

Lighthouse

Family News

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Information sessions about the NDIS funding process

Many families have expressed uncertainty about what needs to be done to prepare for a funding assessment with the NDIA. We have therefore organised two information sessions with Joanne Cregan, Director, Lifelong Pathways. Joanne is a parent who has been through the assessment process and she has set up a business to assist other families to negotiate a funding package.

Both sessions will cover the same information, but we thought that some families would find it easier to meet during the day, while others would prefer an evening time slot. Therefore, the sessions have been organised as follows:

Date: Monday 22nd May

Time: 01:00pm – 03:00pm

Location: Lighthouse Disability - 101 Park Terrace, Salisbury

Date: Tuesday 23rd May

Time: 06:00pm – 08:00pm

Location: Lighthouse Disability - 101 Park Terrace, Salisbury

Time has been allocated for questions, so please bring your questions if you have any. We would appreciate you confirming your attendance so that we can cater adequately for everyone. (Please contact Pat Netschitowsky via email on pat@lighthousedisability.org.au by Thursday 18th May).

In the meantime, if you have some queries, please phone Pat on 8256 9800, and if she can't answer them, she will seek information and get back to you.

Service Provider Relationship with Clients

Our commitment to excellent service to your family member will continue under NDIS i.e. that is something that will not change and we will also continue to build relationships with families.

However, the introduction of NDIS means that clients and families will no longer be passive recipients of services because clients (or families) will have funds to choose what services you want (according to the funding plan) and which provider you want.

Historically, and in the current arrangements, the SA Govt provides funds to agencies to provide services. In this model, clients and parents have had little involvement about funding, or deciding what services are provided. In fact, most families are not aware of the funds that are allocated to each house, and there has not been any need for this.

However, under NDIS, your family member (or families) will be allocated funds to purchase services. If you choose to continue to use Lighthouse Disability as your service provider (and we hope that you will), there will need to be a contract between you and Lighthouse Disability that outlines the services that you want (and are funded for), and what we are accountable for providing. This means that we will have a 'business' relationship; you will be a customer of Lighthouse Disability which is obliged to provide the services that you purchase.

We have prepared a Charter of Expectations to outline what you can expect of us in the NDIS and what we expect of you, to help us provide the best possible services. It is hoped that the Charter of Expectations will be a helpful starting point to discuss the development of a contract with you. This is a new document, and as we receive feedback, it will evolve. It is attached to this newsletter, and if you have any comments about how it could be made more useful for you, please let me know.

There will be other aspects of NDIS which will mean that there will be change about how things are done (e.g. management of funds, billing and payment for services etc.). Information will be provided about these in future Family Newsletters.

Positive Feedback

At the most recent Family Advisory Committee, two family members spoke very positively about the services provided by staff at Mercedes and Tarakan. We are most appreciative of positive feedback for staff. It means a lot to workers to know that their work is noticed and appreciated. At the same time, if you are not happy about our work, it is important to let us know so that we can do something about it.

Governor's Leadership Foundation

The GLF offers leadership training to people identified as potential leaders for the future of South Australia in not-for-profit, profit and government organisations. Lighthouse Disability was offered an opportunity to submit a project for aspiring leaders to work on as part of their course work. We submitted a project on continuing to build our organisational culture, and a team of six GLF course participants has made a commitment to work on this. At this stage, members of the project team have met with the Leadership Team and the Board.

They are developing a project proposal for the consideration of the Board. It is likely that the team will want to consult with the Family Advisory Committee. More information will be provided as the project develops. Our involvement with the GLF is regarded as an opportunity to engage with skilled people to help us continue to build our business.

Staff Retention

We know that the quality and viability of our business is strongly linked to the quality and consistency of our frontline workforce. Families have made it clear that this is very important. Therefore, considerable efforts have been put into recruiting people on the basis of their values, the induction process has been refined and extended, and support is provided for new workers. We also offer permanent part-time work, which is not necessarily how other organisations are working at present (In some instances, service provider organisations are 'casualising' the workforce to more readily meet requirements for flexibility where clients expect quick responses to their expectations about 'choice and control').

It appears that our strategies to improve retain staff are working because the retention rate of front line staff from 1st July 2016 to 31st March 2017 is 11.1% which is much improved on previous years, and is very good compared with industry standards.

Topics for the Family Newsletter

If there are any specific topics that you would like canvassed in the Newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact me. If there is something of interest to you, it is likely that others will also find it helpful. Please either email to mari@lighthousedisability.org.au or phone on 8256 9800.