

Dimensions

Can't get the staff

Dimensions developed training on employment and staff development for family carers of people with learning disability and autism who are currently employing or are thinking about employing staff through Direct Payments (DP) and Personal Budgets.

Background

Dimensions is a specialist provider of a wide range of services for people with learning disabilities and people who experience autism. It is a not-for-profit organisation, supporting around 3,500 people and their families throughout England and Wales.

Dimensions was aware that some families with whom it worked were not taking up the opportunities presented by Personal Budgets because of uncertainties they had about becoming an employer. It wanted to provide training to share best practice in recruitment and staff development from large organisations with families looking to become Individual Employers.

What we wanted to achieve

The key aim of the project was to support families in using a Personal Budget effectively and to make sure that they recruited the right person for their needs. It aimed to help people explore what they

wanted from an employee and to make sure that people were aware of the necessary information they needed to employ and manage staff.

Staff at Dimensions were aware of the biggest issues identified by families in employing staff using a Personal Budget and this information was used in the designing the material to be delivered as part of the overall course.

It sought to use the lessons learned from recruitment and staff management in larger organisations and present these to families in an accessible and usable way.

What we did

Participants in the training were provided with a resource pack to help them in using Personal Budgets effectively. This included blank templates for participants to fill in.

“The training was very practical and very focused on what we needed to think about.”

Individual Employer



Participants were provided with training on the following issues:

- How to write a job description;
- How to manage staff performance;
- Awareness of the ethical issues involved in employing staff;
- How to address staff development needs; and
- How to dismiss staff.

Training was provided over 5 days. Participants were invited to be accompanied by staff who already worked for them. The training was a mix of group discussion and course delivery.

What we achieved

Participants reported an increased confidence that they would be able to recruit the right person having received the training.

Staff employed by families were happy with the fact that they now had clear aims and objectives developed after their employers attended the training.

Families that participated in the course have continued to meet in an informal network after the training finished. They used this as a forum to share best practice and experience.

As a result of the project, Dimensions now has a resource information pack developed which it can share with families it supports. This is a useful resource for families to show them how person-centred recruitment works.

What we learnt

Providing participants with an information pack was something really useful that they were able to use after the training concluded. Including blank templates which participants could subsequently fill in were mentioned as being particularly useful.

Participants found that the training was very relevant and this was one of the best things about the course. It has been a useful means of highlighting best practice in addressing employment and staff issues. Also, discussing experiences with other participants was considered to be helpful.

Keeping records and preparing the necessary paperwork have been useful exercises for Individual Employers (IEs) to undertake. It was particularly useful in helping families decide what the goals for employees should be, as well as what they wanted employees to achieve.

Given that families have a lot of demands on their time, addressing practical issues like providing an accessible venue were important in making it easy for people to attend.

“We wanted to support people to explore what they wanted from an employee and how they could achieve that”

Trainer

For more information please contact

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Skills for Care Recommends

Skills for Care produces a range of resources aimed at people who employ their own care and support. These can help individual employers to employ personal assistants and develop their workforce.

Employing personal assistants toolkit

The employing personal assistants toolkit covers responsibilities as an employer and legal obligations. It includes templates of job descriptions, application forms and contracts of employment.

www.employingpersonalassistants.co.uk

Individual employer funding

Skills for Care can help towards the funding of training for adult social care individual employers. This application form process can help fund induction and longer term development.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/iefunding

An interactive guide for personal assistants

This interactive website helps personal assistants to learn more about gaining the skills they need for their role.

www.paskills.org.uk

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