

## Notes based on the Individual Budgets and Brokerage Workshop held at the Town Hall on 10.11.08 and articles published by MACC on Self Directed Support

### Introduction

Putting People First (Dec 2007) sets out the conditions needed for the social care reforms to work. The broad concepts are those of choice, control, personalization and citizenship. The Government reforms are now well under way with the publication of the official evaluation of the 13 pilot sites for individual budgets and self- assessments, including Manchester and Oldham and the Green Paper on the future funding of social care due to be published in the Spring.

Self Directed support is the vehicle for bringing about the changes in the way social care is delivered. In Manchester, the pace of change is rapid with aprox. 2000 people now in receipt of an Individual Budget. One third of these service users are in receipt of Direct Payments (cash payments)

The findings from the pilots were generally positive though they say that for many **older people**, managing their own support was difficult and caused anxieties. The central idea behind Self Directed support offers huge potential for many service users, people receiving an IB were more likely to feel in control of their daily lives, compared with those receiving conventional social care support (summary of the national evaluation) however, the transition from one system to another still raises some serious concerns which do need to be addressed.

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/PSSRU/pdf/IBSENSummaryReport.pdf>

Using brokers could be a solution to some of those concerns, but not all. MACC has raised issues shared by many Voluntary and Community organisations that the rush to Personalisation could deny people access to quality services and therefore give them less choice. (*Connections. Spring 2008 MACC*)

As we said, it will be a cruel irony if the available range of services was to be reduced now that the system may finally be starting to enable service users to make genuine informed choices.

## **How do they work and where does Brokerage fit in?**

A community care assessment is still part of the process and will also include a self-assessment questionnaire. In order to link the needs assessment to the eligibility criteria for services, points will then be allocated under each level of need and this will dictate how much money the individual will have to spend on their support.

**The person will then need to write their own support plan and may need help to do this. This ‘help’ may come from a family member or friend, or from a ‘broker’. Manchester wants to see the pattern of brokerage to reflect the diversity of the City and for brokerage to be ‘legal, decent and honest’**

The role of the broker *could be* to identify funding streams, support the planning, signposting to services (conflict of interest?), seek technical advice, and help the service user identify risks and possible solutions.

In terms of safeguarding, Manchester has developed an interim policy for Individual Budget users which include that the support plan has to be legal (in terms of what you purchase) in budget and keep you healthy, safe and well. Service users will not be able to spend their budgets on ‘healthcare’ or food for themselves. This raised the question again about what is health and what is social care! (an example given at the meeting was that you can buy exercise in a gym but not a hip replacement)  
Personal Health Budgets are to be piloted next year.....

## **So what is Brokerage?**

### **Manchester City Council circulated definitions to the meeting:**

‘Brokerage is a way for individuals to get what they need, by using a third party to act on their behalf. The role is emerging as an essential support mechanism to empower more people on their journey to directing their own support.’  
A service broker will give advice and information and *practical help to the user*.  
A broker has also been described as a ‘service user’s personal resource manager’, they should ensure that the service user is fully involved and in control, throughout the process of choosing a care package and its delivery.

There are a number of different definitions available.

## **What are the criteria for funding brokerage?**

Funding for brokerage may be provided via the resource allocation system:

- If it is considered an individual lacks capacity to direct their own support.
- If the cost of support is deemed to carry considerable risk it may be necessary to utilise a broker.
- If the relationship with the City Council has irretrievably broken down.
- Where it could be evidenced that paying a broker could be more efficient use of funds to obtain a greater outcome (*for the service user*)
- Where there may be conflict within the family setting.

### **How much will the council pay for brokerage?**

As a general rule the City Council will allocate up to £200 per person if they meet the criteria for brokerage, not everybody will require this amount of support (*nationally quotes are averaging £20 per hour*) and obviously funding will match individual requirements.

*Paul Cassidy was talking about the Council funding the first hour (£20) but this needs further clarification.*

If it is anticipated that an individual will require further brokerage which will exceed the £200 budget an explanation and estimate will need to be forwarded to the funding panel (*Adult Social Care*)

People whom self-fund their support may also wish to use a brokerage service.

Manchester has decided that all external brokers need to be accredited with the City Council. It will be up to the provider applying for accreditation to demonstrate that the organisation will have checks and balances in place to show that there will be ***no conflict of interest***.

The City Council's own 'brokers' will eventually work from the developing Business Units in each ward. The Council are working towards having an accredited list of organisations that could provide a brokerage service in each locality, and groups who could provide a service for particular communities of interest (though the latter also needs further clarification with MCC)

**It would be up to the VCS organisations who do get accredited to market themselves.**

Issues were raised about the 'independence' of the support brokerage service. At a recent meeting of the Manchester Older Peoples Network, older people themselves wanted reassurance that brokerage services would not be part of a marketing process of a service provider. For the sector itself, members wanted the opportunity to discuss further the roles of an advocacy service that could sit alongside a support brokerage service and how a voluntary sector organisation could plan for a brokerage service which would be paid for by the service user, when the future demand/ need for brokerage is unknown.

The Local Authority will lead on training but organisations will need to identify their training needs. Time scales for having an effective, diverse brokerage service in place are unknown at this point however; this initial opportunity for the VCS to apply for accreditation has a closing date of three weeks.

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