

Self Directed Support

- Key questions for Support Planners
- Contributing to the cost of your support
- Achieving change with a good Support Plan and Broker

community living alternatives for people with additional support needs

Welcome

A warm welcome to the latest 16 page special issue of 'Options' for independent living

Dear Reader,

We are well into the New Year and the changes to Richmond's social care provision continue apace.

Called Self Directed Support (SDS), this new way of delivering personalised home and community support has led to a redesign of existing services, the introduction of new ones and changes in the way they can be used.

One such significant change is the council's new Contributions Policy. This will affect the financial contribution that some service users make towards the cost of their publicly-funded support. To try and clarify what these changes are, we have included a centrefold of questions and answers (p.07).

For our part, RUILS has responded to the changes by working to ensure your best interests are kept at the heart of the personalisation agenda. We have revised our membership entitlement so that all social service users can have a say in how we do things. We have taken on new staff and provided them, and existing staff, with the training that will help you navigate your way through the new system. Finally, we continue working with the council to smooth the way for current recipients of Direct Payments to receive their future funding as a Personal Budget.

As a reminder of what all these changes are trying to achieve, we feature a real example of a service user and her son, working hand-in-hand with their broker, to achieve a better quality of life (p.14).

By way of contrast, and as part of our occasional 'In my opinion' feature, we also print a reader's letter which reminds us that social care is not all about money, formal assessments and practical help (p.06).

Finally, we hope that 'Options', will keep you abreast of developments and go some way to achieving our New Year resolution - to help you make the most of your future support.

The Editorial Team

IN THIS ISSUE

- 05** A 'travel agent' to supported living!
- 07** Paying for support at home
- 12** Planning an Alternative Tomorrow
- 14** Planning - the real thing



EASY-READ GUIDE

Throughout this issue of the 'Options' newsletter, you will find most information is presented in the format you are now reading. There are however, several other types of information which you may find useful. They are displayed in boxes and explained as follows:



Tips & Advice

A box with this image of a lightbulb contains useful tips and ideas provided by experienced service users and practitioners.



Useful Contacts

A box with the image of a telephone contains the contact details of useful people and organizations.



Jargon Buster

A box with the alphabet letters gives a simple description of abbreviations and terms used as shorthand by professionals and others.



Information

These boxes contain extra information or explanation such as government or council advice, what rights you have and what you should expect from other bodies, such as Social Services.



WHAT IS SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORT?

Self-directed Support or SDS for short, is the new way that Richmond Council provides a personal response to the social support needs of eligible adults.

- **SDS** is for you if a chronic illness, age-related condition, disability or caring role means you need extra help,
- **SDS** helps you to live at home, to be part of your community or to pursue an education, career or ambition,
- **SDS** enables you to live as safely and as independently as possible whilst also doing those things that others take for granted,
- **SDS** asks you to identify what personal and domestic help you need and if there are any lifestyle changes that would improve your quality of life,
- **SDS** may include a council-funded cash contribution (Personal Budget) towards your preferred care and support,
- **SDS** lets you plan and spend wisely by setting aside the money you will get towards a full year of individual support,
- **SDS** is personal and powerful. It gives you choice and control to decide who, how, when, what and where your support is given,
- **SDS** can provide you with assistance to cost, choose, set-up, monitor and manage your support services,
- **SDS** is available to you if you cannot contribute to your own support costs and also if you can afford to pay, but want help to arrange your support,
- **SDS** gives you the opportunity to be well supported and perhaps to live a more fulfilling, equal, active and dignified life.

For more information contact RUILS tel: 020 8831 6083.
E-mail: info@ruils.co.uk

News In brief

New Staff

Hanna Pearce has joined the RUILS team as our Helpline Advisor, web forum moderator and 'YourSay' organiser. Hanna lives locally, has worked with young disabled adults and uses Makaton to communicate with people with a learning disability.



Hanna Pearce



Estelle Christmas

RUILS also extends a warm welcome to Estelle Christmas. She joins us as manager of the new RIBS Brokerage Service and brings a wealth of experience from her previous job as a Director of Supported Services for people with specialist and complex needs.

RIBS Brokerage Support Service

Richmond Independent Brokerage Service or RIBS, is a group of local organisations that has been set up to develop a home-visiting brokerage service to help holders of a Personal Budget plan and set up their 'social-care' support.

The RIBS service will be available to anyone eligible for council funding and also to those who pay for their own support and live in the Richmond area.

If you would like more information or to secure the services of a trained Broker, please contact 020 8831 6083 or email info@ruils.co.uk.

'YourSay'

'YourSay' is a new and informal group that 'test drives' new SDS 'social care' services and procedures.

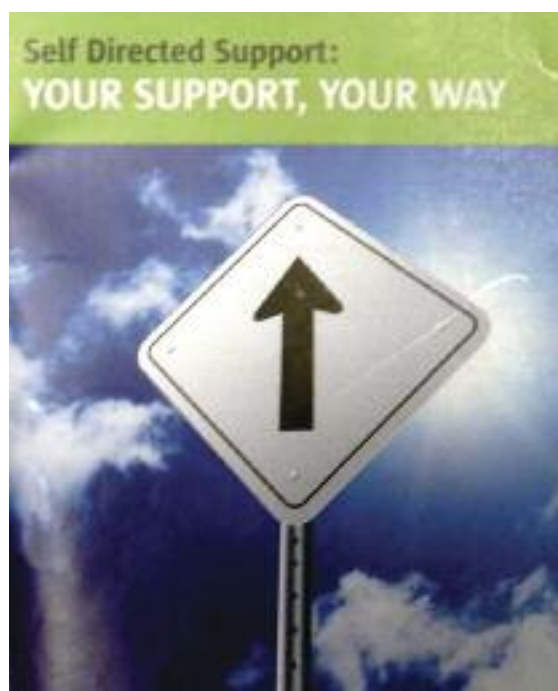
We want to create a respected and informed group of volunteer service users who look at the working methods of those services that directly affect their day-to-day lives. In particular, 'YourSay' will look at

their accessibility, worth and ease of use.

The group meets regularly in comfortable surroundings. It has already had some lively discussions and ideas about the council's new Self Assessment Questionnaire and these will be shared with senior managers in order to inform and shape future services and policy.

If you are interested in taking part in 'YourSay', please contact Hanna on 020 8831 6083.

New Guide



Free SDS Guide

Richmond Council has published a free booklet called "Self Directed Support: Your Support, Your Way". It tells you about the new way of providing social care and how to benefit from the greater flexibility, choice and control that SDS offers.

To obtain your free copy, contact the RUILS Helpline T. 020 8831 6083.

New Forum

Do you 'surf the net'? Are you looking for tips and advice about getting the most out of your Personal Budget? Then why not 'click on' to www.ruils.co.uk and follow the links to our 'Forum'. Once there you can meet others to share ideas, post questions or just pick up useful tips. Signing on and taking part in discussions is easy, so 'log on' now to become part of the virtual community of browsers.

A 'travel agent' to supported living!

We take a look at how a broker can help you get the right help and support.

A broker is someone who helps you to decide on, find and set-up support that will meet your personal needs. They may also be able to help you accomplish any lifestyle changes that prevent a further loss of independence or realise any unfulfilled achievements that will benefit your well-being.

Put another way, a broker is something like a 'travel agent'. They ask you what personal support and life (holiday) you are looking to have and can afford (using your Personal Budget). Then, with your agreement, they find and book all the support staff, services, aids and equipment (flights, hotels, excursions etc.) within your set 'price range' and finally, make sure these are all in place and ready for your personal use.

To help you achieve all these things, a Support Broker will work with you to:

- Prepare a Personal Support Plan (see p.12) that says who you are, what your life is like now, what parts of your day-to-day living you'd like to keep and/or change, and what essential personal support you need,
- Work out a budget or spending plan to show how you will buy these services, using money from your Personal Budget and any other funds,
- Draw up a list of 'Things to Do' that will set out how and when you will get all the people, services and community resources you need,
- Explore and help you to buy, monitor and manage the services and items of personal support that you have identified as needing.

So, in summary, your Support Broker is someone who works alongside you and uses his/her skills as

- a life planner,
- a financial, services and benefits advisor,
- a guide to local community assets and how to use them,
- an ally and mentor (to advise and encourage you),
- a go-between and 'personal shopper'

Ed.

See page 15 for Colin's and Lauren's experience of working with their broker.

..... to prepare and bring together all those essential elements of support that will enable you to live more easily with your disability or health-related condition.



INFORMATION

Google 'InfoRich', to access a web tool that can be used when support planning. You can use it to find what is available in your local community. For example, if you would like to get out and about to pursue an interest in history. InfoRich will help you to search for local organisations or colleges that run courses.

Alternatively, you can use the site to find out about local home care agencies that could help support you in your own home.

In my opinion

A reader reminds us that disability is about confronting emotional as well as physical and attitudinal barriers

An insider looking out.



I was diagnosed with progressive MS in 1995 and, for the first 11 years, thought my symptoms had stabilised – I could get about on a walking stick and required nothing from Social Services.

Then my condition suddenly deteriorated and I was forced to ask Social Services for help – primarily to be re-housed to the ground floor, as I was living in a 2nd floor flat on a hill.

I was virtually housebound for 2 years. Naturally this took its toll on my psychological and emotional well-being. I even arranged for a psychiatrist to visit me, as I feared for my mental health. He wrote a letter to the Housing Department expressing his concern – there was no response.



I approached Social Services for emotional support but was told it was not part of their remit. Social Services, though excellent in their knowledge of bureaucracy, procedure, form-filling and conducting an assessment or means test, lacked human connection.

Why Social Services did not supply emotional support, e.g. counselling, psychotherapy and cognitive behavioural therapy for disabled people, I did not know, as I felt they were only dealing with one side of the coin.

The emotional side of any disability can be devastating – it destroys the previous way of living and requires a rebuild for a person to survive. What had been easy before was now difficult, what had been difficult before was now impossible without careful assistance. Self-identity was radically altered, along with self-confidence, self-esteem, incentive and the ability to ‘do’.

This required a severe change of personal attitude, an acceptance of vulnerability and the necessity to ask for help. This is a huge emotional task and, in my view, equal in importance to the physical disability.

Practical help via walking aids, adaptations etc, are all very well, but it seems pointless for Social Services to fix only one wheel of the bicycle. Disabled people have as much right as anyone else to live as full a life as possible, and the support of Social Services can be crucial. When a disabled person has no family to support them, and only infrequent visits from friends, the loneliness of disability can become intolerable.

My consoling thought is that this disability is not my fault – although perhaps some spiritual paths might disagree.

Nevertheless, I feel it is unjust for able-bodied people to ignore me and talk to my carer because I am in a wheelchair, presumably having concluded that being in a wheelchair also means incapable of speech.

There seems to be a trend in society today which supports more capitalism than heart, more greed than sincerity, and where cheating is accepted as a means to success. The view from a wheelchair offers a different perception of living. Being in a wheelchair brings many observations of human nature – which can be an unpleasant realisation. Obviously in need of help, but not receiving it, crying out but no one hearing. There are good Samaritans, but they seem a rare breed. ”

Paying for support at home.

We answer some common questions about paying for the support you need to live at home and to retain your independence.

Unlike National Health Services, 'social care' is not free - most local authorities ask for a contribution from those who can afford to pay something towards the cost of their support.

In Richmond, the council has changed the way it calculates and collects this contribution so that it is compatible with the new system of social-care provision called Self-directed Support. The new arrangements apply to all recipients of Direct Payments and those who use:

- 'home helps' or care agency support,
- intensive day care for older people,
- residential respite care,
- day services for adults with learning or physical disabilities.

Who pays for my 'social care'?

The cost of providing your personal (social care) support is met by two contributors – the council, using public funds, and you, using some of your own money.

The amount you contribute depends on how much you can afford to pay after certain allowances have been taken into account.

How does the council work out what my contribution should be?

There are a number of steps to follow:

Step 1. You complete a form called a **Self Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ)**. This indicates the amount and type of support you currently need,

Step 2. The council uses the answers to your completed SAQ to work out how much money may

be needed to meet the annual cost of your support,

Step 3. You then complete a **Financial Assessment**, or test of your means, to determine what, if anything, you can afford to contribute to the cost of your support,

Step 4. The council tells you the amount of your **Personal Budget**. This is the annual amount the Council will pay towards your future support, less anything you have been assessed as contributing.

Step 5. Having identified your contribution and the amount that will be paid from public funds, your Personal Budget is released. It is then up to you how you spend both the council's and your contribution to get your support.

How will the Council work out how much I will have to pay?

You will not have to pay anything if you receive Pension Credit, Guaranteed Credit or Income Support.

However, if you are not in receipt of these benefits, the council will look at your income, expenses and savings (see worked example). Your expenses are deducted from your total income to find your "**net weekly income**". A further minimum basic income allowance(*) is then deducted from your net weekly income to determine your 'disposable income'. This is the amount you can afford to contribute.

(*) Basic Income Support or the Guaranteed Credit or Pension Credit, plus a further 25 per cent.

Are my benefits regarded as income?

The council ignores income from the following benefits:

Paying for support at home. (continued)

- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance,
- War Widows Mobility Supplement,
- Employment and Support Allowance.
- Child Benefit Allowance

Worked Example.1. Service User's contribution

Mr C has a Personal Budget of £400. He has savings of £26,000. Following a financial assessment, he has to pay a contribution of £302 per wk.

Comi c Sans	INCOME (before allowances)	£ (per week)
(A)	Total weekly Income	471.56
	SAVINGS	
(B)	Total Savings = £26,000	
	Calculated interest on savings above £13,500 (£1 per £250 savings)	50.00
	EXPENSES	
(C)	Total Household Expenses	31.64
(D)	Net Weekly Income = (A) + (B) - (C)	489.92
(E)	Pension Credit + 25% (single person rate)	155.06
	INCOME (after all allowances)	
(F)	Disposable Weekly Income = (D) - (E)	334.86
(G)	Maximum contribution	£302.00
	CONTRIBUTIONS	
(H)	Mr C's Contribution = (lower amount of (F) and (G))	£302.00

Council's annual contribution to C's Personal Budget (PB) is £5,096.

i.e. PB calculated as £400, less user's contribution of £302(G) = £98 per wk.
£98 x 52 wks = £5,096 a year (Mr.C's Personal Budget).

Q Which of my expenses are deducted?

Before working out how much you should pay, the council deducts some essential housing expenses from your weekly income. These are:

- mortgage payments,
- rent,
- ground rent and any communal service charges,
- council tax,
- water rates.

Q Are my savings included as income?

The council ignores the first £13,500 of your savings. If, however, you have more than this amount, then £1 for every £250 over £13,500 is added as weekly income. (See worked example, Sum (B)).

Your capital can also include land and buildings - but not the value of the house in which you live.

Q What are the different ways the contribution guidelines could affect me?

The council considers your 'disposable income' to be the amount you can afford to contribute each week towards your care and support. If your 'disposable income' is:

- very low, then you will not have to contribute towards your support,
- less than your Personal Budget, then your contribution will equal your disposable income and the Council will pay the difference between these two amounts. (See worked example).
- more than your estimated Personal Budget, then you will not be eligible to receive any money from the Council. You can, however, still get free information, advice and practical help to plan and set-up your support.

Q Is there a limit to what the Council can ask me to pay?

The most you be will asked to pay is £302, rising to £310 per week in April 2009. This maximum applies:

- if you have personal savings of over £35,000, or
- you choose not to complete the financial means test.

If your support costs amount to more than the maximum weekly personal contribution, then anything above this will be paid by the Council.

Q How will my contribution be collected?

This depends on who holds your Personal Budget.

- If you choose to hold it, then the council will make a monthly Direct (cash) Payment. Your contribution is deducted from the monthly payment before it is deposited into the account you have set up for this purpose.
- If you choose to have the council hold your Personal Budget and provide or commission social care services on your behalf, then the council's part of the cost is set off against your Personal Budget and your contribution is collected by monthly invoice. In this case, the easiest way to pay may be by Direct Debit.
- If you have agreed that a care agency or similar organisation holds your Personal Budget and uses it to provide your support, then either the Council or that agency will collect your contribution by invoice.

Q If I decide to use my Personal Budget to pay for respite care, will my contribution remain the same?

Yes. Your contribution will remain the same regardless of the type of support you decide to buy.

Q I get money from the Independent Living Fund – how will this be affected?

The council's policy will not apply to the proportion of care services that are funded by the Independent Living Fund (ILF) - they have their own contribution rules.

Q How are carers affected by the new contributions arrangements?

A carer will not be expected to contribute towards the cost of any Personal Budget that may arise as a result their own assessment of need.

The SDS Contributions Policy will also not apply to the following services for carers:

- Carers' short break services not provided as part of the Personal Budget paid to the (cared for) service user,
- Small Carers Payments.

Q What about young adults, will they pay a contribution?

If responsibility for your care and support is moving from Children's Services to Adult Services, you will be told your Personal Budget at age 16 but you will not receive any money or make a contribution (if any) until you are 18 yrs old.

Q What if my contribution goes up?

Richmond Council predicts that the majority (93%) of current service users will be unaffected by the changes. However, if you face an increase in your contribution then:

- this will take effect from 1 June 2009 or the date of moving to a Personal Budget, if this occurs after 1 June 2009,
- any new and additional personal contribution will be capped at an increase of £20 per week in 2009 and a further £20 increase from 1 April 2010,

- where, in exceptional circumstances, the increased personal contribution can be shown to have caused severe hardship, the council can put aside this amount.

All service users will be offered a welfare benefits check, with any additional benefits claimed not being included as income.

Q How do I get a benefits check?

The council has arranged for the following organisations to give you benefits advice:

- Richmond Community Partnership
T. 020 8481 3113.
- Richmond AID T. 020 8831 6070.

Q What if I disagree with the amount of my Personal Budget or my contribution?

To appeal, contact the care manager that helped you complete your assessment of needs.

Q What other help is available?

For further information on this policy contact:

- The Adult and Community Finance Team,
Civic Centre, 44 York Street, Twickenham
TW1 3BZ. Telephone: 020 8831 6215
Email: charginghelpline@richmond.gov.uk

For help to review your Personal Budget spending or to explore the possibility of unpaid support, contact: RUILS T. 020 8831 6083.

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If, at any time, you find yourself in circumstances that make it difficult for you to meet the costs of your support - either for a short period or long term – you should contact Adult Services immediately to discuss ways of dealing with the situation.

TRUSTEES WANTED

(To make a difference by serving others)



RUILS is a small but growing voluntary organisation with ambitious plans for future expansion of its social care and support services. It is a registered charity operated as a company limited by guarantee. The board of directors of the company are also trustees of the charity.

To help us grow and achieve a more diverse skill-mix, we need members of the public to join our board. We are particularly keen to recruit:

- a human resources manager to advise and monitor the terms and conditions of employment of the organisation's workforce,
- a person with legal experience and first-hand knowledge of charity, company and/or Inland Revenue regulation,
- a person to advise on marketing, public relations and events management,
- a person with experience of fundraising and grant-giving opportunities.

The positions may be of interest to retired or unemployed professionals seeking to keep their skills and practice up-to-date or local part-time salaried workers with an interest in community development.

Board meetings are held bi-monthly at our office in Teddington. Trustees are also encouraged to participate in sub-committees that meet every month during working hours. Out of pocket expenses are reimbursed.

More about us

RUILS provides a suite of services that enable disabled people and others with personal support needs to remain living in their own home and to participate in day-to-day activities that non-disabled people take for granted.

We are a user-led, self-help organisation. Our members contribute to the design, delivery and quality assurance of our services as well as comprising 75% of our board's membership.

In 2007 we began a joint venture with Richmond Council and local voluntary organisations to develop the National Social Care Personalisation Agenda. This requires the total transformation of traditional 'social care' services into new and more innovative ways of providing publicly funded, commercial and community-based social care support.

To find out more, please visit our website www.ruils.co.uk and contact the Chair by leaving a message on **020 8831 6083** or email: richardkember@ruils.co.uk

Planning an alternative tomorrow

A Support Plan will help you to be well supported and is the 'passport' to getting council funding.

Planning with a purpose

For those of us living with a disability or chronic illness, life can often feel out of control. At times, we seem to be passengers on a journey not of our choosing and, whilst we may strive to make the best of each day, we would find it hard to say that we have much choice and control over our



day-to-day living.

The Self-directed Support approach to social care addresses this problem by asking people with personal support needs to prepare a Support Plan. This describes what help they want and how it should be provided. In particular, it sets out what domestic, social or personal assistance is to be given, what individual life changes are to be pursued and how council-funds (in the form of a Personal Budget), will be used to achieve these.

In addition, a well thought-out and achievable Support Plan is key to getting the council to release funding for some or all future care and support.

The essentials of any plan

There are different ways of gathering the information to put in a Support Plan, but what all plans must include are answers to the following seven essential questions. Why essential? Because they will help you identify what is really important to your safety and well-being whilst also reassuring the council that taxpayers' money is being spent on giving you adequate support.

Q What is important to you?

This question affords you the opportunity to let everyone know that you are not a number but a unique person that has a history, preferences, talents and ambitions. In addition, your answer can say what is important and what really matters to you. As an example, you might include;

- details about your life that could inform and shape the way your future care and support is given e.g. "I was in the Navy. I like a set daily routine and having company whilst I'm eating.
- what is a good and bad day for you.
- what unfulfilled ambitions, interests or wishes you have e.g. "I want to set up home nearer to my family"

Q What (outcomes) do you want to change or achieve?

This key question prompts several others:

- What in your life works at present (the best parts to keep or have more of) and what doesn't work (the worst parts that need changing)?
- What will your future well-supported life look like? Will you consider one measure of success to be, 'To live in a well-maintained home, wear clean clothes and have nourishing and appetising meals?
- What are your 'must-have' and your 'like-to-have' daily-living needs and how much (or little) do you get of each?

'Must-have' needs are the essential things that keep you safe, healthy, independent and motivated. For example, they may include people ("I must stay in touch with my family"), equipment (a mobility aid), support (a personal assistant), or not-to-be-missed tasks (daily medication, faith observance).

'Like-to-have' needs add that extra bit to your quality of life. Your Personal Budget may not cover all their costs but it may be that your plan, and some smart budgeting, can work out ways for them to happen.

Q How will you be supported?

Your plan must describe how you are going to be supported so that you remain as independent and healthy as possible. It will include details about who, how, when, what and where your care and support will be delivered and whether it will be a paid or informally provided service. Your answer should also say how you will stay safe and well should any pre-arranged support fail or there is an unexpected and sudden change in your health or level of need.

Q How will you spend your Personal Budget?

Your Support Plan needs to itemise the weekly and annual cost of your paid support. In so doing, you will show the Council that you have control of your spending and will always have enough to buy your 'must-have' needs. Any money put aside to pay for 'like-to-have' non-essentials' or occasional 'high-cost' events, can also be noted.

“ A support plan is not a one-off thing that should gather dust in the back of a draw. It is a constant companion to be revised if your circumstances change, you need to review your progress or adjust your course. ”

Q How will your support be managed?

Your answer to this question could usefully say something about:

- How you will find and select a suitable support worker or care agency,
- How you will manage any routine administrative jobs associated with your paid support,
- How you will check that you stay well supported and free from harm.

Q How will you stay in control of your life?

Your answer to this question, may depend on:

- how comfortable you are at making important

decisions about your support,

- how willing and able you are to oversee the quality of its day-to-day delivery and
- how confident you are about making changes when things are not right?

If you wish to delegate or prefer others to act on your behalf in regard to these matters, then your Support Plan needs to record what type of decisions you are happy to be made for you and by whom.

Q What are you going to do to make this plan happen?

Your plan needs to sets out a clear, realisable and commonsense list of what needs to be done to make sure that your proposed support and life changes happen. It lists:

- What outcome you want to achieve? e.g. To get involved in my community by visiting places & people.
- What exactly will be done to achieve this goal, by when and by whom? e.g. Apply for a Taxi Card within 1 month,
- How will you know when you have achieved it? e.g. I'll be making regular local trips by Taxi Card

- When will each action be started and finished? If your goal is long-term, can you break it down into smaller, more immediately achievable chunks?

Getting help to plan (see Top Tips)

The thought of preparing your own Support Plan may seem off-putting but there is help to hand – it can include:

- Family members or close friends,
 - Brokers who are trained support planners (p.05),
 - Advocates, who can represent your best interests when planning,
 - Social Services Care Managers,
 - Voluntary organisations.
- or any mix of the above.

Planning an alternative tomorrow (continued)

..... and lastly

Support planning is much more than can be described here and we strongly recommend that you seek further help and information before preparing your plan.

At present, you can get a 'taste' of support planning by coming along to one of our small and friendly get-togethers (lunch included) or, if you already know how much money you have to spend on your social care, then you can ask one of the RIBS support planning brokers to visit and work with you to prepare your plan.

For all of the above services contact the helpline 020 8831 6083 or website: www.ruils.co.uk.



TIPS & ADVICE

A good planning companion is someone that:

- knows you well or is prepared to spend time getting to know you,
- sees the person not the disability,
- will maximise your personal choice, control and independence
- can actively help to turn your decisions into actions and beneficial results.
- is trustworthy, 'on your side' and committed to furthering your well-being and self-interests.

Planning - the real thing

A well-prepared plan has helped Lauren to live a fuller life.

The Broker's Tale



My role as a support Broker is to help people to lead their own and fuller lives.

Working with Lauren and her son Colin meant working in partnership with them, using Colin's first hand unique knowledge and experience of his mum, so we could put down what was important for her and work towards the desired life she wanted. He was not only her son but her advocate.



The person who was central was Colin's Mum Lauren, her wishes and needs were the driving force. What she wanted was clear - a new life in London living close to her son and being part of the local community. She wanted a different future to the one she had in Liverpool with the agency. Having her own budget gave her the scope to do this.

Her life plan is so entirely different now. She's doing things she has never done before; meeting new people, living in an area miles away from where she lived before, planning to use her budget to learn to read and write, a dream she never thought possible. This makes my work so exciting and satisfying. Moving from assessments and safe outcomes, to ones based on real lives ””.



INFORMATION

Contact 'paFinder Plus' (T: 020 8831 6084) if you decide to use Direct Payments to employ your own Personal Assistant or support worker. Karen and Sarah can introduce you to known jobseekers, help you to set up as an employer and give advice on how to manage your staff.

The Planner's Tale



I had the good fortune to move my Mum, Lauren, down from the North in March last year. She was living in a Housing Scheme and, due to funding cuts, the residents were asked to relocate.

My Mum is mentally disabled and illiterate and, as a result, needs some care. She is able to look after herself in terms of cooking, washing and getting out to the shops, but she had carers who came in to check up on her, help her (through contact with me) pay her bills and take her shopping for food and necessities. This was done through Social Services and through a care agency.



Before moving Mum down to London, I was told by my our previous Social Services that she would not be entitled to any care assistance. Now, given Mums condition and the fact that she was new to the area and needed help adjusting, I found this statement ridiculous - and so did the team in Teddington who assess all circumstances before coming to any rash decisions.

The Teddington team were great. They put me in touch with RUILS and a staff member, Jackie, got in touch to see what could be done to improve Mum's situation. Jackie did a home visit with Mum and I to assess what she needed and to address what things would have to put in place to improve her quality of life.

We wanted more than just a 'care' package. Mum had moved away from what she had known for 40+ years, her friends and everything she had known. After a relaxed chat with Jackie, and identifying the key points, Mums main concerns were getting out and about and meeting new people. Mum is a very outgoing and bubbly person who likes a good dance and the odd drink like the rest of us. I have to work and I see Mum 3-4 days a week. She has got more independent since her move and has braved going out and about and exploring the local area. The main thing was getting her introduced to new people, which is where RUILS comes in. They have arranged for a carer to come in two days a week who will take Mum to local activities, coffee mornings, etc and will also assist with general duties around the flat. Social Services have also provided the funds towards tuition for Mum to teach her to read and write, which will be life changing if we can make this happen - and I'm sure we will.

I love my Mum and I'm very grateful that she can be living so close to me now. I am so proud of how brave she has been in moving as it was a huge step for her. RUILS has given Mum a great chance to settle into her new life, to hopefully make new friends along the way and live a fuller life.

Jackie and the RUILS team have been fantastic all the way, quickly responding to calls, emails, questions or concerns and making home visits so the whole process is personal to my Mum's needs, and to mine. I believe Mum's life and mine will be richer for the help we have been given and would recommend it to anyone.



Richmond Users Independent Living Scheme (RUILS) is an independent, grassroots, self-help organisation that acts as the champion, representative and peer supporter of all those local people who use Direct Payments, personal assistants and other means to achieve a more independent and inclusive lifestyle.

Help us to help each other

As a self-help group of individuals who are receiving Direct Payments, we value your knowledge, skills and experience and invite you to share your know-how with others.

For further information about volunteering opportunities, the services and events mentioned here, or a copy of this newsletter in Braille, large print, audio tape or community language, please contact us at:

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Per informata te metutjeshme lidhur me sherbimet, mundesite per tu bere vullnetare ose per kopjen e ketij botimi ne gjuhen e te verberve (Braille), me shkronja te medha, ne kasete ose ne gjuhen tuaj, ju lutemi kontaktoni

如欲查詢更多有關各項服務、義工工作機會的訊息，或者索取這份出版物的盲人點字、大字體印刷、錄音帶或另一種語言的印本，請聯絡：

ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਂ ਵਲੰਟੀਅਰ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਜਾਂ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਕਾਪੀ ਬਰੇਲ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਸੁਣਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਜਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਬੋਲੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਫ਼ਿਰਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ

સેવાઓ વિષે અથવા સ્વયંસેવક તરીકેની તકો વિષે તમને વધુ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, અથવા આ પુસ્તિકાની નકલ અંધવિપિ (બ્રેલ)માં, મોટી છપાઈમાં, ઓડિયો ટેપ પર અથવા ગુજરાતી ભાષામાં જોઈતી હોય તો મહેરબાની કરી સંપર્ક સાધો:

المزيد من المعلومات حول الخدمات و فرص العمل التطوعي او للحصول على نسخة من هذا المنشور مطبوع بلغة برايل او مطبوع بالاحرف الكبيرة او نسخة مسجلة على شريط تسجيلي او مترجم بلغة الجالية الرجاء الاتصال على

ruils