

DP Peer Support Group Minutes March 2017

Attending: Cllr Jane Pickard (Cabinet Member for Children's Services) Justin Coleman (Head of CWD), Sarah McGarry (Lambeth Council, CWD Payments Officer)

Joseph Healy DASL, Lee Delaney DASL, Louise Holden DASL, VM, DV, MR, MM, HBH, EO, JW, NL, JH, HS, VLM, BA, CW

Apologies: Sean McGovern, MM, YK.

Louise Holden DASL informed the group of the upcoming public meeting by the Equality Commission for Lambeth that is targeted specifically to disability issues. The Council want to hear resident's views on how to improve equality in the Borough and what experiences they have.

This will take place on Tuesday 21st March at We Are 336, 336 Brixton Road.

If you are unable to attend but want your views put forward contact Louise by phone or email and she will make sure your views are put forward.

louise.holden@disabilitylambeth.org.uk

0207 501 8976

There will also be opportunities for focus groups and 1-2-1s but there are no details for these as of yet.

DASL members are regularly told about these kinds of events via email list so sign up as a DASL member to keep up to date with what's happening.

Filming: Panos, the Marketing and Communications Manager from Age UK, came to film and take pictures of the group for the ILCP website. The group all gave permission for this.

Main Meeting

Jane Pickard: opened main part of meeting with brief overview of situation in Lambeth. She has been in post for around 2 years and

identified 3 major problems: computer systems, management chaos and funding levels.

Jane argued there have been improvements in all areas. The computer systems used by Social Services have been updated to the MOSAIC system. There are moves to reduce the number of temporary staff working for Social Services, and there is now a flat rate of £12.04 for CYPS.

Sarah McGarry informed us that the new rate has been approved. Letters will be sent in shortly but the last payment was made at this rate and the rate will be back-paid to 1st January 2017.

Sarah wanted to make sure the payment at the new rate was set up as priority which is why a letter hasn't been sent it yet but it is on its way.

Justin Coleman: While there have been lots of changes to management and staff Justin feels this will change. He is here to stay and as more permanent staff come on board this will encourage more quality permanent staff to come to Lambeth to work. He envisages an upward trend for Lambeth in this area.

He has high expectations for quality of work of his team and bad practice will not be tolerated. A new system is in place for staff appraisal and support.

Questions:

Several issues were raised by the group:

Parents are not receiving copies of assessments for their children done by social workers and therefore they do not know what is being taken to panel.

Parents are not receiving information about decisions made at panel or otherwise in relation to their children.

Parents are not able to attend panel meetings.

Social workers do not appear to be taking any notes during meetings with families so how do they know what to take to panel.

Justin Coleman:

Any assessment and reviews conducted should be communicated to families and families can receive paper copies of this if requested.

Panel meets every 2 weeks for 3 to 4 hours to cover many cases. It is felt it would be too difficult if parents were invited to attend. However an organisation such as Contact a Family can send a representative to sit in on panel meetings to see what takes place.

Justin assured the group that panel meetings are robust and any social workers who come to panel unprepared are sent back to get more evidence for their clients. The social worker should be using the information from the assessment during panel, and should be communicating the views and wishes of the family/service user also.

Panel is also required to give clear rationale for decisions made which social workers should communicate to families.

Assessments must be done before any changes can be made to a care package. Justin explained he has already overturned cuts to packages where assessments have not taken place.

Sarah McGarry explained that commissioners were still looking at a Prepaid Card and were considering several potential providers.

Jane Pickard:

There need to be 12% cuts made in disability services by 2018 in Lambeth. Feels this is possible as with staff changes there are too many staff. This will change as permanent staff are recruited. Money will also be saved through reviewing packages and making reasonable changes where packages are out of date.

Respite/Short Breaks

Group raised the issue that there were limited options for parents to get respite and that services had closed leaving mostly charities with limited spaces.

Jane Pickard explained there is no additional money for such services and that in order to create a short break service for adults with learning disabilities two other day centres had to be closed down to free up resources.

She will explore this issue further.

Justin Coleman advised for parents to keep in touch with Contact a Family as there are currently ongoing consultations in which parents can raise such issues.

Also DP can be used to buy in respite services.

Sarah McGarry explained there is a list of approved providers. Parents can use other providers but they won't have been checked by Lambeth for child protection, health and safety issues etc.

DBS checks

Joseph Healy raised the issue of the current process for DBS checks.

Sarah McGarry It will soon be possible for DBS checks to be done online. Sarah will be able to check progress at all stages and see when it has come through which will help speed things up. Should have gone live on 28th Feb but this has not happened yet, but it is happening.

For those who recruit a PA with an existing DBS there is a waiver form to be signed by the parent you can get from your social worker which allows the PA to start while they go through a new DBS check. IT does not replace getting a new DBS check done but it does mean they can start work.

Joseph Healy announced there will be an ILCP Open Day focusing on Disability on 26th April featuring stalls, info sessions etc.