

User Group Meeting Minutes
25th March 2009

Guests - Yvette Fowles (Direct Payments Finance Officer, Lambeth)
 Francis Harry (Direct Payments Officer, CWD)
 Julian Hall (Direct Payments Manager, Lambeth)

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

DASL Update

Nick Tomkins has left DASL to pursue his teaching music career. We have a new Direct Payments Worker, Joseph Healy who works on a Wednesday and Thursday.

Developments in Lambeth

- Julian has joined Lambeth as a Direct Payments Manager; he will be overseeing DP's and Self Directed Support Projects. Julian has worked in local government for 25 years and has a background in Revenue and Benefits.
- There is a new person working with Judy Clark called Kerry Smart who is looking at training for PA's
- Julian is going to be looking at the DP Contract, as it is to legalistic. A participant said that they think that a lot of people sign it without reading it.
- Julian also wants to make the DP process friendlier.

Direct Payments Pay Rates

- At the meeting it was announced that the DP rates for 2009/10 would be increased by 1%, there was much discussion around this as the participants felt that the increase was not sufficient.
- Since the meeting it has been confirmed that the DP rates for adults will be increased by 3.9% and the DP rates for Children's services will be increased by 1% from 1st April 2009. The new rates are as follows -

DP Rates For Adults		DP Rates For Children	
Standard Rate - (Mon - Fri)	£10.21 per hour	Standard Rate - (Mon - Fri)	£9.93 per hour
Enhanced Rate - (Weekends & Bank Holidays)	£12.03 per hour	Enhanced Rate - (Weekends & Bank Holidays)	£11.70 per hour
Night Rate	£67.38	Night Rate	£65.50

**PLEASE NOTE - IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOU KEEP £2.00 BACK PER HOUR
 FOR YOUR CONTINGENCY FUND.**

- Participants of the meeting felt that they should be told a lot sooner what the increase in the DP rates would be.
- Julian recognises that there needs to be a link between users and the people who make the decisions in the council about pay rates.

Users Getting Involved

- Peer Support - is about users supporting each other independently of DASL. DASL can facilitate peer support by providing a room, refreshments and a page on our website.
- David Hart formed an organisation in 1999 called Working Together For Independent Living In Lambeth (WTILL). WTILL is a group of DP Users who meet regularly, share care workers and campaign, anyone can join WTILL. If you would like to find out more you can contact David at davidhart9@btinternet.com
- Participants were concerned that there is not enough user engagement and things don't actually happen.
- A participant asked how users are going to be involved in the development of Self Direct Support? Julian said that user consultation will play a big part in the development of Self Direct Support

DP Queries

- A participant asked if Lambeth could fund a counselling course for someone? DP's have to be for an assessed need funded through Social Services. You cannot have a DP if it is an assessed need through health. Personal budgets for health services are being looked at nationally and Lambeth are bidding to be part of a pilot around personal budgets in mental health services.
- There is some confusion around people's assessed contribution to the cost of their services. Many people do not realise that they have to put their contribution into their DP bank account. The letter from the Financial Assessment Team (FAS Team) gives the impression that users will be invoiced for their contribution. Yvette said she would speak to the FAS Team.

Direct Payments Monitoring

- Frances said that monitoring should not be complex; she expects to be sent - a bank statement, timesheets and sickness/holiday forms.
- Don't let monitoring build up, that is when it gets difficult
- Lambeth are working towards a lighter touch with monitoring
- The problems that people have is - time to do it, people need assistance to do it if their condition worsens and being an employer is hard enough.

Suggestions For Future meetings

- It was suggested that a Care Manager could talk to the group about assessments and reviews
- Someone to talk to the group about Self Directed Support.