



Neuro Partners Governance Stakeholder Panel Meeting

Monday 5th December 2011, 10:30am

Attendees:

- SC – Chair/ Service User’s Family Member
- MP – Service User
- BM – Service User’s Family Member
- Lorraine Hetherington - Senior Head of Service
- Sarah Henderson - Head of Service
- Kath Ismay - Community Services Manager
- NG & CR – Guest speakers from local Solicitors specialising in acquired brain injury

Apologies for absence:

- JI – Service User
- David Park - Support Worker
- Tanya Grears – Support Worker
- Steve Berry – Independent Representative

Item discussed	Action
<p>Guest speakers NG (solicitor) and CR were welcomed to the meeting. SC outlined the purpose of the Panel to them and that the Panel would appreciate their input in collating information regarding benefits and legal matters which could be circulated to Neuro Partners’ service users and their families. NG and CR invited questions from the Panel and advice was provided as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SH asked what steps should be taken to get the relevant benefits. NG stated that job centre plus may be helpful in advising individuals what benefits they are entitled to. This does involve a lot of form filling and individuals may require some help with this as some of the forms are quite complex. NG informed the Panel that from next year Disability Living Allowance will be renamed Personal Independence Payments. Incapacity Benefit will also end in March 2014 and any new cases are now being replaced with Employment and Support Allowance (which may be means 	

tested). Disability Rights Advisers who are based in the job centres can offer help and advice regarding these benefits free of charge but it may be difficult to get an appointment. Other people do offer a similar service with a charge attached. NG advised that individuals be very careful when getting assessed as if an individual tells someone that they are 'fine' they may lose benefits even though this may be said due to cognitive impairments. NG stressed that this can be a very difficult process as an individual with an acquired brain injury may not be visibly 'disabled' and a lot of organisations/individuals may not be aware of issues and problems.

NG stressed that an individual with brain injury should seek as much help as possible and that there are a number of voluntary organisations who can provide such support; Headway is a particularly good source of support and information. Their website contains a helpline number and signposts to other useful organisations. Headway also have a list of approved solicitors who will give advice free of charge and NG stressed that he would strongly urge that people get help to fill in forms to ensure they do not miss out on anything they may be entitled to as it is a complex process.

CR advised that the local Council may also be a useful source of information as individuals may be entitled to Council Tax reduction, housing benefit etc.

- MP enquired whether the blue badge (disabled parking) scheme has been changed as his application was rejected when he applied to renew his badge. CR stated that this is normally based on the level of mobility assessed for Disability Living Allowance and again the form filling for this can also be complex.
- NG stated that he does feel there is a need for an information pack informing people what is available and signposting to the appropriate places.
- The decision-making process for an individual with a brain injury was discussed. Problems can occur because individuals do not expect this to happen and therefore would not normally have plans in place. This may result in their next of kin feeling like they have no say in what happens. It is a complex process to become Power of Attorney or Appointed Person for an individual. NG suggested that someone from Cumbria County Council Legal Services Department may be useful to speak to the Governance Panel on these issues and may be able to provide useful contacts.
- Other queries included; How much voluntary work is an individual able to undertake while on Incapacity Benefit? and How the new Employment and Support Allowance will work?
- NG & CR agreed that they would look into the queries raised at this meeting and will return to a future Governance Panel meeting

<p>in February/March 2012. In the meantime they will liaise with SH.</p> <p>NG & CR left the meeting at this point</p>	SH
<p>Outstanding Actions</p>	
<p>Social Events Questionnaire – there has not been a great response to this. SC suggested the Panel postpone arranging any social event until a future meeting as several members of the Panel were unable to attend this meeting. This will be discussed at a future meeting when more Panel members are present.</p>	All
<p>Occupational Therapy Student – SH informed the Panel that a student will be on placement with Neuro Partners early in the New Year and they may be able to help arrange a social event.</p>	
<p>Training Week – SH reported that the format of the training week has just been changed. SH would like to look at including some input from the Governance Panel into the training.</p>	SH
<p>Neuro Partners update SH reported that Kelly Dunn (Director) is currently on maternity leave. Kelly is due back at work in March 2012.</p>	
<p>Lorraine Hetherington is covering Kelly’s maternity leave and Sarah Henderson is covering Lorraine’s role.</p>	
<p>Antonia Gartland has left the company and Neidin Eustace has joined the company as an Assistant Psychologist.</p>	
<p>The Carlisle office continues to oversee services delivered in Lancashire.</p>	
<p>New Business</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA forms – SH reported there is not a good response rate from these forms and asked the Panel for any suggestions which may help to improve this. SC stated that he would only complete these forms if he had a problem and if everything is okay he doesn’t bother returning them. BM stated she may be more likely to complete the forms now that her son is living independently as he is now receiving more support that he was previously but she has always telephoned and spoken to someone if she has any problems. All members of the Panel stated that they would prefer to speak to someone face to face rather than complete a questionnaire. SH will look into possibly sending out a letter asking for suggestions regarding the best way of obtaining individuals’ opinions on the service provided. 	SH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events – It was felt that support workers and their families should also be invited to any social event. This will also create a larger base for any charity fund raising incorporated into these events. The questionnaire previously sent to service users may also be sent out to support workers to see if they can encourage 	

<p>service users to complete a questionnaire and improve the response rate to help in organising a relevant social event.</p>	SH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact e-mail – MP agreed to set up an e-mail address to deal with queries for the Governance Panel. This e-mail will be included in information distributed about the Panel. 	MP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company newsletter – Jackie Moore is producing a newsletter which will be sent to other professionals and includes an article about the Governance Panel. Kath Ismay read the article to the Panel for approval; following one minor amendment it was approved for circulation. • Severe weather – SC queried what will happen if there is severe weather this winter and staff struggle to get to their shift or return home after shift. SH stated that new procedures are in place following difficulties experienced last year. These new procedures will be circulated to Panel members with the minutes from this meeting. 	SH
<p>Extra Items</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot water – The availability of hot water is crucial to maintaining the dignity of service users and the Panel felt it may be necessary to have case specific action plans in place. SH will discuss this at the next health and safety meeting and will look at the existing policies which are in place. 	SH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next of kin – Query whether the on call manager should have details of the next of kin for all support workers should staff become ill or have an accident when on shift outside office hours. SH will speak to Kieran Turnbull about producing a document for the on-call file. 	SH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex needs recording sheet – Suggested amendments passed to the Complex Needs Case Manager for action. 	SH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team meetings – discussed frequency and necessity. SH stated that regular team meetings are a CQC requirement and as such need to be held every month. 	SH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new support workers will be identified to become members of the Governance Panel. 	SH
<p>Date of next meeting The next meeting is scheduled for the end of March, date to be confirmed.</p>	SH/KI