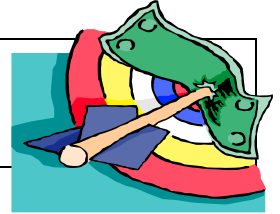


Direct Payments Project Update

June 2007



Direct Payments Consultants Group

The final DPCG workshop for the project was held on 12 May 2007. The focus on the workshop was on developing recommendations for the evaluation and discussions were grouped into four themes:

- Supporting direct payments users and extending it to others
- Administration and accountability
- Service provision
- Consultation, follow-up, information and data.

It is timely to review the achievements of the DPCG in the project. Since January 2006 eighteen workshops have been held with the DPCG on the development and trial of direct payments. Attendance at the workshops has been on average over 80%. In Stage 1 of the project, the development of direct payments, the DPCG:

- informed the development of the model of direct payments for the trial.
- contributed to the development of a two-page deed between direct payments users and the department.
- developed the Direct Payments User Manual, which outlines the respective responsibilities of direct payments users and the department. The manual also includes a Consumer Guide, which provides advice about how to make decisions about service quality, and information about consumer rights and responsibilities and contact details of organisations, which provide information and support, such as advocacy organisations.
- discussed how direct payments works in the United Kingdom with Peter Kinsella, Managing Director of Paradigm, which developed InControl, the model of direct payments widely used there.

In Stage 2, the trial of direct payments, the DPCG has:

- Developed a profile, which outlined the role of the group in the development of direct payments and their achievements to date.

- Had two sessions with a trainer from the Community Education Unit, Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) about consumer rights and responsibilities
- Participated in a session on skills of negotiation
- Identified issues with the process of direct payments and improvements to be made
- Contributed their views on issues for consideration in any future roll out of direct payments including:
 - employment of staff by direct payments users
 - training and support for direct payments users and
 - the target group for direct payments.
- Heard from Les Scaife, West Lancs Peer Support Group about peer support for direct payments users in the West Lancashire County, England.

In addition to developing the recommendations the DPCG has also:

- Made joint presentations with the department about direct payments to service providers they use, Active Participation Strategy Reference Group, Victorian Disability Advocacy Network and Yooralla.
- Contributed to workshops for service providers about direct payments.

Maureen McLiesh, direct payments user



Maureen (pictured) is the mother of Lauren, 23, who works as a volunteer at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image at Federation Square. Lauren works as an usher in the cinema and in the marketing department. Direct payments are important to Lauren because of the flexibility of the funding.

While Lauren and Maureen have been grateful for the Futures for Young Adults funding, previously restrictions meant that Lauren was participating in segregated activities and could not have the therapy she needed. Using direct payments, Lauren is enjoying going to a local hydrotherapy class and has been able to pursue interests such as football and theatre that help Lauren with her communication skills and enable her be a part of the community.

Maureen joined the Direct Payments Project halfway through and found it took a couple of meetings and the experience of using direct payments before realising how exciting the project is. 'I have liked being part of something so innovative with the Government relying on users to develop guidelines and to have a say on how things should work,' said Maureen.

Below is the poem Maureen wrote for the final DPCG workshop on her experience of the Direct Payments Project:

THE MOVEMENT

There was movement in the state, and the words had passed around

That people should be getting more for their money.

So, the people in the movement, kept the pressure on the department and

Direct Payments were born - a way to change their funding.

Now people asked for transparency, flexibility and independence and more

All words the department had heard many times before,

But they weren't quite certain giving disabled people the funds

They might spend it on gambling, drinking and the occasional whore.

So they asked a trusted few

To gather in Moorabbin, for a certain mustering of the clan.

To devise ideas around independence and trust,

To help all disabled people become independent and make choices of their own,

So, lets hope it goes forward with a thrust.

A group all came together, very large folders in hand

And Direct Payments Consulting Group is up and running

Lead by wise leaders - Lisa and Sam, we have

The flexibility we asked for in our funding.

- *Maureen McLeish, May 2007*

Service provider workshop

The final service provider workshop held on 29 May was well attended with representatives from 6 service providers in attendance. Progress on the implementation of the action plan, which was developed by the service providers in November 2006 in response to issues raised by the DPCG, was reviewed and informed the development of recommendations for the evaluation. The opportunity for service providers to contribute to the development and implementation of direct payments through the project was considered important. Service providers support direct payments as a means of increasing the control and choice of people with a disability. They recommended that in the future the number of direct payments users be increased as it would assist them with change management to have more than one or two direct payments users purchasing their services.

Farewell to Samantha Jenkinson

It is with sadness that we farewell Samantha Jenkinson, direct payments project officer. Samantha has been with the project since it began in Southern Metropolitan Region and has been a driving force in the Direct Payments Project. Always at the end of the phone for direct payments users, facilitators, service providers and members of the project management team, we will miss her enthusiasm, commitment and sound advice. Samantha has taken on the role of acting CEO of Australian Federation of Disability Services, the peak body for people with a disability. We wish Sam well in her new ventures.



Introducing new members of the project management team

Kim Little, Direct Payments Project Officer, SMR



I work for Disability Services in the Southern Metropolitan Region. I have worked in the region for 4 and 1/2 years as a Program and Service Adviser. I have been involved as the regional contact for the Nightlife project, which is a new consumer driven project which aims to create a flexible night time service for people with disabilities living

in their own homes in the Southern Region. My role in this project will be doing the administration of the project in Southern Metropolitan Region (taking the role over from the wonderful Samantha Jenkinson). In my spare time I am slowly completing house renovations. (Note: slowly. Those who know me, know this is years of work in progress.)

Kate Ramsay, Direct Payments Project Officer, Disability Services

My name is Kate Ramsay and I'm a project officer in Disability Services Division in the central office. I've worked in the division for almost three years, first in the Individual Planning & Support team, and now for the Access, Planning & Pathways team and the Individual



Funding Options team, which is where I've become involved in direct payments. I'll be assisting with the work on direct payments, when Lisa Minchin is on leave from August – December 2007 and am really looking forward to being involved in such an exciting project.

Direct Payments Project information

Information about the Direct Payments Project can be found on the Disability Services website under Improving Supports (www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability). Information available includes the definition of direct payments, a description of the different methods of administration of Disability Services funding, a description of the project, Direct Payments Project Updates and the DPCG profile.

Evaluation

LDC Group is working to finalise the evaluation report of the Direct Payments Project. The report is due to be completed by the end of June 2007. A summary of the report will be made available on the Disability Services website.

Code of Ethics for Direct Support Workers

Members of the DPCG, service providers and facilitators may be interested to learn about the development of a draft code of ethics for direct support workers. Feedback from DPCG workshops has

been that specific service standards for the attendant care industry should be developed. The Australasian Society for the Study of Intellectual Disability (ASSID) is seeking comments and suggestions from individuals and organisations on the draft material, which is proposed as the basis for a code of ethics for direct support workers. Feedback on the code of ethics is required by 13 July 2007.

There has been strong support throughout Australia and New Zealand for the development of a code of ethics to guide the work of direct support professionals. In particular, support has been evident in the large number of people (over 300) attending workshops conducted on this topic over the past 4 years, the comments of workshop participants and the many enquiries ASSID has received concerning progress with this project.

It is proposed that the final document will also inform the training and education of students studying for certificate, diploma and degree level qualifications in human services and disability related courses.

The draft code of ethics can be found at: [http:// www.dpv.org.au](http://www.dpv.org.au). Comments and suggestions by the 13th July 2007 should be sent to:

ASSID Ethics for Direct Support Project

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