



# Carers And Parents of adults with learning disabilities in Enfield

## CAPE NEWS – JUNE 2020

I hope all CAPE members and their families are keeping well and that they are comfortable with the increasingly rapid progress in easing the lockdown. I am sure that many carers, particularly those of us who may be in the vulnerable groups, or whose family members are in those groups, have mixed feelings about this.

### Local Covid19 Swab Antigen Testing

CAPE committee members continue to be active, taking part in more 'virtual' meetings with officers and also lobbying in support of issues affecting carers and people with L.D. Hopefully you will have recently received information about Covid19 testing available locally for all carers and service users, even those who do not have symptoms. This is a real success for us, as we had been lobbying for equality with the care home sector, and this, now, brings that into line. This is a specific 'Enfield' response, and initially the tests will be available for 2 weeks, from 22/06/2020. Please take advantage of this important facility.

### Day Services.

You will also have received a questionnaire from Julia Glenn regarding IWE day services, and asking for your views on the return of service users to these services. IWE is now back under direct L.A. control, and I have spoke to Julia about this questionnaire. She is happy for CAPE members to respond, even though their family members may attend another day services, so as to obtain as much information from as many people as possible. This should then be used to inform any Enfield policies on the re-opening of day services, more widely.

We have been trying hard to obtain information from the L.A. about any structured return of the day services, and an idea of what restrictions may be imposed. Currently no response has been forthcoming, and we have been informed that the L.A. is carefully considering its options.

### Integrated Learning Disabilities Service.

We are aware that we had arranged for Vicky Main (Head of the Integrated Learning Disabilities Service) to attend our CAPE meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> June. Obviously this did not happen, but we have been in close contact with Vicky throughout the lockdown period. We held a 'virtual' meeting with her on 19<sup>th</sup> June, where she (very ably assisted by Chris O'Donnell) agreed to address queries from L.D. carer representatives on a number of important issues. We have attached a 'Question & Answer' document, with these notes, detailing the discussions which took place. I hope you will find this helpful (it is quite long!).

### Charging Issues.

CAPE Committee members (Bernadette Reigar, Jane Richards and myself) attended a 'virtual' meeting of the Charging Reference Group on 21<sup>st</sup> June.

There has been an important policy change for 2020-21 regarding charges for overnight respite. Previously, there was always a fixed charge for any respite, whether in a care home or anywhere else. This was significantly higher than the regular assessed contribution. This fixed charge has now been abolished, and a person's assessed contribution will continue to apply during all respite periods, even if this takes place in a care home. If a person has been assessed as having a zero contribution, respite will also be free of charge. If you start to receive separate charges for respite, from 2020-21, please challenge these.

Your family member will have received a letter stating that the assessment of social care charges for 2020-21 will be delayed until the start of July. Your family member should soon receive their 2020-21 contribution assessment letter, including a breakdown of how the charge was arrived at. Disability Related Expenditure has been increased with a double inflationary uplift, as there was no uplift applied last year. We have been informed that the DRE guidance and claim form will not be sent to everyone, as happened last year. We are very unhappy about this, and have asked that this be continued. If you do not receive a copy of the DRE form, and wish to have a paper copy – PLEASE CALL the Income Assessment team and request this! Please check the DRE form, and make sure



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you are entering all your DRE. The financial assessment team has agreed to show flexibility during these difficult times, where some DRE amounts may have reduced, where others may have increased.

We raised very serious concerns about the issue of people being charged when they are receiving no services or significantly reduced services, following lockdown restrictions. We have been told that if no services are being provided at all, then any charges will be waived. The discussions regarding people who are receiving very reduced services (e.g. a couple of Zoom sessions a week, to replace a day service) became 'difficult,' and we were informed that each case would be dealt with individually. So, if you are paying a charge, and you do not consider that the service you receive is worth the payment you are making - PLEASE PHONE DUTY: 020 8379 5075, and ask for your charge to be removed, or reduced.

### **Finally.**

CAPE wishes all its members well, and please keep all your networks going – everyone needs friends at these difficult times. We shall let you know as soon as CAPE meetings can be re-started. Please use the CAPE email address to send us any queries or issues you may have. Luan has been furloughed, but EDA's Karen Grime, whom many of you know, has kindly agreed to stand in and support CAPE.

Wendy Berry (Vice-Chair, CAPE).