

Devon Small Scale Provider Forum meeting

Date: 05.02.07

Time: 10.00

Venue: Step By Step, Dawlish

Present:

Wendy Mason - chair

Ian Greenaway

Jan Navran

Jenny Cook

Cara Cox

Rory Swift

Penny Wilkinson

Jan Buckingham

Katie Mockridge

Apologies:

Julianne Dalton

Simon Haywood

Mike Armstrong

Linda Williams

Jim Chapman

By invitation:-

Edward MacMullen - Devon Supporting People

Mark Jennings - Adult & Community Services

Wendy began the meeting by welcoming Ed and Mark.

She expressed disappointment at the poor attendance in view of the importance of the meeting and the hard work which has gone in to setting it up.

Ed and Mark were asked to outline their roles and sum up anything that is new for Service Providers.

Ed: He is in the process of sending default notices to providers who have failed to make their returns but is more than happy to talk to providers and help them with this.

Mark: The latest thing is 'Self-directing Support'. This turns on its head the present concept. There is a big drive to match Service Users' requests and needs to Service Providers'.

We are also working in conjunction with health services and have already in place special nurses in hospitals to assist patients Learning Disabilities. We want to extend this to GP practices where we will have screening nurses to recognise the particular needs of Service Users with Learning Disabilities. It is now recognised that they have particular needs in accessing health services.

Wendy then outlined our concerns and questions as noted in the previous minutes.

Mark: Most Social Services teams should be aware of what can and cannot be funded by Supporting People. It is now clear that, from the outset, Supporting People funded too much and a proportion must now be taken on by Social Services. This should not vary from area to area within Devon and forum members need to talk to their area Team Managers about why they differ.

Service Users' needs change and it is always hoped that support can be gradually reduced. However, we had to accept that this view was simplistic and look at individual cases.

We have learned hard lessons with regard to lack of regular assessments.

I think it's proper that Providers do assessments for potential Service Users and should feel empowered to question the appropriateness of placements.

We all need to talk to each other: Service Users, families, providers, Care Managers.

We are working more closely now with Supporting People to discuss funding criteria.

Ed: We accept that, historically, there has been a lack of understanding but there is good news.

We are looking to start a pilot scheme (if anyone would like to put their organisation forward) to change the focus to individual Service User needs. There will then be more joint commissioning of services.

Sometimes it may be necessary for Service Users to supplement funding themselves. This is one of the things that DLA is for.

Jan Buckingham: Are we talking about self directed support payments? My experience is that this does not always work as it can be insufficient to support the needs of an individual.

Wendy: It can also mean that providers do not receive payments.

Ian: It also takes a lot of hours to oversee.

Wendy: Assessments should not be made by just ticking boxes. The assessor needs to make sure that the Service User fully understands the implications of the questions. Perhaps the Support Worker could be consulted.

Mark: Assessment for this is achieved with a tool, ticking boxes which equate to points for direct payments. We are aware that this can lead to a shortfall in funding. We are also aware that Service Users with Learning Disabilities are more expensive to care for than others. We try to work with providers to discuss means and flexibility in order to give the Service User what they want.

Do not lose faith.....this is all fairly new and we must try to find ways to make it work. (An example of this might be new technology so that a support worker does not always need to be present).

Cara: If you make direct payments, what safeguards are in place to ensure that the money is properly used, that providers receive payments and that the providers are suitable?

Rory: There should be a system in place to ensure that funding is appropriately handled, to differentiate between 'want' and 'need' and to assess the risks of direct payments.

Mark: We have quarterly returns and we are hoping to develop brokering teams.

Wendy: We worry that large scale providers will swallow up small scale providers.

Ed: As a general rule, small providers are better, more cost effective. We encourage floating support so that the package can go with the Service User if they move on.

Mark: I agreesmall is good.

Wendy: We now have a system of hours per provider instead of hours per Service User. This makes provision more flexible but we can encounter problems when we need to give a Service User more time over a specific period.

Mark: Yes and we may need to supplement hours where affordable.
We need to build contingencies into Care Plans. Talk to your local team.
Most teams should have a member who understands Supporting People criteria.

Ed: I admit that it is all very confusing and complicated. The problem is that we did not, initially, co-ordinate with Social Services.
We are now moving towards far more co-operation.
We will continue to review. We will involve Care Managers. We will look at outcomes, improvements and change.

Mark: Support Plans are our contract with a Service User. We will work far more in partnership.
If you have spare hours, talk to Social Services. We recognise that providers must have viable businesses.

Wendy: Before we offer hours to Social Services there is no referral form. We have devised such a form for our service as we must provide paper evidence of referrals and submit them.

Mark: I have taken note and will look at that. You must have evidence of referrals.

Ed: We need you to let us know as we do not want large numbers of inappropriate referrals.

Mark: With reference to referrals; we are looking, in Exeter, at setting up an initiative for transitional training before independent living.

Wendy: Is there any way to foster understanding of Supporting People criteria by Social Services.

Ed: It is happening. There is definitely more communication. We are trying to see Supporting People/Social Services/enabling etc as a package. Joint commissioning *will* happen.

There will soon be paperwork coming to accommodation based providers to help set up a data base of information about properties.

Wendy: What happens if a Service User is refused specific funding?

Mark: There is a system for appealing to panel.

David Cardy - Team Manager (Direct Payments), Adult & Community Services, DCC, provides support for setting up direct payments.

There is also a protocol in place to indicate which team is responsible for a Service User (see websites).

These websites may be useful:-

www.in-control.org.uk

www.valuingpeople.gov.uk

www.learningdisabilitiesdevon.org.uk

Wendy thanked Ed and Mark for their time and the meeting closed at 12.10.

Next meeting:

Monday 2nd April 2007, 10am, Step by Step, Dawlish