

Devon Small Scale Provider Forum meeting 13.12.10

Venue...Step One Services Newton Abbot

Those present

Wendy Mason...chair

No apologies were received

Cara Cox

Paul Bird

Linda Williams

Kay Nicholls

Elaine Slack

Jan Navran

Ian Greenaway

The main focus of the meeting was a discussion and attempts to clarify the current changes to services.

Several members had attended meetings where these proposals were put forward. The recent meeting of Devon Independent Care Providers has helped to clarify certain issues.

The need for registration is a case in point ; prompting Service Users with supervision of tasks is a ' regulated activity' requiring registration while prompting alone is not. If a provider decides against registration they will have to be very vigilant with staff so that they do not 'overstep the mark'.

The meeting then discussed at great length the new framework. Small Scale providers are obviously extremely worried. The timescale for the changes is very tight.

[Although DCC say that there has been a year to address this, in fact they had only included dom care before.]

The pre-qualification questionnaire means that providers must show that within three months they are actively seeking to come into line.

All small scale providers must either belong to a consortium or partnership .Concerns were expressed that otherwise they might be swallowed up by large companies who undoubtedly have dedicated staff to write and undercut quotes.

This framework might signal the end for many small providers. In fact, we were saddened to hear that one of our most loyal members will not be able to continue. Providers have absorbed so many increases in costs over the years with no commensurate increase in funding.

Consortia.....how will it work ?

Devon will be divided into 7 zones as follows:-

West Devon

Mid Devon

Exeter

East Devon

South Devon

North Devon 1 &2

Each zone will have a lead provider and there could be 1, 2 or many consortia/partnerships .

The services will be divided into 3 lots:-

1. Community support [formerly Supporting People and Enabling]
2. Regulated support [Community care and Personal care]
3. Personal care [including Dom.care]

Consortia can bid for 1,2 or3 lots but must be able to offer full generic services within the lots for which they bid.

The consortia should be operational by mid July 2011 and DCC are talking about 'one price for all'.

County Hall will only deal directly with the lead in a consortium who will then source a provider from their group or groups. The lead organisation would take a management fee for the extra work involved but the division of contracts must be equitable.

What's next for small scale providers ?

Become 'au fait' with the legalities of consortia.

Look at indicative zones and potential partners for your consortium. *The second part of this is virtually impossible because county are so dragging their*

feet in publishing the list of providers on the web site.
When setting up seek legal advice and set guidelines.

Members wondered whether, in the medium term, Service Users would be better served by opting for Direct Payments. Even though this has drawbacks it can avoid the need to bid. Everyone is very concerned that, if a company is not in the framework, it cannot be part of the funding system and will not receive referrals.

Although Devon County Council avers that these changes are Service User led, this is patently a cost cutting exercise. Small companies provide bespoke services which the large national companies cannot do.

Small scale provider groups have protested for so long but must now accept the inevitable. If they 'stick their heads in the sand' in the hope that this will go away they will find that it is too late to act.

The meeting agreed that providers must address the changes and urged them to attend the meetings being organised county-wide.

There are, in particular, two powerful lobby groups whose meetings and literature are helpful. They are Devon Independent Care Providers [telephone Richard Newcombe 07966320193] and Devon Learning Exchange [Christiana Fisher tel 07590713763 email... christianafisher.len@googlemail.com] Another useful source of information on consortia is Deborah Fisher at Teignbridge CVS [tel 01626 215914 email commofficer@teignbridgecvs.org.uk]

Next meetings....

Monday 17th January at 10.00

Monday 14th February at 10.00

**These meetings will be held at.... Caraston Hall
14, Alphington Rd
Exeter EX2 8HH
01392203877**