

Workshop questions and answers about Personal Budgets

Independent Living Event 18.11.10

Assessment

Q. Who is eligible for Social Care from DMBC?

A. Currently those who are defined as having critical, substantial or moderate needs. Those with low needs are not eligible but would receive support from other DMBC services.

Q. Will this change?

A. It is possible that those with moderate needs will no longer be eligible in the future. If someone is assessed as having low or moderate needs they will be passed on to other organisations such as voluntary groups or the Council's new Wellbeing Officers.

Q. Are the assessment criteria subjective or objective?

A. They are objective but subjectivity does enter into all systems. Service users felt that the systematic processes could deny access to personalisation and other services.

Q Does the council offer enough support?

A. In Rotherham there is a lack of continuity with case load and understanding. If a Social Worker is away from work there appears to be no-one to take up the casework to support the service user. In Doncaster service users felt that they received a good service and felt that the experience was good. Good communications were the key.

Q. How easy is the Self Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) to fill in?

A. It is too prescriptive, room for the narrative helps but is this taken into account? The Social Worker team said that the greater points scored did increase the allocation; however the service user must demonstrate a genuine need and balanced reflection on every question.

Q Is there an established framework for assessment.

A. There is a framework, but this needs greater clarity on how it works.

Q. Is there a limit to how long I should wait for an assessment?

A. DMBC is aiming to assess each referral within 28 days but it is necessary to prioritise cases on a day to day basis. The Social Worker teams are extremely busy and many cases have to go to top of the queue due to their urgent nature.

Q Is the SAQ available in other formats

A It is currently only available in paper format that can be available in other languages, large print, Braille etc. An electronic format would be investigated by DMBC.

Q. Some people moving from a Direct Payment to a Personal Budget are now getting a different allocation. Why is this?

A. Some people receiving a Direct Payment have not been through such a rigorous assessment.

Q. What happens when my Direct Payment review is due?

A. You will need to go through the current assessment process.

The budget

Q. How is the Resource Allocation generated?

A. The 'tick' boxes generate the allocation of the budget. This is an indicative amount that can be revised up and down.

Q. How good an estimate is the RAS?

A. It is at best a 'guesstimate' and flexibility is built in to allow service users more room for manoeuvre.

Q. Is all my income taken into account when my financial assessment is done?

A. Benefits and savings are taken into account but not income from employment.

Q. Is there a fair charging system

A Yes there is a fair charging policy in place

Q. When is the Resource Allocation reviewed?

A. It can be reviewed whenever circumstances change but otherwise after the first three months and then annually.

Q. If the service user is eligible for a contribution from Health to their Personal Budget is it the Social Worker's responsibility to ensure that they get it?

A. Yes it is.

Q. If the allocated hours need to be increased would the personal contribution also be increased?

A. Yes it would.

Q Is there a move to partnership working to maximise personal benefits

A Work is being done although Health budgets have difficulties with regard to charges

Q. Can you use the money for a family member to undertake your care?

A. In some situations.

Q. How much of your RAS money should you put aside for emergencies?

A. Around 10%

Q. In the right circumstances can you apply for respite care?

A. Yes

Q. If someone has too much money to get a financial contribution from Social Services, where do they go for help?

A. DMBC can still help to organise the support. *It would also be possible to approach a voluntary organisation such as SYCIL.*

Q. Is there a lot of difference in the amount between Direct Payments and Personal Budgets?

A. Assessment and amount of money the same.

The support plan

Q. Can the Support Plan be in different formats such as DVD/BSL, pictures?

A. This is OK as long as the criteria are covered and it shows how the needs identified in the assessment process are met.

Q Is the support plan outcome focussed and easy read?

A It is intended to address the issues highlighted and an explanation of terms and jargon is available from the SAQ

Q What is the 'risk panel' and how independent and objective is it?

A The risk panel is a badly named appeals and assessment body that assesses individual cases. It can look at all aspects of a case including financial risk. It is comprised of senior management within Adult Services, who act independently, and was used a lot in the early adoption of Personalisation.

Now a greater understanding at Social Worker level the need for regular meetings has reduced.

Other comments made:

Some people have barriers to expressing what they want.

Parents are not always involved in the assessment process for people with Learning Difficulties. Some people can be lead into putting the 'right' answer.

People with Autism have no concept of 'self' and self-understanding.

The layout of the Self-Assessment Questionnaire is being revised to make it more user-friendly. The Social Worker can offer support to fill it in.