

INDIVIDUAL BUDGETS & SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORT

A Joint Forum Event

Workshop 1

Determining Development Needs of Agencies

What do VCOs need to know before they can start delivering social care through individual budgets?

- To be kept informed & involved as the practice evolves and develops - to enable a clearer view of the possibilities for them and to make sure they keep up with or ahead of change.
- The structure of future funding from RBC – will it become partly or wholly based on service users – how to protect their very existence.
- An understanding of where the responsibilities and duties will fall – legal.
- How to plan projects dependent on take up from individuals – especially financially?
- How to change the focus of marketing from funders to individuals – how to facilitate this cultural shift within the organisation from trustees, staff & volunteers. How to advertise to individuals in an appropriate way – services have always been free for the end users.
- How to manage the change in relationship with service users as they will be paying us directly for our service and may well become more demanding – role of volunteer here is of particular concern.
- How to make the most of the strong relationship VSOs have with service users – stronger influence & demand.
- How to implement formal ways of capturing service users views to keep ahead of their needs.

How do they need to adapt as a business in order to deliver social care through individual budgets?

- See comments above – change of focus from funder to service user.
- See as positive and involve the whole organisation.

- Probably need to be more 'commercial' in approach and open to partnerships.
- Need to listen and respond to service users – make sure they are happy – do this now but it will be different.
- Be assertive with RBC
- Not be embarrassed to say how good they are & what they can offer people.

Are you willing & able to act as a broker?

- Concern over conflicts of interest – if we are going to deliver services how can we be a broker? RBC will also have a conflict of interest.
- We don't deliver services & would like to consider advising on services available & employment advice to service users but not managing the money on their behalf?
- Would like all advice shops in Reading to work together to make info available.
- If become full broker may be subject to same law as public sector – Equality schemes & Freedom of info etc.

Workshop 2

Collaborating to Deliver Social Care Packages

How will you identify potential partners with similar, complementary or even contrasting service capabilities?

- Database for searching and clustering groups e.g. the Reading Voluntary Action's database available on www.rvadirectory.org.uk
- Clustering of groups on the database e.g. filters for health, carers, dementia etc. for easy accessibility

How can you work together in consortiums to win social care contracts?

- A collaboration of willing partnerships
- A larger organisation 'leading' a smaller organization that might be able to offer a niche service

- Clustering services to win contracts, does not necessarily have to be a brokerage

Where can you go for help with collaborative working?

Local Authority

Other agencies e.g. Age Concern

RVA – to be used as a catalyst /enabling the collaboration of groups

Sharing knowledge of agencies, information about ongoing processes, database usage

Training for agencies to offer advice e.g. CAB could offer financial advice

Signposting of existing services so that new, duplicate services are not set up in competition

Directory of services (e.g. <http://www.littlegreenbook.co.uk>)

Workshop 3

Maintaining Quality Standards in a Framework of Self Directed Support

In the workshops two different questions were posed to each of the group and they were asked to work in pairs and come back together with one or two key points each. The groups were given background on how quality standards were implemented at the present time to put the work in context.

The questions posed were:

Group 1

Safeguarding Adults – how will core standards and quality be maintained?

How will the quality of new areas of social care be assessed and guaranteed?

Group 2

How will monitoring, evaluation and review be developed?

How will training and personal development needs and professional standards be maintained?

The answers are collated under the headings below:

TRAINING

This was a recurring theme in both groups with the following Comments:

- Training must be made available for informal carers
- More investment in training and should be led by those who understand – could be done on the job (this was relating to comments that those receiving care did not need their carers to have the regular mandatory training)

- Training to be undertaken by RBC Voluntary Sector Workforce. Free training provided by RBC will be important in the new system
- Systems must be put in place to ensure basic training.

MONITORING OF THE SERVICE

Comments as below

- Reviews should continue as per existing contracts
- There should be a new body for monitoring – this could be a multi-agency body or undertaken by local voluntary agencies
- Enhanced role for Care Managers to review clients care more regularly

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- The new system will mean those receiving direct payments will need support in addressing poor performance i.e. disciplining or sacking staff
- A complaints system will need to be in place – will this still be with the Local Authority
- User led assessment of quality of service
- Provider services should have an accreditation system – who would do the accreditation
- Formal support required by service users as to how and with whom to pursue a complaint
- Will CRB checks be carried out under the new system