



ARC NI supports people with a learning disability to carry out roving reports in the community.

This is part of the role carried out by ARC NI's 'Telling It Like It Is' groups, part funded by the BHSCT & SEHSCT.



10,000 VOICES IMPROVING PATIENT CARE



Roving Reporters Philip and Alex attended the 10,000 Voices Celebration to find out about this interesting project and how it is making a difference to patient care.

TILII members love doing roving reports. As advocacy groups of men and women with a learning disability who speak out on issues that matter to us, we enjoy sharing our views and ideas to influence people who design services to make a difference. So we were really pleased when we were invited to the '10,000 Voices' celebration event. This brilliant project is about making healthcare better for all of us. 10,000 Voices gives us a chance to share our health care experience and to talk about the things we liked or didn't like. This information is actually shared and acted upon to influence the future of healthcare to make it better for everyone.

The first person we interviewed was Christine Armstrong, Regional Lead for 10,000 Voices. Christine, who works on behalf of the Public Health Agency, explained that she leads the 10,000 Voices initiative across all the Trusts in Northern Ireland and other organisations to make sure we get lots of people telling their story about their Health and Social Care journey. Christine told us that it is really important that we get feedback from people about their experience because it's only when we ask people about how their own experience has been, that we can improve it for them and for other people coming along behind them. So far we have had lots of achievements. We have been able to improve experiences for people who attend our emergency departments, we have been able to improve experiences for children and young people whenever they attend the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and we have also been able to make lots of other changes, for example changing the colour of badges to make it easy for people to see them. We want to make sure every person who has had a health and social care experience in NI tells their story. That should be one million voices as there are over one million people who live in Northern Ireland.

We then interviewed Paul Cummings, Director of Finance at the Health and Social Care Board. We decided it was good to interview the person with all the money as they would be a good shopping buddy!!! Only joking. We know how hard it is to get money and it is important it goes to good projects that make a difference, as health is something important to us all.

Paul explained that along with Mary Hinds, he jointly chairs the Patient and Client Steering group and how he had to work hard to get the money for the 10,000 Voices project. He explained it is important as everything we do is for the patients and clients. If we do something that they do not like or think is not good, we need to know because we want to make their lives better and make a difference. Paul said "It is important that we listen to people to understand what they want from the health service. I think we have changed the culture because as a Health Service we did not listen, now we are learning to listen. In the past we always thought we knew best. Now I think we have learned to listen to people and their opinions and stories and we are allowing them to inform our decisions. Now we know to ask people first. For me it is about having the courage to let people give their opinions and for us to listen. That is the key. It is easy to do surveys but it is better to take the time and listen to the actual stories and experiences and to use these to help us understand what the person wants and have the courage to know that it does not always match what we think. It is about being person centred and listening and respecting each individual."

TILII reporters sat and listened to the speakers who were all very good and told some great stories on how patient experiences had been used to make a difference to their service. Roving reporter Alex said he liked that they had changed the colour of name badges to black and yellow so that people with poor sight could see them.

Professor Charlotte McArdle, Chief Nursing Officer, explained that she had responsibility at the Department of Health for patient experience. She worked with the PHA to get feedback from 10,000 Voices and then helped to make changes based on what families and patients tell us. She said "It is really important that the care people get in the health and social care system meets their needs and that we treat everybody with respect and dignity. It is also important that we communicate with them around their health needs and help them to make decisions around their own health and social care. It is really important for me as a nurse that I live these behaviours and see them transpired into practice. There has been a huge amount of achievements so far based on the feedback and a number of things have changed from how we reassess and assess people's pain, to helping people in the emergency Departments who have an unavoidable delay to make sure they are more comfortable with blankets as well as giving out refreshments. We have helped to change the way we provide services in primary care and most importantly we have got people involved in helping us shape what the future looks like for health and social care. I hope that we will have a new type of health and social care based on real partnership with the people who use it and the staff who deliver it and that the changes we make will be to everybody's benefit. I think that 10,000 Voices has done a fantastic job. It has really been creative about getting peoples voices heard and not only heard but making sure we all learn from what they have told us. We need to make the changes to how the care is delivered everyday across thousands of different facilities and thousands of homes across thousands of people."

There was a really funny speaker called David Meade. He was brilliant and he spoke about the importance of listening. He got all the audience up doing activities and just kept us laughing all the time. He told us how important it was to empower people so that they could make a difference. TILII are all about empowering everyone to speak out so we knew we had to interview David.

David Meade, Keynote Speaker said "I have been a patient and a user over all of the trusts for many years, so I come at it from that perspective. But second of all, I am here to show how important it is to listen and when you listen to the patient experience, you can help the services to grow and improve for the better. It is important to me because my family and I use the trust an awful lot and I think improving it, even if it is only small improvements, when they come together they can make a really big impact. At this point there had been lots of small achievements and the one that really sticks with me is how we deal with the visually impaired making name badges on the ward yellow and black as opposed to white and black. This has made a really big difference to a lot of people. That is the most important thing for me. It doesn't have to be a big change but it still can make such a difference. It is crucial to keep listening and then we will keep learning new things. It is like attending a class. We always gain something and I hope if 10,000 Voices continues, it will create a culture where everyone is listened to and can access the right care and services. I think this day has been very good. I would have liked a few more noodles and if there had not been pavlova for dessert I would have gone straight to Trip Advisor to say this is the worst conference ever"!

TILII agreed that pavlova does make a huge difference and were all happy that lunch including a big piece of pavlova was a perk of being a roving reporter. Yum yum!!

Lynne Charlton, Head of Quality, Safety and Patient Experience in the PHA said she had been very privileged to have been involved in the project since 2015 and working alongside Christine and the team. "I have been privileged to see every single story that has been submitted to 10,000 Voices and to be able to see and hear through the eyes and ears of the patients, clients, service users, families and carers and to understand and learn how we can improve services based on their stories. It is very important to me as a service user myself as I have had family members and my own personal experience of being in hospital. I understand about the importance of things that patients and clients are telling us about what matters to them. Things like being assured, being introduced, being cared for and feeling safe. So it is very important to me as an individual and it is also a very important aspect of my role in the Public Health Agency as well. I am pleased to say how many things have been achieved both locally within the Trust themselves where they have many actions in relation to the stories they have heard both from their staff and their services users. But regionally we have a responsibility within the Public Health Agency to try and influence policy, influence commissioning decisions and inform future service developments, as well as making sure we share the stories with everybody we can share them with to try and influence the care patients and clients receive. I hope the project will never end and I am very impressed with the work that everyone has done regionally to bring 10,000 Voices to where it is today and that we can now move on to 100,000 Voices and more. I hope it does go to where Mary Hinds said she would like it to be, one hundred thousand Voices. That would be excellent. I think the message that has been coming out loud and clear today is don't always assume you know what is right for the patient or client, and one of the things that has also been a strong message today is that the smallest things can make the biggest differences. They are often low cost and yet they mean a lot to patients, families, carers and service users. I think that is the key message from today."

Roving reporters Alex and Philip decided it would be a good idea to ask some of the guests what they thought of the event.

Richard, who works alongside the project, said "it has been a very good day with a good range of speakers. David Meade was very good. It was good to hear about all the Trusts and the changes. It is a brilliant project and very worthwhile. It is great hearing all the voices and taking the experiences away to improve services".

One of our friends Janet, Director of Compass Advocacy Network (CAN), said it was very good learning about different experiences and she was having a lovely day especially because TILII Roving Reporters were there. Thank you Janet we will be sending the flowers later.

Alison and Natalie, Staff Nurse and Senior Nurse, said "It is fantastic, very entertaining speakers. We work in the surgical day admission units and were part of some of the surveys. Great work done by the project".

A Staff Nurse from the Ulster hospital said "It was a fabulous event. We have learnt so much today about the badges for example, which will be useful in our ward to help the elderly".

Now it was time for our last victim, we mean interviewee Grainne Cushley, Quality Twenty Twenty (Q2020) Project Manager. Grainne said "I have been involved from the very beginning. I provided some project support to the setup of the project and have been working closely with Christine and Nicola and the rest of the 10,000 Voices team to facilitate a lot of the work. It is really important to me. I think patients experience should be at the core of everything we do. It is crucial that we listen to them, learn from them and improve the services. There already have been many key improvement areas in each of the different organisations. There have been really tangible things and lots of work going on in the background in terms of influencing educational programme, policies and commissioning. It would be great to keep going and to see 100,000 Voices listening to the patients, having them round the table to inform decisions and improve services. Today has been a very positive day, with a good turn out and it is great to hear so many positive stories".

TILII like doing roving reports and making sure all those good news stories get out there. This was a great event that was not only fun but was all about everyone sharing their stories and experiences so that the people who make the decisions and design the services for health care, can make it better for us all.

We wanted to finish with a really nice quote that we heard at the celebration event; 'The patient voice should be heard and heeded at all times, even when it is just a whisper (Berwick 2013)' and 10,000 Voices are making sure this happens.



Christine Armstrong Regional Lead



Paul Cummings Director of Finance & TILII's new shopping buddy!



Richard talks to us about his involvement with the project and what he thinks of the event



Getting to have your photograph taken with a VIP is a great part of being a roving reporter



Roving reporters Philip and Alex with Professor Charlotte McArdle & Key Note Speaker David Meade all smiling after the Pavlova. This roving reporting is really hard work you know!!!



WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED OUR REPORT AS MUCH AS WE ENJOYED BEING THERE, AND REMEMBER MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD AND IMPROVE HEALTHCARE.

