

ACTIVITY CARDS



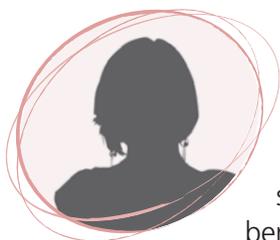
JOINT COMMISSIONING MANAGER FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

(YOU WILL BE CHAIRING THE MEETING – It is your role to ensure that the group come to some kind of consensus or agreement by the end of the meeting)

You have been with the authority throughout the implementation of personalisation and are very supportive of the changes made, but have had some reluctant staff to convince, at times, about the feasibility and safety of reduced involvement by professionals. The case reported in the press article is reviving those concerns.

Setting the Resource Allocation System (RAS) was a complex task and any proposed changes to it will need to go through the political process in the local authority as expenditure control is a key concern. You will want to ensure that the more flexible approach being proposed about support is not a “blank cheque”, and that any additional investment in care budgets doesn’t result in your staffing being reduced to levels you would consider unsafe for completing core tasks.

You are also aware that legal services have been made nervous by a recent prosecution of a personal assistant (PA) for defrauding their client, and they are wanting to work further on the role of PAs and the local authority’s accountability for them or otherwise.



PROVIDER 1

You are a Housing Support Provider, working mainly with people with a learning disability or mental health support needs. You are a strong supporter of personal budgets and direct payments and they have many benefits in enabling your people who use services to “have a life not a care package”. You are considering expanding from your core services to offer a wider range of support services in the community.



PROVIDER 2

You are a large domiciliary care provider, working mainly with older people and have mixed views about the use of personal budgets. You feel you are working well with direct purchasers and self-funders in achieving outcome based approaches that make good use of the allocated funds but experience makes you sceptical about whether it can really work well for all people who use services, even with extra support.

However, you find the rigid control and bureaucratic systems the council applies to its own remaining purchases are time consuming to manage, unsatisfying for staff and unresponsive to the requests of people who use services. You want to use this opportunity to promote streamlining of processes, including resolving the slow payments that have been causing you cash flow problems at times, as well as participating in the debate about the development of the market.

You have some reservations about the “Trip Advisor” idea and whether it could be appropriately monitored.



PROVIDER 3

You are a smaller provider of domiciliary care and have started to specialise in mental health support including dementia care. Some services users and families manage direct payment successfully, but you can see others struggling. You’re also aware that some families are not in a position to administer one because of their distance from their relative, and so want to see a continuing reliable managed care service from the council.

Generally you think the “Trip Advisor” idea would be beneficial to a smaller, more specialist business like yours, providing there are appropriate safeguards.





PERSONAL BUDGET USERS AND BEST INTEREST SUPPORTERS

Participants are a mix of people directly managing their own personal budgets, and family members doing so on the service user's behalf.

The general theme is that, while you are finding personal budgets and direct payments work well for you or your relative, you think their effectiveness for delivering good outcomes in your life can be further improved if better support is available both at the start of the process and at review points. You want the costs of this to be included in the Resource Allocation System (RAS) so that it can be flexibly used.

You also want to discuss with both the local authority and providers how the market can be stimulated to offer a wider range of more responsive services. You are interested in developing locally a scheme you have heard of elsewhere for a "Trip Advisor" style website where people who use services can log reviews of the care and support they receive.



ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY

You want to make sure that the needs and interests of people with dementia and their carers get equal attention with those of younger adults with disabilities.

Locally you have a number of families in contact with you who don't find a personal budget easy to manage and would prefer traditional support from social services. You're aware of findings from a 2011 national research report (Laing and Buisson) that not all older people given personal budgets were willing recipients – some signed up because it was the only way they could continue to receive existing support. In some cases, changing to a personal budget resulted in less home care; personal budgets must not be a "smoke screen for cuts to social care funding".

You don't dismiss the potential benefits of direct payments for people with dementia but you think the existing system needs more fundamental change than just additional support. It needs:

- To be much less complex and intimidating.
- Better information and support to people considering taking it up.
- Better understanding of dementia by professionals.
- Better range of dementia-focussed services offered in the local care market.





LOCAL AUTHORITY PERSONALISATION LEAD

You feel that your local authority has made good progress with the key activities of personalisation, including hitting the targets for rates of personal budgets and achieving good levels of direct payments. You're aware of how support is currently being provided and that many people are happier using personal budgets, but you are also aware of the concerns from older people's organisations that the needs of families who are not able or not willing to manage direct payments themselves are not being sufficiently recognised.

On the whole implementation of direct payments has gone well. There have been some complaints about their management, both from social workers who have uncovered misuse of funding, and about people refusing to pay sick pay or maternity pay to directly employed staff, but these have not been the dominant feature. Similarly, there have been few complaints from people using personal budgets, and where these have arisen, the authority has enabled the person to withdraw from holding a personal budget and has fulfilled its duty to make adequate provision by another means.

