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Changes in Social Care: Personalisation and Self Directed Support (November 2010)

After October this year all new service users/carers and those whose care plans are being reviewed, should be offered a personal budget. By April 2011 at least 30% of eligible service users/carers should have a personal budget.

Some of those who contact the FCSS have experience of Personalisation and Self-directed Support, but we know from the support calls and emails we receive that very many family carers have no knowledge either of these and the new social care systems that are being developed.

Why is there a change?

Putting People First, a shared commitment to the Transformation of Adult Social Care, published in December 2007, set a new vision for meeting the needs of people requiring social care, saying "In the future, we want people to have maximum choice, control and power over the support services they receive"

What is the change?

People will only have choice, control and power over the support they receive if there are new arrangements. At present it is usual for a Local Authority (LA) to decide how people that are eligible for services should have their needs met, they then contract with service providers to meet the assessed needs. Under the new system council's social services are required to let people know what budget they are likely to be entitled to and then ask them how they would prefer the money to be spent on their support. This is called self-directed support and is part of the Government's personalisation agenda. (Continuing to have support provided in ways

that work well remains a choice.)

The LA still has a role to play. It will not hand over a budget unless they have agreed with the support plan that is proposed, they must be sure it will meet a person's needs. The LA will monitor payments and review the situation annually.

Self directed support does not mean you do everything yourself!

Self directed support does NOT mean that people are expected to manage budgets, control contracts & rotas and ensure that paid staff work within the law - though some individuals and families are choosing to do these things, with support from service brokers or agencies that they buy time from, using part of the personal budget.

Helping the changes happen

Putting People First noted that information, advice and advocacy services for people needing services and their carers, irrespective of their eligibility for public funding, would be important to enable the social care system to be transformed. It encouraged "a greater emphasis on self assessment. Social workers spending less time on assessment and more on support, brokerage and advocacy".

LAs are expected to reduce the proportion of their spending on "back office" activities, so that as much of their funding as possible can be used for supporting local people.

How can your Local Authority afford the Transformation?

Since April 2009 every LA has been given a

grant to transform how its adult social service department supports people who are older, disabled or have long-term conditions. With this funding they have been expected to tackle a range of changes.

Integrated working with the NHS; maximising choice and control while also investing in prevention and early intervention; social care assessment processes that are proportionate to the complexity of people's support needs; person centred planning, self-directed support and personal budgets as mainstream activities; the involvement of family members and other carers; a framework that makes sure people can exercise choice and control with advocacy and brokerage linked to user-led organisations; appropriate safeguarding arrangements and effective quality assurance are all parts of the change required.

How will Personalisation affect you?

At present few people with learning disabilities who are receiving services, and not all family carers, know the cost of the "package of support" their LA provides, so they cannot easily know if the individual needing support is getting good value, or whether alternatives might suit them better.

In future, rather than being told how many support hours are available, or which provider can offer a service, under personalised social care, a local Resource Allocation System (usually based on a self assessment questionnaire) will indicate what money an individual will be entitled to.

A different starting point

The starting point in personalised social care is to make a person centred plan with someone, thinking about their goals, preferred activities, nightmares to avoid, what is important to and for them, who they like/do not like to be with.

When you have worked out together what is essential, what the individual would like to do and what they need to avoid, you are in a position to think of different ways to achieve this with the money that you have been told about. Ideas

developed with those close to the individual are likely to suit them better than decisions made by a funding panel! A circle of support, care manager, person centred planning facilitator, support broker or friend can help with this.

What does the LA want to see in a support plan?

To sign off the support plan, and allow the money to be paid out, the authority will need to be satisfied that the plan describes

- What is important to the individual
- What they want to change or achieve
- How their support will be arranged
- How the personal budget will be used
- How the support and money will be managed
- How the person will stay in control of their life
- What will be done to make the plan happen

The plan will need to keep the person healthy, safe and well. Someone (or people) who will spend the money in a responsible way will need to be in charge of the budget.

If you can show it will not be possible to arrange adequate support within the "indicative budget" let the LA know; they may be able to suggest solutions that do not put the individual at risk. (In Control have a fact sheet entitled "What to do if I disagree with the resource allocation", see www.in-control.org.uk/site/INCO/Templates/General.aspx?pageid=1330&cc=GB)

Sources of help with support planning

There are a number of "person centred support planning tools" to help you develop a plan that will satisfy the LA. If you need help to find these let us know at the FCSS.

Since October each council should have arrangements in place for everyone to get information and advice. By December there should be at least one user-led (ULO) directly helping people with personal budgets.

There will be families with experience of planning and getting personalised support in your local area – your Learning Disability Partnership Board, ULO and carers' centre may be able to

help you get in touch with them. The FCSS may also be able to put you in touch with someone in your region.

Who manages the personal budget and benefits?

There are several ways of organising the money:

- The individual can receive it as a Direct Payment: the LA pays the personal budget straight into a bank account set up to keep this money separate from any other money the individual has
- A family member or friend trusted by the individual can manage the money
- A Trust (a legal group) can be set up to act for the individual
- A broker, independent social worker or advocate can be paid to manage the money
- A service provider can manage the money and provide support using the funding as an Individual Service Fund
- A local authority care manager or social worker can manage the money.

Budgets can be pooled if people would like to share support for an activity. Money can be spent on technology that enables someone to cope better. Family, friends, volunteers, courses at college, clubs, a job and volunteering, leisure and fitness opportunities may mean that paid support is not essential throughout the entire week.

Whoever manages the money must keep track of it. The LA will want to see copies of invoices and receipts. If an individual or Independent Living Trust employs anyone it is important they keep details of employees' tax and national insurance contributions.

See The Fact Sheets under the Information tab on in Control's website (www.in-control.org.uk)

What will there be to spend a budget on?

Everyone needing support will not want to carry on doing exactly the same things as before, so new alternatives will need to be developed. The demand from individuals and their support-

ers will put them more in the role of "commissioners".

When they learn there is a choice many individuals are likely to want support from different people to do different things. Someone with an interest in cooking might make good company while a person learns more about getting their own food ready. Someone who likes fishing/football/line dancing or bowling might be better able to help them enjoy these activities, possibly in the company of other like-minded friends.

In Darlington several friends pool their direct payments to pay for the support they need to volunteer in JJ's café. JJ's was set up by parents when their son left college in 2007. These days the JJ team cooks together on Mondays, runs the café on Tuesdays and delivers lunches to offices on Wednesdays. If you would like to know more you could ring Val Hutchinson on 01325 300688 or email valhutchinson2@aol.com.

People and Places (P&P) is a secure, moderated, web based approach to supporting people to build their local community networks and keep in touch safely with friends. Licenses are free to individuals. Local activities and events are put onto P&P by a 'Project Officer'. People can look on P&P to see what is going on. They then have the choice of either paying for support to participate or using 'natural support' without paying.

P&P, which has been developed with a great deal family carer input, also helps people to plan, record and keep everyone supporting someone in touch with each other. See www.mypeopleandplaces.co.uk, email info@mypeopleandplaces.co.uk or ring 01792 463865.

Changes in the social care market and workforce

Expanding the options and the range of people who can provide support are part of "stimulating and developing the market and workforce". LAs, the voluntary and the workforce/training sectors have been and remain involved in this.

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