

A Regional Partnership

10 local authorities agreed to work together in dialogue with independent care providers (Providers) to explore the opportunities from a Regional Partnership. This was seen as a forum where all authorities in the Region could work with Providers to create a positive balance between the need to reduce costs and the shifting elements/expectations of people who use services.

Using a carefully planned and structured approach we gathered the differing perspectives of Directors/Commissioners, Providers and Carers/People who use Services – meeting each group separately. We then brought them together for a full day, a total of 39 people, so that each could build their understandings of the others' wishes for the future, a future in which they collaborated to achieve positive results that they all wanted to achieve.

The afternoon saw them working in mixed groups generating many creative ideas about actions to achieve an agreed series of priorities. Within this there was recognition that collaboration via the Partnership approach would bring clear opportunities for cost reductions and that the inclusion of people who used services would increase the potential for services that were truly responsive.

At the conclusion agreements were reached about important 'next steps' and all participants gave their views about the dialogue workshop. The evaluation sheets confirmed that a significant majority of people were very positive about the day. Their ratings, on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), showed 44% who viewed it as Excellent, 41% as Very Good and 15% as Good i.e. No dissatisfied participants!!