



LBN's 10 statements about brokerage

(with thanks to Steve Dowson's 10 statements about brokerage, 2007)

- 1) **The role of the Support Broker is a key element of individualised funding systems.** This means that individual funding systems are incomplete without the inclusion of Support Brokers. Equally it means that the support broker role only becomes effective when accompanied by systemic change in the structures, procedures and culture of the social care system as a whole.
- 2) **Support Brokers provide a skilled, technical service that is distinct from the role of Advocate.** Like many professions within social care, the Broker's work may include some elements of advocacy – for example, reminding people in meetings to pay attention to the views of the disabled person. But Brokers are mainly providing technical assistance to help people identify and achieve changes they require in their lives, and should be working in a system that recognises and values this role.
- 3) **There should be an overt and uninhibited choice for people to use independent Support Brokers, who have no conflicts of interest.** This means more than not working for social services or social care providers. Independent Brokers also need to be free of loyalties to the professionalised social care system and fundamentally in alliance with people who use services, their families and friends, and with the wider community.
- 4) **People who need a Broker should not be discouraged from using one and should be able to choose their Broker.** This means there is a need for government (probably through local councils) to invest in the development of independent Brokers, so that there is not an undue financial disincentive to use a Broker and so that there are enough Brokers to provide a real choice.
- 5) **Support Brokers are accountable to the disabled person they work for, providing assistance as each person requires and on the basis each person requires, from the range of services that fall within the scope of the Broker's role.**
- 6) **Support Brokers have no authority to make decisions.** They have no right to determine or veto a plan or an element of a plan or to talk to other people to get or share information about the person they are working for, without the consent of the person (or where necessary the consent of the family on their behalf).
- 7) **The scope of the Broker's role includes helping people to identify the changes they want to make to their lives; find support services and community opportunities that the person requires; negotiate with providers and prepare community resources as necessary; cost and write a support plan; identify and obtain funding (including securing agreement on social services funding by whatever procedures are required within the IF system); and initiate implementation of the plan.**



- 8) **The role of the Broker does not normally extend beyond the implementation of the plan.** In general, the Broker should not provide direct services to a client beyond assistance with implementation of and (if necessary) scheduled reviewing of a plan. There are potential conflicts of interest if the roles are combined in one person (and possibly even in one agency). However, a client should be free to re-contract with a broker for appropriate additional brokerage if necessary, for example to make future changes to a plan. The LBN also recognises that, in the absence of a fully mature system of IF, support brokers have an important role in ensuring that plans are implemented correctly and that provider services recognise the new, direct and accountable relationship they have with their customers.
- 9) **Support Brokers are offering a professional service in the sense that they should be operating within a context of regulation that ensures minimum competencies, accountabilities to each customer and safeguards.** The challenge for the development of Support Broker resources is to make sure that Brokers do not become 'professionals' in the negative sense of remote, bureaucratic and unaccountable to the people they serve.
- 10) **Brokerage is not just support planning.** Brokerage often includes, but is certainly not limited to, writing a plan. Often, Brokers are chosen to 'fill a gap' that traditional, commissioned services do not cover, or to assist with a single task that a disabled person (or their networks) cannot do for themselves.

Core beliefs in summary

- 1) Disabled people should have choice and control over how they get and organise any help and support that they need
- 2) Someone should be able to choose from a variety of different Brokers
- 3) Personalisation means that just that – people are different and require different things and different levels of input. One size will never fit all.
- 4) Independent support brokerage should be a realistic and genuine option
- 5) Disabled people don't fit into neat boxes, such as a certain client group, and a support plan should be a holistic document.
- 6) Brokers work best when they work together.
- 7) "Get a life, not a service!"
- 8) The small stuff matters