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Co-production at its best!

Breakthrough UK was delighted to recently host an interesting and informative visit in August 2011, welcoming Commissioners and the disabled leader from the new Hartlepool Centre for Independent Living project on Teesside.

In a packed schedule, the party visited Trafford Centre for Independent Living, the nationally important Right to Control Pilot Site and the established Breakthrough UK Employment Venture Centre in Ardwick.

The visit was brokered through the User-Led Organisations Network North East, where the need to learn from National Leaders in the field was identified. Breakthrough UK already deliver a Policy Briefing for ULOs in the North and have worked on several projects alongside Vision Sense, their colleagues in the North East which hosts the network there.



During the visit, the party (pictured with representatives from Manchester) heard about learning and recommendations from Local Authority counterparts in Manchester and user-led organisation experts who have already established and now run the essential, innovative services to ensure disabled people enjoy the independent living, choice and control that most people take for granted. Lorraine Gradwell MBE, Chief Executive of Breakthrough UK, who gives strategic direction to the Right to Control site, hosted the visit and shared with the Commissioners how the low-cost, high impact, personalised services had been established and developed, run by disabled people themselves, to improve outcomes and cut costs.

Chris Horn, Modernisation Lead Working Age Adults, Hartlepool Borough Council said, "It was a great opportunity for us to visit the Trafford CiL and then the Breakthrough and Right to Control Sites. We were made very welcome by Lorraine and her colleagues and we were very grateful for the opportunity to hear how they have successfully established the CiL, but more importantly to hear the story behind the hard work and successful partnership work that has taken place in promoting the rights of disabled people. We hope that here in Hartlepool we can use some of our learning from the visit in the development of the Hartlepool CiL and User-Led Organisations, and also to build on our newly found friendships with colleagues in Manchester."

Pictured above are (left to right, back row): Kevin Taylor, Trafford CiL; Ben Wickens, Employment Support Service; Susie Balderston, ULO Network NE; Chris Horn, Modernisation Lead, Working Age Adults, Hartlepool Borough Council; Gary Timperley, Trafford CiL; Neil Harrison, Strategic Commissioner - Working Age Adults Hartlepool Borough Council & Hartlepool Primary Care Trust; (Left to right, front row): Michael Slimings, Director, Incontrol-able CIC; Lorraine Gradwell, MBE, Chief Executive, Breakthrough UK Ltd.