanisms** – This will be through a range of traditional and less traditional outlets, recognising the role that friends, relatives and local communities often play in advising individuals. The aim will be to develop integrated and reliable resources all will be able to access.

Diagrammatically this can be represented as:
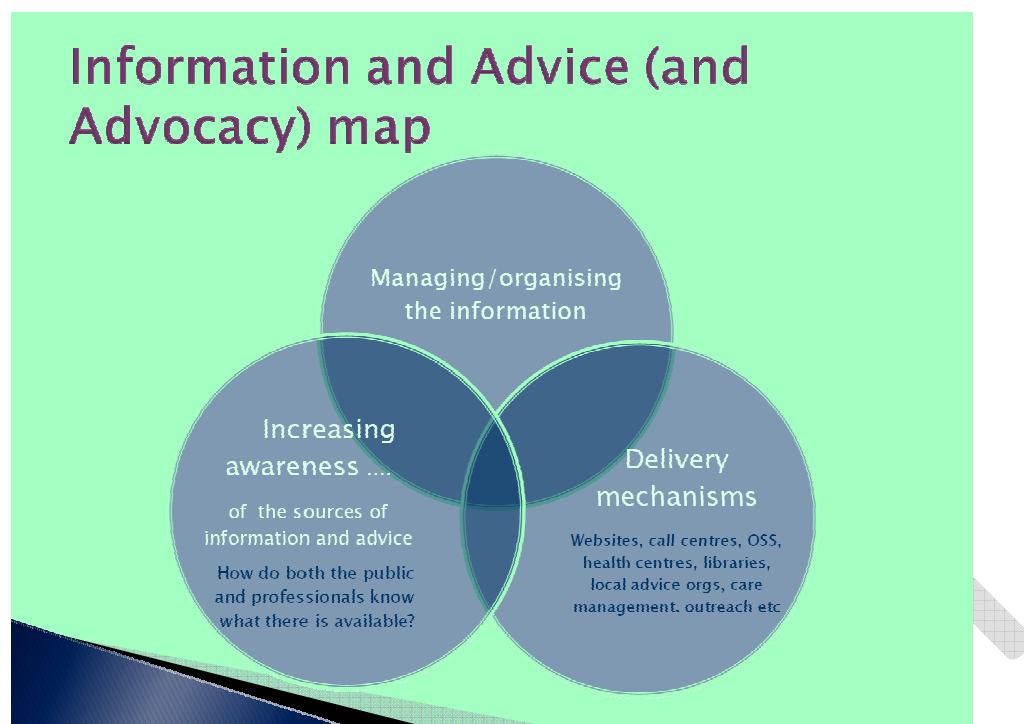
1.9 There is also a recognition that the strategy will need to be kept under review and evolve to reflect emerging practice as the personalisation and self directing support agenda develops.

2 Information and Advice (and Advocacy): Needs Analysis

The Halton area and its information needs

2.1 Although improving, Halton has relatively areas of high deprivation and low literacy rates. Although the proportion of people from ethnic communities in Halton is relatively low, there is a recognition that that may lead to greater isolation and the need to access support from outside of the borough.

2.2 Although Halton has a relatively young average age there will be an impact resulting from an overall aging population and their information, advice and advocacy needs.

2.3 In developing the strategy, there is a recognition that we need to address and meet the specific needs of various people in our area. These will include:

- **People with specific needs** - Older people, disabled people, mentally ill people, substance misusers, carers, young carers, people with sensory impairments and other vulnerable adults

- The need to recognise the need to produce information in **plain language** that people can understand

- People with **specific language or communication needs** and those with sensory or other impairments who may need information presented in an alternative format.

- People who have **specific cultural needs** (in the widest sense) and consider how they are will interact. This may include communities of ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, sexual orientation, age groups etc

- Addressing and reflecting the need to provide information about **mainstream services** that help support and improve peoples wellbeing (eg benefit advice, employment, health, education, transport, sport & leisure etc)

- The information and advice of people **no matter where they live** – eg those wishing to move to the area or relatives of people living in Halton.

Specific research and consultations that help inform direction of the strategy

2.4 There have been a number of initiatives that have helped inform the direction of travel in this strategy. These include:

- The 'Future Café' event consulting people on how they would like to see services develop to meet the Personalisation agenda and their resulting information and advice needs.

- Subsequent Personalisation information needs consultation supported by the Helen Sanderson Group

- Consultation of Internet users into preferred look and feel of websites

- Access to the research findings into information needs and subsequent templates of information website presentation resulting from the Stockport Borough Council/Quickheart project, sponsored by numerous North West authorities and backed the Care Services Efficiency Delivery (CSED) arm of the Department of Health.

- A report commissioned from Susan Bennett of LCS Consultancy Services mapping adult services for personalisation in the Halton area

2.5   In delivering the strategy there is a recognition that further work will be required to better filter and direct people to the information that they require. Initially, the Stockport model (see: www.mycaremychoice.org.uk) that has been market tested in detail, will be used as a template on which to inform navigation through the information system, and help identify gaps.

2.6   Further work will need to be undertaken on how public facing information systems will integrate with back office systems, possibly through a "Personalisation Hub".

2.7   We will need to develop a solution that benchmarks Halton information against potential deficiencies illustrated in the literature review in the I&DeA "Transforming Adult Social Care: Access to Information, Advice and Advocacy" report, which described common national themes to include:

- lack of or misinformation.

- fragmentation of information. Information is rarely held in one place, pertains to different groups of people, is about different departments or service types. There is little signposting between services

- information sources can be overwhelming and non-personalised, with an over-use of jargon or non-accessible language

- inadequate service provision for certain group

- lack of robust evidence-based research around 'what works' in relation to IAA

- specific gaps in relation to evidence on IAA provision for:

    a) ethnic minority communities
    b) those with chaotic lifestyles
    c) people with fluctuating support needs
    d) visually impaired
    e) multiple impairments
    f) private purchasers of social care services (Baxter et al, 2006).

3   Current Position

3.1   In addition to the information about social care services presented traditionally though leaflets, fact sheets, flyers, Internet etc a range of databases, directories and support services have been developed to inform and support people in accesses information and advice about both specific social care services and universal services.

3.2   Often these resources have been developed through specific funding streams, both within the council and beyond. Also, with being a relatively small area, the need to access information regionally, outside the borough's boundaries, is also important. By way of illustration, information sources and support services that have evolved include:

- Sure Start to Later Life Team & Directory for older people
- Reach for the Stars (health sponsored) for older people
- Mental Health Databases
- Bridgebuilders Team & Directory
- Supporting People Directory
- HVA Database of Community Groups
- HVA Here to Help directory
- Help for me (regional directory aimed at Children & families)
- New Greater Merseyside "Signpost" directory

3.3   In the past there was recognition by the predecessor of the current Halton Information & Advice Providers Group (HIAP – partners across the statutory and voluntary sectors operating in Halton) that there was a need for information to be made accessible from one trusted source. .The Haltoncares website was born to meet that need but due to ageing technology and the lack of capacity to maintain it, it was discontinued.

Managing of Information

3.4   Clearly the managing of information for the personalisation agenda, addressing peoples' wider wellbeing needs, and the impact that universal services may have on them, presents a challenge. Whilst there may be some gaps in information that will need addressing, the greater challenge will be to organise information that is relevant to people into a format that is easy for people to navigate (for using life events search options).

3.5   Some existing initiatives do make use of nationally available information from trusted sources to complement knowledge about particular areas. To develop this further, encompassing the wider wellbeing agenda we will need to map this further to identify resources to signpost.

3.6 We will also identify and address any gaps in information that we need to fill. Areas highlighted nationally as demanding additional attention are those surrounding price, availability, quality and accessibility. These will need to areas to give particular attention in mapping what to develop further in Halton.

3.7 Ownership of information across the wider advice sectors in Halton has generally evolved from the needs and demands of individual organisations. This universal strategy gives us the opportunity of working more closely with partners to coordinate more closely with each other to provide a more cross organisational and structured approach that is more cost effective and easier for people to navigate.

3.8 Information Standards has been previously discussed by HIAP partners. The potential around a standard linked to the Community Legal Services scheme was examined but did not come to fruition locally. This strategy gives us an opportunity to examine new initiatives, such as the recently developed Information Standards, that partners may sign up to.

3.9 Whilst there has been cross organisational co-operation through the HIAP group, this strategy gives us the opportunity to re-examine delivery mechanisms in Halton. An underlying principle to such an approach will be the need for trustworthy information that is kept up to date.

3.10 The potential expansion of opportunities for vulnerable people illustrate the importance of continuing to promote safeguarding and to encourage people to remain safe in the choices that they make about their lives.

Delivery Mechanisms

3.11 Within the council, cross services Information and advice is provided through Direct Link offices, the 24 hour call centre and various publications (including those with particular communication needs) accessed through the website and beyond. The council also has a contract for translation and various interpretation needs which is accessed as required.

3.12 Council information is a good source of other universal services information to support the Personalisation agenda and the promotion of wellbeing through mainstream services. However, we need to recognise are also elsewhere and will need to be reflected within the delivery of the aims of this strategy.

3.13 Specific person centred Information and advice is dispensed by Council outreach staff to complement the standard information and advice that is available.

3.14   Also specialised social care related information and advice services such as Sure Start to Later Life, the Bridge Building and Supporting People Teams have been developed to meet particular needs. In addition other services, such as Welfare Rights and the Halton Advice Bus, deliver specialist financial advice that affect peoples' wellbeing.

3.15   User organisations within Halton have their own information and advice resources. Providers range from those covering a wide agenda (for example Citizens Advice Bureau), those covering particular groups (for example Age Concern, the Carers Centre etc) and other more specialised areas.

3.16   The developing user led organisations in Halton, will be key partners in taking this strategy forward. Also, in developing our approach in Halton we will need to recognise the role played by the wider community, such as family, friends and community groups as those people approach for information and advice.

3.17   Consequently, in developing our information resource, we need to be mindful to present information in such a way that it is easy for non specialists to navigate, to help them find the information and advice required. Such an approach will also help own staff in Direct Link offices and other places (such as libraries and community centres to access trustworthy information.

3.18   An internet accessible solution that is available to all, which coordinates information and navigates advisors and the public alike to it clearly should be explored as the most cost effective model to develop.

Using research to inform our direction for the future

3.19   We have undertaken and had access to various research resources looking at how people want information and advice services to be delivered. Locally this has included the "Future Café" consultation event of the development of Personalisation in Halton, consultation led by the Helen Sanderson Group for Halton on style of information people preferred or Personalisation and the mapping exercise commissioned from Susan Bennett (LCS Consultancy Services), covering Information, Advice and Advocacy Services.

3.20   Additionally, Halton along with 12 other North West authorities, signed up to the intellectual rites of research into peoples social care information needs (sponsored by the Care Services Efficiency Delivery (CSED) arm of the Department of Health). The project involved detailed market research by a ` company called Quickheart with Stockport Borough Council to develop a template for the presentation and navigation of information that people needed to make positive choices about their lives and their support needs.

3.21   This research, and the Stockport template, will give us the evidence and foundations on which to build our own model of information delivery in Halton.

Advocacy in Halton

3.22 Advocacy in Halton is provided by a combination of funded arrangements for specific groups or issues, along with that provided by user led organisations and others through more informal arrangements. This strategy offers us the opportunity to review current arrangements to examine how they fit with the evolving Personalisation agenda.

Quality Assurance of Information and Advice

3.23 At present, individual organisations use their own systems, or contracts with those they commission, to assure quality standards. There is not currently a cross organisational quality standard, used to benchmark and assure the quality of information and advice. This strategy offers the opportunity of developing such an approach, to assure quality and consistency across the Halton area.

4 Developing and Delivering Information and Advice (and Advocacy) Services over the next five years

Statement of strategic intent

4.1 The development of this strategy will be contributory towards achieving Halton's vision, which is that:

Halton will be a thriving and vibrant Borough where people can learn and develop their skills; enjoy a good quality of life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality, sustained by a thriving business community; and safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods.

Context of Information and Advice (and Advocacy) in the wider Transformation of Adult Social Care

4.2 Information, advice and advocacy are fundamental to enabling individuals, and those who advise and advocate for them, to take control of their lives.

4.3 One of the strategy's key aims will be to promote the use of universal services, to help meet peoples care needs and improve or maintain their wellbeing.

4.4 Part of this process will not only to raise awareness of people who have those needs, and those who currently support them, but also the rest of the

population who can help transform the wider community in to one that is more aware and supportive of people with care needs.

4.5 We also need to recognise the information needs of those who are approached for advice, both those in those in the advice sectors and others with a less formal advice roll (such as family, friends and community groups).

Potential direction to develop the strategy

4.6 An internet solution that is available to all, which coordinates information and navigates advisors and the public alike to it clearly, should be explored as the most cost effective model to develop. This will however, need to be backed up by more traditional paper based information, along with that directed to people who have additional communication needs.

4.6 The Stockport template, that we have intellectual rites to, is an obvious starting point on which to benchmark how we present information, given the market testing already undertaken on that project, and to consult and build a Halton solution. Such a solution enables those who know what they are looking for to go straight to it, but also to be aided to browse through options based on lifetime events.

4.7 Whilst a longer term goal could be the central database, as recommended in Susan Bennett's report, we need to be realistic and mindful of existing resources, particularly those held by partners who we need to sign up to the approach, along with the out of borough organisations and information resources we may need to point to. To reflect the realities that we have to deal with, a more incremental approach is a more practical solution, starting with better ordering and signposting of current information, identifying gaps in information and quickly developing a platform on which to present it.

4.8 However, relatively early in the project, we will need to examine the potential of drawing together existing social care directories into whatever central database we develop (for example, Sure Start to Later Life, Bridgebuilding, Supporting People). This would help to create a strong foundation on which to develop greater coordination/integration with other information resources outside the Council.

4.9 Such a resource will need to be developed with and promoted to partner organisations as a tool to enable them to offer trusted advice. The Halton Information and Providers (HIAP) group, which includes members from across the Council, health and the voluntary sector, will be important. This has been agreed as a good way forward by some of the major partners in the HIAP

group and has been put on the agenda of the next meeting in May to discuss the role that the wider group can play.

4.10 In order to maximise the reach of the strategy we will need to examine the wider potential of promoting the resource. A publicity campaign will help to raise general awareness, but we must examine other ways of reaching those who are traditionally more isolated.

4.11 There is greater potential for a well designed and easy to use internet based resource to be promoted and used in other areas that people may approach for more informal information and advice. Amongst these may be libraries, day services, community services and Halton's Advice Bus. These, and other areas where to enable access to such advice should be examined in developing our strategy and how we deliver it.

4.12 The creation of such a portal, that is well marketed, opens up the possibilities of recreating the intended spirit of the Haltoncares project but supported by more functional and easier to maintain platform.

4.13 Such an approach opens the opportunity to "badge" and promote the use of the resource in a wider context than just traditional advice outlets. This may include the promotion of its usage in partner agencies in the voluntary sectors (for example, age concern and Citizen's Advice Bureau), Council and other Community Centres, Social Care Day Services, Libraries etc.

4.14 Further marketing of the resource to promote personal usage could be scheduled through the Inside Halton magazine and various promotional events such as the Disability Awareness Day, Carers Week, World Mental Health Day and other Halton specific events.

Potential technical solutions to deliver the strategy

4.15 There are a number of options in developing a resource to promote consistent and accurate advice. These include:

- To create a stand alone internet presence linked to, but independent of, the Council website

- Using the new Council Internet software to create a look and feel of the Stockport project to guide people around information sources

- To go a stage further and create linkages from the website to back office functions (such as self/supported assessment modules, calculator of illustrative indicative personal budget and cost calculator)

- A bespoke "Personalisation Hub" that integrates back office functions with web facing information and tools.

- Or a combination of some of the preceding

These will need further evaluation to select the most appropriate direction to take.

Measuring success

4.16   Any technical solutions that we develop will need to incorporate ways of measuring success (for example – positive outcomes from referrals to other agencies). Identification of referral would need to be identified along with a way of identifying and measuring outcome success.

4.17   We will also need to identify how we will demonstrate how we have met the second and third "Putting People First" milestones, i.e. by October 2010 that the council has put in place arrangements for universal access to information and advice and by April 2011 that the public are informed about where they can go to get the best information and advice about their care and support needs.

4.18   In doing so we will have to illustrate points such as:

- Any accreditation systems for services

- Feedback from people who have used the services

- How we ensure that the information is legal, truthful, decent

- If the system is open and internet based, how will you build in protection measures in relation to abuse and exploitation

- Who will elicit, collate, update and store information and how

- Who will own the information

- How we will "future proof" provision so that it can adapt to the communication preferences of younger and future generations.

4.19   We may not be at a stage by April 2010 to be completely definitive about the standards and QA systems that you we want to deploy; therefore defining these may be an early critical activity of the strategy.

5 Commissioning and Resourcing the Strategy

5.1 The initial phase of delivering the strategy will be defining the detail of what we want to achieve. This will include

- **Commissioning intentions**: Specifying our requirements, defining who we need to involve and how, and what procurement activities we may wish to undertake

- **Workforce planning**: setting out both workforce requirements, how these will relate to other workforce development activity

- **Community capacity building implications**: and how this will link with other such activity

- **Marketing planning:** and how we will secure skills and resources to communicate and raise knowledge and awareness across all of our stakeholders

- **Financial planning**: identifying what resources we will require to deliver the strategy, how this will impact on other services, whether and which components of the strategy may be Invest to Save activities and how we will model your finances over the life of the strategy

- **Performance Management**: including how we will manage and communicate our measures of success

5.2   Clearly, how we do so with be related to decisions on the direction and methodology we will take to meet the broad aims and aspirations of the strategy.

Initial steps required to deliver the strategy
5.3   Within the first 3 months of the 2010/2011 financial year we will need to consult, examine and decide on how we intend to develop universal information, advice and advocacy in Halton, to enable us to meet the "Putting People First" milestones, that by October 2010 that the council has put in place arrangements for universal access to information and advice and by April 2011 that the public are informed about where they can go

Roles in scoping opportunities and developing detailed plans to deliver the strategy
5.4   To deliver the strategy will require coordinated partnership working. Below are some of the key players who will need to input into the initial scoping process:

Who	How
Senior Management Team	Agree approach and Allocated resources to meet the strategy
Transformation Team	Lead Role in the detailed management of processes and resources of the personalisation
Customer Care and Information Team	Supporting role informing potential direction, resources and solutions
IT Business Services	Supporting role informing and evaluating potential technical solutions and working practices, costs, compatibility with other Council systems and liaison with other IT support.
Communications and Marketing Team	Developing the information content, helping to identify gaps and links within the solution
Community Services	Developing outreach of the resource to communities and those who are isolated
Commissioners	Reviewing existing resources in the context of the requirements of personalisation (eg advice and

	advocacy)
Halton Information and Advice Providers (HIAP) Group	Helping to develop, using and promoting the resource
User led organisations	Also helping to develop, using and promoting the resource
Operational Services	Also helping to develop, using and promoting the resource

Key issues to address

5.5 A number of issues that demand early attention. Amongst these are:

- Further consult stakeholders in the development of this strategy

- Benchmarking current information against what we aspire to (eg Stockport site and the I&DEA research) and identifying gaps and how we may fill them

- Potential solutions to be examined (see 4.11) with costs and resources (eg technical, project management, additional support) identified

- Examination of current advice and advocacy against the requirement of the Personalisation agenda.

5.6 Such a scoping exercise will enable us to develop a detailed action plan to meet the initial milestones of the "Putting People First" agenda, but also plot out the longer term goals we wish to set over the next 5 years to meet local aspirations.