



and



How are we doing?

An important message from Jon Wright

As you are probably all aware, the last few months have been very testing for **Supported Lives** finances. Our weekly support hours dropped by approximately 150 between November and December and then the Christmas holiday period meant we were not required to provide as much support. This left a pretty big hole in our finances from which we are only just starting to recover.

How do we recover?

For several months our income was smaller than our expenditure and this has resulted in us taking tough decisions to ensure the survival of the company.

It is unlikely that we will be able to offer a cost of living increase in salaries to staff this year, although if things do improve we will reconsider this decision.

- We are having to look at our mileage expenses policy, as we are currently paying anything up to £2000 per month in mileage claims, of which we are only able to reclaim about £500. One option is to reduce the mileage rates and support staff to claim the difference back via the Inland Revenue.
- Two members of the management team (Sally Benn and Eileen Jones) have volunteered to take a minimum of three months unpaid leave, at which point we will reconsider the position as to whether we can afford to re-employ them.
- Another member of the management team, Tracy Ellington has resigned her post to save the company money.
- The remaining management team have reallocated the tasks of the three staff

who have left amongst themselves.

- We have started a 'marketing campaign' amongst social workers and managers to increase the referral rates of new work, and we are already seeing the benefits of this with several new contracts being awarded.
- Several members of the management team, including Mandy, JK, Owen, and the 'Two Johns' are all involved in providing direct support to client's in order to make the service more cost effective.
- We are involved in setting up a major new piece of work in Harrogate, which should be in place as we go to press.

Is Supported Lives going to survive?

The last few months have been very worrying, and we are still vulnerable, but things are improving. Above all the work that we all do is exceptional and highly valued, as the recent CSCI report showed (*see overleaf*). Therefore it is important that we continue to provide an unrivalled service, and once all the measures mentioned above take effect, the financial situation will improve to a point where the company is once again healthy and secure.

I wouldn't want anyone to worry about whether **Supported Lives** will survive, we may need to make one or two more changes to ensure we are once again financially viable, but I have every confidence that we will achieve that.

Above all I want to thank you all for your continuing hard work and effort throughout these difficult last few months.

CSCI Report

On February 9th we received our CSCI unannounced inspection. The Commission for Social Care are the accrediting body for organisations such as Supported Lives.

CSCI's remit is to register, inspect and report on social care services in the UK. This inspection aimed to assess if our services are meeting the needs of the people who use them.

They concluded that **Supported Lives** is "managed by people who are committed to helping service users ... live as independently as possible in their own homes and to assist them to 'pursue their interests, no matter how challenging these may be".

The inspector received excellent feedback from clients and staff but did make some

recommendations in areas, which they felt we could improve. These were largely in our record taking and keeping. You should have received a letter recently offering you a copy of care plans and risk assessments; this was in response to one of the recommendations made.

Overall they identified three areas that required immediate attention; these have been rectified. We were seen to be excelling in six areas, particularly in 'outcomes' (e.g. the experiences of people who use the service) and were either satisfactory or good in all others.

They concluded that we provide a person centred service, which helps to "create a service that meets the needs and aspirations of the people who need the care".

Do Drop in!

The last 'drop in' had to be cancelled due to staff sickness. We hope to do better at the next one, which will take place on Thursday 10 May, 2:00-3:30pm. We will have *All Our Yesterdays* as a theme, so please come armed with a photo of yourself if you can, plus any bit of personal memorabilia you can find.

We can then do a time line starting with the older members of the group, which Jon Wright can be part of, through to us younger ones! We will have some music hopefully a song or two from times past; with me and Jez as the backbone and guest appearances from the plethora of talent that would do anything to share the stage with us. We will also do a rendition of *Delilah*, that number made famous by Tom Jones in the 60s.

This is for clients, carers, family members, staff, their families and professional colleagues and any one else you wish to drag in off the street.

Tea and cake will be served. (Anybody offering to make one?)

John Drury

Advisory Committee

The advisory committee met on 18 January, we really appreciated everybody coming along to the meeting, as it was a very windy day! Nine people attended the meeting and Jon Wright, John Drury and Sally Benn came along to give a report on the developments and ongoing work at **Supported Lives**. The committee continue to support and give advice to the directors and management team, which is greatly appreciated. The committee had a tour of the building, the offices and rooms where clients and staff are welcome to come along and use or drop in for a coffee.

The response from the questionnaires has generally been very positive. The main areas that may need working on are communication and training.

Any relevant issues raised at the meeting have been fed back to the management team.

If anyone would like details about the committee please contact me at **Supported Lives** - new members are welcome!

Tracy

Questionnaires

In November 2006 we sent out questionnaires to clients, staff and care managers to see what they thought of **Supported Lives**.

The response from the questionnaires has generally been very positive. The main areas that may need working on are communication and training.

Because of the nature of the work such as working in isolation and having to find cover for staff shifts it can be hard for staff to access training and meetings, it can also mean communicating issues within the organisation can sometimes be difficult.

The feedback from the questionnaires has been reported back to the management team who will be looking at ways of overcoming any weaknesses within the organisation.

The following are some comments that were made about the organisation:

"Staff at **Supported Lives** are supportive and reliable"

"My support worker is like an old friend"

"My support worker helps me do what I want to do"

Carers Grant

Up to £200 is available to carers within Bradford District. There are some conditions, but most of **Supported Lives** clients' carers would qualify. Forms and criteria are available from *Carers Support*, they have a 24 hour answering machine:

01274 366 332

NB: Closing date is 25 May 2007

Remember carers, this is money for **YOU** to spend on **YOURSELF** to acknowledge the work that you do day in day out. Claim it today.

John Drury

"My support worker helps and understands me"

"**Supported Lives** are the best team of workers we have had who can meet our son's needs"

There is a more in depth report available from **Supported Lives** if anyone would like some more details about the findings from the questionnaires.

I would like to thank everyone who completed the questionnaires and for letting us know what you think of **Supported Lives**.

We will continue to review our services on a regular basis to make sure we are meeting the needs of our clients and staff.

Tracy

A Grand Day Out Temple Newsam

Richard Barrett and I had a great time at Temple Newsam in Leeds despite it being the depths of winter.

There's a magnificent stately home, a farm with a collection of rare breeds (I found the pigs are particularly impressive) and extensive gardens and parklands for those keen on exercise.

As it's owned by Leeds Council entry



to the house and farm is free to people with disabilities and their carers.

The house is on Temple Newsam Road, off Selby Road, Leeds. Unfortunately it's difficult to get to on public transport (and also it's closed on Mondays.)

Drott

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