

DEVON SMALL SCALE PROVIDER FORUM MEETING

Date:- 26.11,07

Time:- 10.00

Venue:- Step By Step, Dawlish

Those attending:-

Wendy Mason...chair

Penny Wilkinson

Linda Williams

Roger Thorner

John Southcombe

Mike Armstrong

Ian Greenaway

Jan Navran

Gary Bowld

Apologies

Lesley Wick

Pam Powlesland

Guest....Stephen Spratling

Devon Supporting People

It was extremely disappointing that, having chosen his preferred date and agreed to attend, Matthew Burrridge was unable to join us. Our concerns with regard to Social Services therefore remain largely unanswered. The concerns which we have about the lack of understanding by Social Services of the Supporting People criteria would appear to be highlighted by his failure to attend the meeting. Whilst we appreciate that Mr Burrridge is a very busy man, the group felt that this would appear to underline the discrepancies between the districts in the county. It was pointed out that Mark Jennings from Exeter Social Services had attended a previous meeting, having understood the importance and status of the Devon Small Scale Provider Forum.

Stephen Spratling was, however, most approachable and helpful. He was given examples of how the lack of liaison between Social Services and Supporting People and the differences between districts could affect providers and service users. Also, referral problems in regard to Social Services assessments were highlighted to him.

He pointed out that the Supporting People criteria are available on the website.

He then spoke about the new brokerage system which is in development. As all new service user placements will be handled through this, the problems should be 'ironed out' in the long term. Devon County Council's initiative in this should get us away from the current discrepancies between districts and Social Services and Supporting People roles would

be defined in each case. This system would be inclusive of all support including enabling hours.

This is tied to a recognition that Supporting People needs more flexibility.

He said that both Social Services and Supporting People should be reviewing contracts.

Stephen then went on to explain the next phase which is to look at Local Area Agreements. Agencies involved in this [health services/police/education/social services etc] will be tasked to decide how money is to be spent in their community. Supporting People and Providers will have to validate funding and 'prove our worth'.

Stephen was asked when these agreements will come into being and replied that they already exist but are not all encompassing. Supporting People funding will be included in 2009 but will need to be agreed in 2008.

Central Government has imposed the Outcomes Framework. When a service user leaves the service a review must take place. Also, long term service users have care reviews.

A lot of service users no longer have Care Managers and do not have Social Services reviews. Therefore, assessments have to be based on provider reviews.

Members pointed out the difficulties with online forms as service users' needs do not always 'fit into boxes' and there is no space for explanation. Some of the problems do not fall in line with criteria and, although a service user may have made progress, reinforcement and revisiting are necessary.

Stephen explained that the framework is based on QAF headers and support plans should be based on these where applicable. To help with planning, Supporting People will look at where the QAF headers are not applicable.

Supporting People have to recognise what is reasonable and providers must record what happens. Openness and recording are essential.

In terms of reviews, the problems caused previously by the complicated service user forms were highlighted. Stephen was happy to accept our offer of help in devising the next forms.

The meeting revisited the problem of the lack of 'joined up thinking'.

Stephen said that there is a Supporting People/Social Services steering group. It would make sense to have providers represented.

The meeting elected Wendy Mason to this role and Stephen will propose this to the steering group.

This may prove to be a forum in which our concerns could be raised.

The members then discussed with Stephen the huge number of hours that are spent in administration. This also applies to the paper work and visits required for a new referral. This is less onerous for large scale providers but puts a big strain on the smaller businesses.

Stephen stressed the importance of small scale providers in the range of choice for placements. He was sympathetic towards the need for greater efficiency in letting us know what funding will be available and in curtailing delays in funding for referrals. The move towards the Outcomes system should help with this.

He will report back to Supporting People about our concerns and let us know what transpires.

Wendy thanked Stephen for his time and input.

She will also contact Matthew BurrIDGE and ask him to attend a further meeting.

The meeting closed at 11.45.

Dates for next two meetings:-

Monday 28th January 10.00 Step by Step, Dawlish

Monday 17th March 10.00 Step by Step, Dawlish