

Direct Payments User Group Meeting Minutes 11th June 2008

Guests - Yvette Fowles (Direct Payments Finance Officer, Lambeth)
Jim Heron (Commissioning Officer Disability and Older Persons, Lambeth)

Margaret welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Minutes of User Group Meeting on 12th March 2008

Issues Raised -

- The Self Directed Support Event run by the London Direct Payments (DP) Forum will be taking place on 20th June at City Hall
- SCILL are now providing payroll services and third party service to Lambeth DP recipients, if you are interested then get in touch with the DP Team at DASL
- Maxine Bennett has left the Children with Disabilities (CWD) Team and they are in the process of recruiting a replacement.
- The peer support questionnaires have been sent out and we have received some back, we will feed back from the questionnaires at the next User Group meeting in September.

Developments in Lambeth

- The new Director for personalised care will be starting soon
- Lambeth are still looking to recruit a DP Manager, the process is taking longer than they first thought it would.
- Social Workers have now been trained on DP's.

DP Queries

- One participant said that Social Workers should be offering DP's; Jim said that all Social Workers do offer DP's but some people are just not interested. One participant suggested that this was because they were scared of the council saying they were doing something wrong and that they don't trust the council. Jim said that DASL is there to provide support on DP's, the participant thanked god that DASL is there as a resource as they use the support a lot.
- Yvette said that many people have anxieties about doing it right, managing money and paying staff. The council are trying to make it easier for people to manage their DP's.
- One participant said that monthly monitoring is too much; Yvette said that some people find it easier to do it every three months and that individuals can speak to her about it.
- Finding cover for Personal Assistants (PA) can be difficult and recruiting new PA's takes a long time. Jim said that Social Workers should be making it clear that DASL provides support to recruit PA's.
- Margaret said that the third party service from SCILL takes a lot of the admin burden away as SCILL will manage the money, pay staff and other bills and send the monitoring to Yvette whilst still having complete control over who you employ as your PA. If people are interested in the third party then they can call the DP Team at DASL.
- If you get someone to cover for one day in an emergency can you pay them in cash and not pay tax and National Insurance? Yvette said in an emergency you could pay them in cash. Margaret said that if they earn over the tax threshold they need to pay tax and

NI, it is employment law. Alternatively you can use an agency and then you're not responsible for the tax.

- If the agency is closed on Sunday what do you do? Margaret said that agencies should provide a 24-hour service and have an out of hours contact number. Alternatively call Social Services as they have a duty of care towards you and will be able to provide cover.
- When you use an agency to cover some of the staff are not skilled and it is scary and difficult, it is easier to get someone you know to cover but tax is an issue. Hannah said that if you use the same person to cover frequently then put them on your payroll. Margaret said that to pay a PA 'cash in hand' so that they didn't have to pay tax is illegal.
- Some people are still waiting for their first payment from the CWD Team. Margaret said that because the new person is not yet in post things are taking a long time. Once the new person has started they will be invited to the User Group meetings. It was asked if there was someone who worked under Maxine to cover. Margaret said that Maxine worked alone and that there is currently no one appropriate to invite to these meetings. Jim said that people could look at making a complaint about the issue to get a formal response.
- It was asked how the increase of DP rates works. Yvette said that the increase is the amount that the council pays to the DP recipient who can then decide to increase the PA's wages from 1st April.
- It was asked if you could pay your PA to do your paperwork. MF said that the PA should fill in their own timesheets and if the other paper work fits within the hours of the PA's work then they can do some paperwork. If it cuts in on the support provided then they could look at using the third party service.
- Can the DP cover everyday expenses and phone calls to agencies? Yvette said that the DP could cover reasonable expenditure like stationary and stamps.
- If you go on holiday what happens to the DP money? Margaret said that if you go on holiday you can arrange with the PA for them to take their annual leave at the same time, or you can use the money at another time for extra support. Yvette said that they would not ask for the money back.
- Can you pay you PA when they go on holiday? Yvette said that the contingency fund allows you to pay the PA for their annual leave and pay someone else to cover.
- If an informal carer wants to go on holiday can you use the DP money for the person you care for and go on holiday yourself? Yvette said no, the carer would need to have a carer's assessment for a carers break.
- If you are going away for a week can you use your DP money for support? Margaret said that you can use your DP money to pay for your PA to support you abroad but not for their fares to get there with you, this should change with individual budgets.
- Can you use your DP money to pay extra for a special seat on a plane? Yvette said that the airline should not charge extra if your need for a special seat is due to your disability and you can complain under the Disability Discrimination Act if they do.

Workshop on User Guide

Notes from the workshop are attached.