

Carers Reference Group Meeting  
Friday 11th September 2015

Carers Leeds, 6-8 The Headrow, Leeds

Notes from the Financial Assessment and Benefits meeting

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| <p><b>Present at the meeting</b></p> <p>Lynn Bailey, Family Carer<br/>Kausar Iqbal, Family Carer<br/>Julie Cole, Care Manager LCC<br/>Shirley Evison, Family Carer<br/>Liz Davis, Family Carer<br/>Ann Hill, Head of Finance LCC<br/>Matthew James, Customer Service Manager LCC<br/>Madeleine Fahy, Connect in the North<br/>Maire Sykes, Family Carer<br/>Diana Barnes, Family Carer</p> | <p>Kate Huthwaite, Learning Disabilities &amp; Difficulties Adviser<br/>Chapelton CAB<br/>Maureen Lumb, Family Carer<br/>Ann Seaton, Family Carer<br/>Louise Mills, Joint Commissioning Service</p> <p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Azra, Family Carer</p> |
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| <b>1.</b> | <b>Purpose of the meeting</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|           | The meeting was convened to look at Adult Social Care Financial Assessments, where to go if unhappy with assessment results and the consultation process.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>The overall eligibility criteria for adults</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|           | <p>Matthew gave a detailed explanation of two handouts; the <a href="#">Payment towards non-residential social care services</a> charging policy guidance, and a sample letter, which requests information such as goods receipts, to support the financial assessment.</p> <p>The following points were raised during the presentation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The charging policy guidance booklets are available on line and from some Adult Social Care departments although service users not in regular contact with the Adult Social Care may not automatically receive a copy. Ideally, the booklets should be handed out at the first point of contact with Adult Social Care.<br/><b>Action:</b> Matthew and Julie agreed to pass this on to their departments.</li> <li>Paying for non-attendance at a service – there was a discussion around service users only paying for services they have used, for example, if they were unable to attend a day service due to ill health, they should only be charged for the days they were able to attend. <b>Billing is based on attendance information provided by the</b></li> </ul> |

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|           | <p>service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some people avoid being assessed so the department has to charge the standard rate from the date the service was first received, which may result in someone paying more than they should.</li> <li>• A carer felt that the charging policy guidance booklet and presentation was aimed at older people not adults with learning disabilities. It was explained that the guidance booklet had to cover the care needs for a wide range of adults from the age of 18 upwards but acknowledged this is an important point and will be taken back to the department.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Where to go if unhappy with the assessment results</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|           | <p>If someone does not agree with an assessment, they can appeal by contacting the Financial Assessments and Benefits Team by telephone 0113 247 8626 or email <a href="mailto:lbs.visitors@leeds.gov.uk">lbs.visitors@leeds.gov.uk</a>.</p> <p>Reassessments are carried out by another member of staff.</p> <p>If a person does not agree with the second assessment, they can appeal, in writing, to Head of Finance, Adult Social Care, 4th Floor West, Civic Hall, Portland Crescent, Leeds, LS1 1UR</p> <p>Full contact details are in the charging policy guidance booklet.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>How carers can get involved in consultations</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|           | <p>Prior to the meeting, carers had been asked to suggest items for discussion at the meeting. Some of the suggestions included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistent letters/information given to service users saying that reassessment were being done either because of changes required by the Care Act or as result of a Council decision.</li> <li>• In March there was an announcement that the council wanted to look again at the impact of the increased contributions and had decided to postpone them until customers had been consulted in the summer.</li> </ul> <p>Ann gave a brief overview of what has taken place since January and the reasons.</p> <p><b>The Care Act</b></p> <p>The Care Act Charging Regulations brought together what were previously two sets of charging guidance, one for residential care and one for people receiving services in their own homes. The new Regulations are very specific about the approach to be used and figures were quoted for allowances, whereas the previous guidance did not include figures. When the Regulations and accompanying 460</p> |

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|  | <p>pages of Guidance came out in October 2014, The Council's understanding was that we had to use the figures set out in the Regulations. In January 2015, Leeds City Council started to reassess people and some charges would have increased from April 2015 when the Care Act took effect. The Council missed the wording in the guidance that gave councils the discretion to be more generous in their financial assessments than the figures set out in the Regulations if they wished. Ann apologised on behalf of the Council and acknowledged that the letters sent out were misleading. The consultation due in summer will now begin within the next few weeks and the final report will go to the Executive Board in early 2016. If anything changes, it will be in April 2016 at the earliest. For the present time, the same allowances and treatment of income are being used in the financial assessments and these are reflected in the guidance booklet that Matthew circulated. Ann asked if another meeting could be convened with family carers and that the department would greatly appreciate their feedback as part of the consultation. <b>Action:</b> Louise/Lynn will arrange another meeting.</p> <p>The government has delayed implementing the care cap from 2016 to 2020. (The cap means that there will be a limit on how much people pay for their care).</p> |
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