

WORKSTEP to Work Choice

In November 2009 DWP ran a series of “WORKSTEP to Work Choice Transition events” in Edinburgh, Leeds and Cardiff. The following is the summary feedback from sessions on Transition Activities. We will reflect the issues raised as appropriate within WORKSTEP and Work Choice guidance

Question 1: Timeline – is it right? Have we missed anything? Issues with completing activities?

Comments:

- What are the contingency arrangements for providers who cannot meet the security approval requirements;
- Require detailed Information (including dates) about the expectations on Workstep providers, so Workstep providers can plan resource / staffing etc;
- Participants may need longer time to consider transferring to Work Choice;
- Need to pass Financial Incentive information to primes, months in advance, to set up appropriate payment systems;
- Need events in each Contract Package Area (CPA) to clarify Transitional plans between Workstep and Work Choice providers;
- Training requirements for existing staff to support customers & employers during transition.

Question 2: Communications – What do you need from the project and when do you need it? Have we missed anything?

Comments:

- Need regular, consistent and uniformed communications for providers and their staff;
- Set guidelines / communications strategy for providers to support engagement with employers and participants (i.e standard set of templates);
- Need immediate consultations with contract managers to agree action plans;
- Need support with employer engagement activity;
- Communications need to go out to employers by January, outlining what we know is happening;
- Imperative the DWP networking database is updated to ensure communications reach the right people in the organisations (i.e HR Information to be sent to HR departments);
- Hold provider forums for each CPA;
- Communications for carers / families of participants;
- Need to consider format of communications for participants with mental health issues, learning difficulties, sight impairment, hard of hearing and associated costs;
- Issues log during transition.

Question 3: Data transfer draft form – Comments?

Comments:

- What happens if a participant refuses to sign permission to transfer data;
- Will the form be computerised to allow completion electronically or hard copy;
- Will the form be transferred electronically to Work Choice Providers - Security Issues;
- Will the form be compatible with providers current software / systems;
- How will data be used and does the form need to contain so much personal information;
- Will there be the opportunity to amend information on the form between April – October 10 to ensure it is correct;
- Who retains ownership of archive files and should these be handed over to new providers;
- Timescales are tight for Work Choice providers to turn around the form and have discussions with participants;
- Considerable resource will be needed from existing staff;
- Do we need a space to record secondary health conditions on the form.

Question 4 – Any other transitional issues you would like us to consider

Comments:

- When will we know if we are getting any transitional funding, what can it be used for, how can we access it, how will it be paid;
- In addition to the form what other data will need collecting;
- Capacity of existing provider to deliver extra work at a time where they may be losing staff;
- Any potential union issues – How many of the 14,000 participants are in a union;
- Need to consider the support requirements for participants with learning disability & mental health issues etc...and Advocacies / Interpreter support etc;
- Will all participants contracts (Agreements) need to be changed to reflect the new contract (i.e arrangement between Provider & Host organisation).