

Lord Darzi of Denham,
Minister of State,
Department of Health,
Richmond House,
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS

28th July 2008.

Dear Lord Darzi,

Social Perspectives Network held a highly successful study day on personalisation in mental health earlier this month. As you will know the roll out of individual budgets, and also direct payments, has been slower with this group of clients than it has for others with long term conditions. The study day sought to address some of the myths which have impaired progress with people with mental health problems.

It was heartening to read in High Quality Care for All that you intend to develop a national pilot programme to explore the potential of personal health budgets giving patients greater control over the services they receive.

We would urge you to include people with mental health problems as part of those pilots. Despite your approving reference to the Care Programme Approach as a model for personalised care planning you will know that the system has recently been reformed because it has not been undertaken in partnership with the user as fully as originally envisaged. The Health Care Commission report on in patient care showed that despite guidelines to include patients' views in their care plans, this actually occurred in only 50% of cases.

Much good work has been done through the National Service Framework, New Ways of Working and the adoption of the Recovery Model to put service users at the centre of shaping service models. It would be wholly wrong if mental health users were to be excluded from the personal health care budget pilots and again cut off from the mainstream of service development.

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We would be grateful for an assurance that those with mental health problems will be eligible for inclusion in the pilots on the same basis as others with long term conditions.

Yours sincerely

Terry Bamford OBE
Director
Social Perspectives Network

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