

People Scrutiny Commission



7 March 2022

Report of: Hugh Evans, Executive Director, People

Title: Building Rights: update from the task and finish group

Ward: All

Officers Presenting Report: Alun Davies – Bristol DEC / Hugh Evans BCC

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Recommendations:

The People Scrutiny Commission is asked to note the update provided by the body of this report, and to consider the progress that has been made in response to the Sir Stephen Bubb review **Building Rights: Independent Review of Services for Autistic People and People with Learning Difficulties**.

(NB: the review was initially entitled Building Rights: Review of Bristol's policies and actions for people with learning disabilities and autism, but it has since become known by the above title.)

The significant issues in the report are:

The report provides an update on the work of the 'task and finish' group that has been formed to respond to the recommendations in Sir Stephen Bubb's report.

In particular, the 'task and finish' group has decided the following three things.

- People with learning difficulties and Autistic people (including people that find it harder to communicate or join in) must be central to this work.
- It won't be possible to complete the 'task and finish' work by the end of March. It will take longer to do it properly, and make sure people are fully involved.
- A '**reference**' group will be needed to make sure that the work that comes out of the Building Rights report properly meets the challenges.

Further reports on this work will be made available to the People Scrutiny Commission in upcoming months as required.



1. Summary

- a. On 19 July 2021, the Bristol City Council People Scrutiny Commission received a report about a review paper called Building Rights: Independent Review of Services for Autistic People and People with Learning Difficulties. Building Rights was written by Sir Stephen Bubb, who was asked by Bristol City Council and the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership to do a review of services and support for people with learning difficulties and Autistic people in Bristol. The review was published in May 2021.
- b. The Building Rights review makes three recommendations to help people who run services become more aware and to have a better understanding of the challenges faced by Autistic people and people with learning difficulties.
- c. The stories of three families were told in Sir Stephen’s review. After listening to these stories, Sir Stephen said Bristol organisations should follow these recommendations.
 - Introduce a Charter of Rights.
 - Introduce a ‘right to challenge’, so that people can ask questions about their services and support and make it clear if they are unhappy with them.
 - Introduce an independent commissioner for Autistic people and people with learning difficulties.
- d. When the Building Rights review was published in May 2021, Marvin Rees (the Mayor of Bristol) asked Alun Davies to lead a ‘task and finish’ group of people to respond to the review and say what the organisations of the city were going to do about it. Alun Davies leads the Bristol Disability Equalities Commission, and so he’s in a good position to do this piece of work.
- e. This report is a ‘follow up’ for the People Scrutiny Commission. It tells the councillors on the Commission about the membership of the ‘task and finish’ group, about the work that they are doing, and about what they want to achieve from the work.

2. Context

a, Who is on the Building Rights ‘task and finish’ group?

From the beginning of the work, Alun Davies was clear that the ‘task and finish’ group should have two types of people on it.

- People with **‘lived experience’**: Autistic people, people with learning disabilities, and people who support them in their lives, especially their carers.
- **People who provide the services** that are talked about in the Building Rights report.

‘Lived Experience’. So far, the group members include two Autistic people who work for the organisations of the city, and one worker who is a carer for her Autistic son. One of the group members is a man with a learning difficulty. There are also three people who have joined the group who are carers.

People who provide services. The ‘task and finish’ group has members from the following organisations. These organisations have made sure that senior people attend the meetings so that

they can make decisions in the meetings.

- Avon and Somerset Police
- Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership Trust
- Bristol City Council
- Bristol Disability Equality Forum
- British Transport Police
- Carers Support Centre
- Freeways
- National Autistic Society
- NHS Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire CCG
- North Bristol NHS Trust
- WECIL

The ‘task and finish’ group is thinking about how the voices of Autistic people and people with learning difficulties can be properly heard in this work. The group members with ‘lived experience’ who are on the group say that more work is needed to get better insight from the people of Bristol who don’t usually get to say what they think.

A ‘reference’ group. The phrase ‘**nothing about us without us**’ is very powerful in this kind of work. But at the same time, it won’t be possible to have everyone taking part in the ‘task and finish’ group. Because of that, the ‘task and finish’ group members have said that it would be good to start a bigger piece of work to talk to people with ‘lived experience’ in the ways that suit them. At the meeting of the ‘task and finish’ group on 31 March 2022 some options about how this should be done will be discussed. The Participation Project Officer from the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership will be helping the group to discuss this.

b, What work has the ‘task and finish’ group done so far?

The Building Rights ‘task and finish’ group has had three meetings so far. At each of the meetings, the group has discussed one of the Building Rights recommendations.

Members of the group who need more support to think about the questions in the meeting get the agenda and the questions before the meeting, and Alun Davies sometimes has a one-to-one conversation with them as well. One group member prefers to prepare his answers in advance so when the meeting is happening, he can be sure that his point is made.

In the group work discussing the three recommendations, the members spent a full session looking at each of them in detail. Another report will be produced when the ‘task and finish’ group has completed its work. The group has decided three things so far.

- People with learning difficulties and Autistic people (including people that find it harder to communicate or join in) must be central to this work.
- It won’t be possible to complete the ‘task and finish’ work by the end of March. It will take longer to do it properly, and make sure people are fully involved.
- A ‘**reference’ group** (as mentioned above) will be needed to make sure that the work that comes out of the Building Rights report properly meets the challenges.

The **'reference' group** will also be important for this work because it will help to define the key challenges: to work out what they mean for Autistic people and people with learning difficulties, and for people who provide services.

Members of the 'task and finish' group have said that the idea of a 'Charter of Rights' is quite a straightforward one, but that the idea of the 'right to challenge' needs some work to understand exactly what it means, and what the people who provide services will have to do about it. Also, the idea of the 'independent commissioner' needs some thought. Is the role going to be paid? If the role is independent, then where will it 'sit'? How can the role be powerful but also truly 'independent'? The 'reference' group will be thinking about this and deciding on a job description for the independent commissioner.

While the 'task and finish' group has only met three times, quite a lot of work has been done, and progress has been made. The group is very keen to keep going and to make sure that this work is done properly.

3. Policy

This approach aligns with the One City Plan and its aim to make Bristol a **fair and sustainable** city.

The approach also links to the **Health and Wellbeing theme**, ensuring everyone in Bristol will have the opportunity to live a life in which they are mentally and physically healthy and addressing health inequalities.

This work also aligns with our **Equalities and Inclusion Policy** (2018-2023) by valuing diversity and tackling harassment, in particular the following objectives.

- E03. To provide inclusive services which actively address inequality and exclusion and enable all of Bristol's citizens to realise their potential and live safely.
- E04. To achieve a measurable increase in the extent to which communities facing inequality can share in and contribute to the city's success.

4. Consultation

The 'task and finish' group has been formed to build relationships, gather insight, and start work together to produce some good outcomes from the Building Rights review. 'Hearing the voices' of people who often don't get a chance to join in strategic conversations or conversations about their own lives is the most important part of this.

Whilst now is not the time for formal consultation, this work plan will break new ground in meaningful engagement, establishing trust and addressing the challenges of the Sir Stephen Bubb review, Building Rights.

5. Public Sector Equality Duties

Public sector equality duties are entirely relevant to these proposals as we are seeking to eliminate discrimination and harassment and address the inequalities and disadvantage faced by people with Learning Disabilities and Autistic people.

Many people who have Learning Disabilities and Autistic people also face multiple disadvantages and may have other protected characteristics (e.g. related to race, age, sexual orientation) and this is also being considered.

Equalities Impact Assessments will need to be undertaken for all agreed proposals and people with lived experience involved in co-producing any changes or plans.

Appendices:

Find a link to Sir Stephen Bubb's Building Rights review here.

[Review of Bristol's policies and actions for people with learning disabilities and autism](#)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None.