

Lighthouse

Family News

Date: 8th August 2018

Issue No. 54

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Update on NDIA

SIL quotes (fee for payment of 24/7 support)

We now have 5 houses where SIL quotes have been approved (Cullford, Janet, Innes, Grantham and Salmon). The quotes for 24/7 support have been accepted as submitted so that is very good news for us.

Support Coordinator

As we understand it, a Support Coordinator has been allocated for each client who has an approved plan to;

- Assist families to understand what the funding in the plan is for, and
- Access the services for which funding has been provided.

In practice, this means that most families will not be able to access funds until a Support Coordinator has been allocated by the Department for Human Services (DHS) as part of an 'in kind' arrangement that has been negotiated between the State and Commonwealth Governments. At this stage, no one in Lighthouse Disability has had a Support Coordinator allocated. As some clients had their plans approved on 4th June, this is very worrying for many families.

Information was attached to the last Family Newsletter about the fact that families can request to choose a Support Coordinator (a 'release' of the in-kind service) and four families have now taken the step of writing to the NDIA to this effect. At this stage, the outcome is not clear. Please contact me if you would like to know more about this.

Some families have asked us to provide Support Coordination because we have good knowledge of our clients' needs. Late last year, the Board gave approval to appoint a Support Coordinator, on the understanding that every family has 'choice and control' - that is, every family must be given information about other Support Coordinators, and actively choose a Lighthouse Disability Support Coordinator service.

We also need to demonstrate that there is no conflict of interest if we offer this service. In our estimation, if there is a conflict of interest, it can be managed and we will be clear with each client/family about this.



David with his mum



Chris, Tammy & Mark are enjoying playing with balls

Client Tenancies

Another change that is coinciding with the introduction of the NDIA relates to changes in the tenancy arrangements for clients who live in SA Govt. housing (Payneham, Clairville, Spruance, Lavender and Rowe). Other houses which may transition in the future are Riveau, Janet, Log, Grantham and Salmon.

The SA Government (Renewal SA) has made a decision that houses for which they are responsible will be managed by Community Housing organisations, while the SA Government retains ownership of the houses. This means that there are likely to be negotiations about leases and rent with the new landlord. In some instances, because we have not charged the full amount that we could have, the rent for some clients will increase. This ONLY relates to the houses that have been named above.

Insurance

On 12th June, I sent a letter to families in which I outlined how insurance for clients' belongings will change with the introduction of NDIA. In a Newsletter dated 21st June 2018, I provided some information and indicated that I would provide more before families need to make decisions concerning insurance. Please refer to another update below.

It is important that you explore insurance options/issues with your insurance company. Some of the things that you might want to consider are;

- If there is an existing policy, it can run its course – that is, there is no need to stop this.
- When the existing policy expires, you have the following options;
 - You can negotiate with other clients/families in the house to take out a joint insurance policy to cover client belongings (contents) as has been the practice of Lighthouse Disability. Each client would share the cost, and it is not likely to be more than \$100-200/year for each person. However, your decision should be based on advice from your insurance company.
 - You can pursue insurance for your family member irrespective of what others in the house choose to do.
 - You can decide to carry the risk of not having any insurance. This means that, should there be some untoward event, and your family member's belongings are destroyed, then you, or your family member will be liable for the replacement of these.
- What should be insured?

Some families have asked for clarification about the ownership of household items, and it varies from house to house. But families could give consideration to the following to be included in an insurance policy:

- Personal belongings such as clothes, any white goods or furniture that the client owns.
- Disability equipment such as beds and chairs are not usually owned by clients, and the organisation which owns them will have insurance cover.

- In some houses, Lighthouse Disability owns the white goods and some furniture, and we will continue to take responsibility for insurance in relation to this.
- Houses are leased from a range of landlords, and the latter will continue to have the normal responsibilities for insurance associated with the house.

‘Choice and Control’

Choice and control is a basic principle which underpins the philosophy of the NDIS. It is very important because historically, people who have needed disability services have been obliged to take what the government has offered – either through the direct provision of services, or via funding to the not-for-profit sector.

Therefore, the NDIA aims to allocate funds to each client who can then choose the service provider of his/her choice.

When Lighthouse Disability has prepared your SIL quote, and it is approved, you have chosen Lighthouse Disability as your service provider for 24/7 support. It also means that you are choosing us as the service provider which is responsible for recruiting and managing staff – who in turn provide 24/7 support services.

Lighthouse Disability as the employer, carries all of the legal responsibilities associated with the management of staff (Work Health and Safety, Industrial legislation, etc.) along with the quality of care for clients (as per the NDIA Quality and Safeguarding Policy). ‘Choice and control’ does not mean that anyone purchasing our services can expect to choose staff – although of course, we are always interested in your feedback about any of our services, because we are committed to continuous improvement.

Our legal responsibilities to ensure the safety of staff and clients also mean that we will want to choose the providers from whom we seek professional advice. For example, we need to be confident that when we seek advice about manual handling, that the provider of this advice has a good track record for professionally competent practice. We are mindful that, should there be an adverse event, we will need (as we should) to demonstrate due diligence in all that we do.

Client Transport

Under the ‘old’ system of funding disability services in South Australia, the SA Government provided ‘block funding’ to each service provider which included money to provide transport for clients.

NDIA assumes that all clients can access ‘mainstream’ services e.g. use public transport systems such as buses, trains etc. As we know, this is a flawed assumption. Following on from this, the NDIA states that if a person with a disability needs assistance to use public transport, then funding for a worker to assist the client will be provided in the client’s funding package. However, this does not take account of the fact that many of our vehicles are customised to enable clients to use them.

There has been widespread concern about the implications of the NDIA stance concerning transport, but to date, it appears that few people have been allocated the funding needed to access appropriate transport.

At this stage, Lighthouse Disability will continue to provide transport, and in doing so, we are making a judgement call to provide this service when we are clearly not funded to do so. It also means that funds being used for transport are no longer available for other service delivery priorities.

Along with others in the disability sector, we are strongly advocating that funding decisions concerning transport be reviewed. ***Please understand that we are offering ‘value add’ concerning transport, and very much see the need to do so. However, future NDIA funding decisions may make this untenable.***

Subject to NDIA funding arrangements for each client, it is possible that families in some houses could negotiate, with the assistance of a Support Coordinator, to direct some discretionary funds to transport for that house. That is, clients could contribute some funds that would enable the cost of a vehicle to be covered, and thereby have access to the transport that is needed.

Transport costs and arrangements vary for each client according to specific circumstances. If you have any questions about this, please contact Karen Polkinghorne.

If you have any concerns or comments about other topics, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Membership of Lighthouse Disability

Thank you to the parent who asked for information about what being a member of Lighthouse Disability means.

As a 'not for profit' business, our Constitution is based on the legal framework of a Company Limited by Guarantee, and as such, we are required to have members. In a 'for profit' company, the equivalent of a member in our organisation is a shareholder who would expect to have a share in company profits, vote for Directors, and vote at Annual General meetings regarding major decisions (e.g. in some companies, the shareholders vote as to whether a merger or takeover is supported).

In Lighthouse Disability, to become a member, there is a fee of \$10 which is charged annually. As a member, you are entitled to appoint Directors to the company via a voting process at the Annual General Meeting, and to access minutes of general meetings as a means of gaining information about business operations. In addition, changes cannot be made to the Constitution unless endorsed by a specified number of members. In principle, it is the members of Lighthouse Disability who choose who sits on the Board and therefore governs it – that is, members are responsible for appointing the people to take legal responsibility for operating the business.

In practice, there is not always a requirement to vote for Directors at an Annual General Meeting (sometimes the number of candidates is the same as the number of vacancies) but members are required to endorse (or not) the appointment of Directors recommended to them even if there is not an election. The Constitution requires that a Nomination and Appraisal committee be formed to review applicants for Director positions. This committee then recommends (or not) to the Board as to the applicant's suitability to be a candidate for appointment at the Annual General Meeting.

Being a member of Lighthouse Disability implies a loyalty to, and interest in the business, and a commitment to the Objects of the Constitution which are to;

- a) Enable people with disabilities to exercise choice and control in the pursuit of goals and the planning and delivery of supports;
- b) Provide high quality and innovative supports that enable people with disabilities to maximise independent lifestyles and full inclusion in the mainstream community;
- c) Include families, volunteers, the broader community and other key stakeholders in the pursuit of positive outcomes for those to whom the Company provides services;
- d) Work in collaborative relationships with other organisations to further positive outcomes for the people to whom the Company provides services;
- e) Contribute to research in, and the promotion and utilisation of, the best available evidence in practice in relation to the services provided or which may be provided by the Company;
- f) Advise, collaborate with and inform organisations, including government bodies and individuals, about the needs of people with disabilities, their families and carers and advocate for the provision of services necessary to meet those needs; and
- g) Explore other ways of attaining the above objects within the law

Please don't hesitate to contact me should additional information be helpful.



Marj Ellis
CEO