

BORDERS DIRECT PAYMENT AGENCY EVALUATION 2008-09

INTRODUCTION

This is an internal evaluation consisting of the responses to a questionnaire devised by BDPA staff and sent out to clients of BDPA who are in receipt of a Direct Payment and/or Independent Living Fund. From 140 forms sent out in March 2009 (128 Community Care, 12 Children Affected by Disability), 73 were returned (67 Community Care, 6 CHAD), equating to 52%.

The aims of the evaluation are:

- To examine the responsiveness of the Agency to client need, and establish whether there are any gaps in the services provided.
- To look at how we disseminate information and whether this can be improved.
- To assess whether Direct Payments continue to be viewed as a positive alternative by those who use them.

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RESULTS FROM CLIENTS (COMMUNITY CARE)

Client comments in *italics*.

1. Accessibility

Clients were asked if they had difficulty making contact with us or felt they had to wait too long for a response? 63 said No, 1 said Yes.

30 clients said queries had been dealt with in a reasonable timescale, 1 said No.

Always been able to contact whoever I needed to.

Staff always available.

No difficulty at all. Queries dealt with immediately or within a short time frame.

No difficulty – I usually e mail, perhaps a quicker reply would help.

Although this is not a complaint.

Find contact and help very easy and useful.

Clients were asked if they were happy with the nature and frequency of contact with members of BDPA staff.

64 said Yes, 1 said No.

Absolutely – very happy.

Contact regular and helpful. Very satisfied.

Staff are always very helpful when on phone or when I visit office.

Clients were asked if they had been dealt with in a courteous and helpful manner. 67 said Yes.

Always. (Member of staff) usually answers the phone and after I've discussed things, I always feel I've been listened to, and given a satisfactory answer.

Staff always courteous and helpful with 'can-do' attitude.

Always very helpful and quick to answer my questions.

Clients were asked if there are ways in which accessibility to our services could be improved.

60 said No, 4 were Not sure.

Can't think of how you can improve- always accessible.

Not at the moment.

More advertisement would help other people understand their entitlements to benefits they are owed.

2. Professionalism / Effectiveness

Clients were asked if BDPA staff were well-informed and provided accurate information? 66 said Yes.

Yes – even willing to explore alternatives.

Always been prompt & efficient.

Very well informed.

Clients were also asked whether staff had found information and responded in a reasonable time period when information was not readily available.

54 said Yes, and 7 said N/a.

Very quick- and within a short time on complex matters.

Clients were asked if advice was ever unclear or conflicting, and if so, how this was resolved.

56 said No and 6 said Yes.

Advice has always been clear.

Always had good advice.

By face to face contact.

Only re holidays!

3. Information Sharing

Clients were asked if they had attended BDPA events or training and to say what they did and did not like about the events.

13 had attended, 51 had not.

Have attended in past. I liked the information and meeting others.

It is great to be made to feel like a person, not a statistic, and that my input counts.

Never attended any events, could do with some evening/weekend ones!

Friendly atmosphere, good to hear other users' experiences.

It was informative.

Attended two events, happy with both.

Not been to anything because I have not managed to organise it at my end.

Those who had not attended gave the following reasons:

Timing - 14 clients

Not relevant -12 clients

Other commitments – 9 clients

Disability/health reasons -8 clients

Location- 4 clients

Transport -3 clients

Carer responsibilities -1 client

Not aware of events – 1 client

Timing has always played a part in me not being able to attend. I would have like to attend more.

Disability means am unable to leave home also no transport.

Shyness and lack of time.

I would like to attend training but I am housebound at the moment.

Did not wish to attend.

Clients were asked about news sheets and other information which BDPA sends out.

59 clients find this information clear and useful.

Most information is very useful.

Don't think I get anything special.

Not had one yet.

51 clients who receive information along with pay slips are satisfied with this arrangement.

Clients were asked if information circulated to them could be better.

32 said No, 1 said Yes and 4 did not know.

Through care of third party for those with learning disability.

No I think it is okay the newsletters are easy to understand.

Yes- may be better format for accessibility if was in form of email.

No, a friend always at the end of the phone.

Website

57 clients had never used our website, 6 clients had.

Not on internet.

No computer.

No and do not intend to use in future.

No, this is because I prefer the personal contact with staff.

Of those who had visited the site, 4 clients had found what they wanted, 1 had not.

Clients were asked what they would like included on the website.

Don't know

Emergency cover. Emergency contacts.

Anything if is helpful and necessary to know and also maybe a forum.

No suggestions.

65 years old wouldn't know how to use one.

More detailed information.

They were also asked what would make it more 'user-friendly'.

Don't know

Seems easy to use.

No suggestions. Website clear and easy to navigate.

4. Support

The following services have been used by Community Care clients:

Advertising for staff	55%
Writing job descriptions, contracts of employment etc	78%
Interviewing staff	37%
Information on wages, pay rates etc	79%
Payroll service	67%
Support with budgeting the DP	45%
Information on employer's legal responsibility	82%
Information on care agencies	33%
Training for yourself and/or your staff	37%
Dealing with staffing problems	25%
Respite/ holiday information	49%
Staffing holidays / sickness	55%

Also support with:

Conflicts between staff and employer.

Holiday/staff levels/requirements.

Setting up the system.

Everything really.

De-stressing and calming worries.

They keep me right and it's nice to have friendly voice at end of phone.

Anything I'm not sure of I can rely on BDPA to keep me right.

Tax liability (HMRC)

Clients were asked if there was any other type of support they would like to be provided by the Agency.

43 said No, 3 said Yes and 1 Don't know.

Possible more support in future if needed. Holiday support/advice.

Maybe in the future.

If so I'll let you know.

All support being provided.

54 clients feel overall that having a direct payment has been a benefit to them.

It's the best move I've made.

It allows the family to maintain control and the Caree is still making the decisions – very important.

It has been a huge benefit, it is less stressful now I have help on a regular basis.

Great benefit- staffing is more reliable...never called away!

Help us to remain independent.

This has been a great benefit. The Agency made the process so easy to set up and use.

Very much so, a huge benefit with BDPA doing all the groundwork I am able to have full control of my own care.

*Overall DP has benefited my mother's care greatly...Knowing who the employee is before employment commenced (peace of mind)!
It does enable you to choose your staff, but that in itself adds to the workload – managing them & filling gaps caused by illness.
We live in a remote rural area so being able to employ care direct and locally sourced by us has been easier than using town based agency.
Also we have established good consistent care.*

Clients were asked what they would change.

3 clients said *Nothing*

More hours.

SBC should have left the monthly payment as it was – net payment.

Don't like getting a bill every month for our contribution.

Always been satisfied so wouldn't change anything.

Clients were asked whether managing a DP was easier or more difficult than expected, and to say what would make it easier.

27 had found it Easier, 2 found it Harder.

As expected

No problems

BDPA have made it much easier than feared.

DP arrangement is the easy part. Difficulty is in administering the account & staffing. No answers to make it easier.

It is harder and I could not have done it without the support..

It sounded really hard to start with but was made easier with the help of the BDPA staff.

Easier because the agency staff are always there to help, answer queries etc.

Would not like to do it without BDPA support, as there is always advice/reassurance readily available from BDPA, to ensure that employment law is followed.

Managing individual members of staff is much harder work than relying on an agency to deliver a service when you want.

Initially lots of paperwork and new concepts to grasp. Has been time consuming.

5. Complaints

62 clients said they had never had cause to complain about the support from BDPA . None said yes.

Never had to make a complaint.

I have never complained! Except for a staffing issue and this was dealt with satisfactorily.

Indeed not. Had nothing but the best.

I have never had any cause to make a complaint. All support has been very satisfactory.

6. Other comments

Service is supported well by sympathetic and dedicated staff who enhance this service in terms of quality.

...the help and support received from this agency has been most helpful in relieving anxiety and stress when first dealing with the unknown. If all agencies were so efficient, life would be so much easier for disabled people. Many thanks.

I would recommend the Agency to anyone requiring this type of assistance. You always give a first class service and have been a great help to me.

The support we have received from BDPA has been excellent. We consider the service provided to be first class, down to the last detail. An excellent service continues to be provided. I particularly appreciate the payroll service.

Direct Payments is brilliant, couldn't do without it now, makes life much easier for me.

A good service staffed by people with the right attitude.

Good service all round. J

Continue the good work!

RESULTS FROM CLIENTS OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES.

Client comments in *italics*.

1. Accessibility

Clients were asked if they had difficulty making contact with us or felt they had to wait too long for a response? All 6 said No.

3 clients said queries had been dealt with in a reasonable timescale.

Never had to wait, everything dealt with.

No difficulty. Excellent support and help.

Response has usually been prompt.

Clients were asked if they were happy with the nature and frequency of contact with members of BDPA staff.

All 6 said Yes.

Very happy.

Clients were asked if they had been dealt with in a courteous and helpful manner. All 6 said Yes.

Brilliant!

Staff are always helpful and courteous.

Clients were asked if there are ways in which accessibility to our services could be improved.

4 said No.

Can't think of any.

2. Professionalism / Effectiveness

Clients were asked if BDPA staff were well-informed and provided accurate information? 6 said Yes.

Clients were also asked whether staff had found information and responded in a reasonable time period when information was not readily available.

5 said Yes

Generally yes.

Clients were asked if advice was ever unclear and/or conflicting, and if so, how this was resolved. All 6 said No.

Advice is always clear.

3. Information Sharing

Clients were asked if they had attended BDPA events or training and to say what they did and did not like about the events.

3 had attended, 2 had not.

Autism. Good.

Contact with people. Day out.

Only one. It was quite informative.

Those who had not attended were asked to give reasons, as follows:

Timing - 1 client

Location - 1 client

Other commitments – 1 client

Relevance and demands on my time.

Usually location and timing have been unsuitable for me.

Clients were asked about news sheets and other information which BDPA sends out.

5 clients find this information clear and useful. 1 said Sometimes.

3 clients who receive information along with pay slips are satisfied with this arrangement.

Yes – makes sense and reduces cost.

Clients were asked if information circulated to them could be better.

3 clients said No.

I'd be happy to receive by email.

Not that I can think of.

Website

4 clients had never used our website, 2 clients had.

Of those who had visited the site, 1 had not found what they wanted.

It is a bit basic – I use it to get phone number when I'm away from house.

Clients were asked what they would like included on the website.

Make it Web2 so that your staff can update it EASILY – weekly.

FAQ.

Case studies – how people use DP and how agency provides a service.

They were also asked what would make it more 'user-friendly'.

The site is extremely limited – almost anything would!

4. Support

The following services have been used by CHAD clients:

Advertising for staff	33%
Writing job descriptions, contracts of employment etc	83%
Interviewing staff	33%
Information on wages, pay rates etc	100%
Payroll service	50%
Support with budgeting the DP	50%
Information on employer's legal responsibility	100%
Information on care agencies	17%
Training for yourself and/or your staff	33%
Dealing with staffing problems	17%
Respite/ holiday information	33%
Staffing holidays / sickness	67%

Also support with:

General informed discussion – always useful.

Very helpful with any issues you have.

Clients were asked if there was any other type of support they would like to be provided by the Agency. 1 said No.

You could put a link on your website to contact BDPA if interested in working as a carer.

Finding people to provide support is very difficult – could DPA help by building a pool of people in different areas?

All 6 clients feel overall that having a direct payment has been a benefit to them.

WE can pick who we have taking our daughter away different outings. It has helped us greatly and given our daughter some independence in social situations away from her parents.

It has transformed our family life, offering respite and time with other children whilst giving quality individual time to (client).

It has been a benefit as it has helped my son build more independence. Gives us a break.

Clients were asked what they would change.

More hours to make recruitment easier.

Clients were asked whether managing a DP was easier or more difficult than expected, and to say what would make it easier.

3 had found it Easier, 1 found it Harder, 1 same as expected.

Much more difficult. Finding, recruiting and managing staff takes much more time than anticipated and detracts a lot from the benefits. Getting commitment for a few hours a week is virtually impossible.

Easy to manage.

It is quite admin heavy for the payment to be managed. BDPA make that as easy as they can I think.

5. Complaints

All 6 clients said they had never had cause to complain about the support from BDPA .

6. Other comments

Super service. As my daughter is nearly 18 years old, she will no longer have Aberlour day care.

As (client) gets direct payment, she is able to have weekend breaks, cinema, time to enjoy going out with new people. She loves it.

Finding the best bank account at the outset was difficult – this is information the DPA could have held.

CONCLUSIONS

The vast majority of client replies to the evaluation were very positive. Clients are happy with the nature and speed of responses to their queries and find staff helpful and well-informed. The service is readily accessible and advice and support is clear. Staff are perceived as helpful and willing to take time to tailor support to individual clients and their changing needs.

Support with employer issues is the service which is most used by clients. Particular areas of the service which are appreciated are: the payroll service and advice with pay rates, paperwork such as contracts etc and the legal requirements of being an employer. Many clients also highlighted the importance of 'a friendly voice at the end of the phone'. Clients found managing a DP easier than they had imagined with the support of Borders Direct Payment Agency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The take up of training and information events is low, and this is a concern that the BDPA is trying to address. The main reasons for non-participation appear to centre around timing and people having other commitments. Attempts to address this are ongoing, with courses being run at different times and in a variety of locations. Where responses state that the course is not relevant, it is hard to differentiate between clients who feel they are comfortable as employers and need no further information, and those who feel that we are missing their needs. This is something which requires further consideration.

Information circulated in paper form is generally well-received, although some people would prefer email, and this will be extended as a means of communication to clients where possible and appropriate.

The BDPA website is not well accessed. A large proportion of responses indicate a lack of interest in the internet, while others find that the site is too basic to be of much use. BDPA intends to improve the website and raise its profile and usefulness. Possible additions to the website include advertising job vacancies, with current newspaper adverts drawing attention to the website to increase its profile and therefore usage. This would be an ongoing process while job applicants become accustomed to checking for vacancies online.

Statistics April 2008 – Mar 2009	
Referrals April 2008 – March 2009	
Community Care	70
CHAD	8
Total referrals Apr 2008 – Mar 2009	78
Number of referrals since 2000	522
Number of clients end of March 2009	
Community Care DP	135
CHAD	20
ILF only	21
Total number of clients as at March 2009	176
Total files closed to date	109
Number of clients who have used direct payments since 2000	264
Payroll Service usage end March 2009	
Community Care - Employers	105
Community Care - Payslips processed for Employees	206
CHAD - Employers	3
CHAD - Payslips processed for Employees	7
BDPA Payslips processed for Employees	7
Total Payslips processed for month of March 2009	220
Number of payslips processed for year Apr 08 – Mar 09	2368
Client contact	
Logged incoming telephone calls in year	3880
Community Care - Home visits	345
Community Care - Visits to office by clients/carers	167
CHAD - Home visits	14
CHAD - Visits to office by clients/carers	12
Total client contact visits	538
Recruitments	
Total no. of recruitment packs sent out in year	530
Enhanced Disclosures processed	
Community Care	94
CHAD	14
Total Disclosures processed in year	108
Care Packages as at Mar 2009	
Hours per week C. Care	1975
Hours per week CHAD	42
Respite value per annum	£57611
CHAD value per annum	£31,022
Total DP value per annum	£1,316,925
Hours per week ILF	1273
Total ILF value per annum	£788177
Grand Total of care packages per annum	
	£2,105,102