



Impact Data: service example

Name of service and location (please include country).

Access Independent Ltd, working on behalf of Devon County Council in the UK, undertaking assessments of applicants for Blue Badges under the non-visible Hidden Disability criteria introduced in 2019.

Description of the service: eg. profile of users, setting, integrated/multidisciplinary, 7 day, etc.

In 2019 the Department for Transport undertook a review of the guidance issued to local authorities to ensure the guidance meet the Equalities Act. In response the Department for Transport issued clarifications to the guidance to ensure that applicants with mental health difficulties were treated fairly in comparison to those with physical disabilities.

The clarification included extending the criteria to include:

People with an enduring and substantial disability that means they:

- experience very considerable difficulty whilst walking, which may include very considerable psychological distress
- are at risk of serious harm when walking, or pose, when walking, a risk of serious harm to any other person

The challenge: What need was the service set up to meet? What challenge does your service address?

The new criteria were issued and needed to be implemented by all local authorities in England. New assessment forms were required, training in the new criteria was required by assessors and administrative staff in Devon to provide guidance to residents and to make the appropriate decision regarding eligibility.

Actions taken: eg. aims of service, delivery, assessments and measures used.

In late 2018 Access Independent visited Devon County Council and undertook training of Devon demonstrative staff in the non-visible Hidden Disability criteria.

Unfortunately Devon Expert Assessors, who did not attend the training, still struggled with the new criteria so Devon asked Access Independent to undertake all non-visible Hidden Disability assessments, which because of their nature could be sent to Access Independent via a secure email service and undertaken as a desktop assessment.

Impact: eg. difference to service users, carers, systems delivery, other services and delivery partners.

Access Independent worked with Devon to undertake over 450 Hidden Disability assessments in an 18 month period.

Measure of success: KPIs showed that we consistently met timescales and the record of complaints showed a steady reduction as the process was explained to residents.

Access Independent were able to deliver Concessionary Travel assessments undertaken by knowledgeable and fully-trained occupational therapists and physiotherapists. This meant that Concessionary Travel permits were awarded to those who met the criteria under the new non-visible Hidden Disabilities criteria.

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Please confirm that you have gained permission from your employer to share this information: Yes.