PEARLS OF WISDOM

Choosing the Host Provider option for self-direction – a personal perspective

Many people in Queensland who are directing their own funding through Your Life Your Choice choose to use the services of a Host Provider. Everyone's reason for making this choice will be different but, as the following examples show, many people appreciate the "extra layer of support" that working with a Host Provider can offer.

The following examples are all from the people whose stories are included on the Pearl website:

- Leading my life my vision
- Morning in Tewantin - Troy's Story
- My Quest - Will's Story
- Self-direction in regional Queensland - making it work
- The sliding scale of responsibilities - negotiating with a Host Provider

Why did you choose the Host Provider option for self-direction?

- We could have chosen to do Direct Payments but we wanted the extra layer of support from a Host Provider. We were happy with this idea because it meant that the Host Provider would do as much or as little as we wanted in terms of helping with administration, recruiting, payroll etc. I knew that I wanted to concentrate on getting the right kind of support around Sarah rather than worrying at that stage about acquittal of funds and other administrative parts of the business.
- Although I feel confident that I could use the Direct Payments system, managing all the aspects of self-direction myself, I prefer to work with a Host Provider. My network and I see this as one safeguard in our risk management plan.
- We knew we wanted to direct the funding ourselves rather than have support from a service provider because self-direction would give us more control over who we employed and how the support hours were organised. I like the flexibility of the arrangement with our Host Provider... the sliding scale of fees and responsibilities means that we can change the arrangement if we want to.

How has the experience been so far?

- Despite the problems of distance (we live in regional Queensland and the Host Provider is in Brisbane) the arrangement with the Host Provider is working. I know that I can have as little or as much contact with them as I want. Mostly, it is simply a matter of submitting my invoices monthly and them receiving the next month's allocation of funding into my daughter's account.
- The processes were not simple for me at first but now I have a system in place for payroll and for monthly reporting to the Host Provider and it works well and easily. I have responsibility for recruitment too. We have been lucky with finding good staff. Mainly by word of mouth.
- We have negotiated an arrangement with a Host Provider based outside our regional town and are happy so far with how the relationship is working and the level of responsibility we have for directing the support. My son is learning to be active in the recruitment, interviewing, employment and training processes. He is taking the decision making role as he matures.
- We do it all on the computer. It seemed complicated in the beginning but now that we have the processes in place it works quite easily and does not take a lot of time.
- Self Managed Support works for me through a hosting agreement with a service. To me it is a business and I am the CEO if my life. The business is like any other and requires annual planning, weekly analysis of

operations and staff, budget reviews, team meetings, team professional development (for myself and staff), policies and procedures and much more.

What has been helpful?

- From the beginning I felt that the people working for the Host Provider really did share the vision we had for our daughter's life and the values and beliefs that this was based on. I think it is important when people are looking for a Host Provider, that they have this confidence in shared values and the working relationship.
- I think it is important that people are not left alone in their self-direction efforts. Our Host Provider organisation is always there when I need them. We make contact via email and their style of communication is simple and concise. We feel confident working with them because they seem to have their processes worked out and they know what they are doing.
- The best part of all this was the planning we did. My family and I sat down together with a person from the Host Provider organisation and we talked about what I wanted in life. No one had ever asked me that question before. My mother never know that I hoped to have a relationship and a family one day. It was really good to have that talked about and written down. It was great to have my family involved.
- We attended workshops with the Host Provider about how to manage the funding and to set up processes for the paperwork involved.
- I know that I don't have to do everything on my own. Although I have responsibility for everything apart from reporting to the Department, I engage contractors to carry out some of these functions. I use a recruitment service when I need to employ new staff and have engaged a coordinator to work with staff in some areas including training and developing rosters. I share the Governance of the business of self-direction with key people of my choice such as my partner, family and people I have identified to assist in the direction.
- The person from the Host Provider who we worked with was a great inspiration to our family in helping us imagine what our son's life could look like. She had good ideas but was also practical and calm when it came to planning.

The future

- After a year of self-direction, I would feel more confident to take on some of the other responsibilities. I know that I can negotiate this with the Host Provider if I want to.
- My mother and sister are happy to manage the payroll and the paperwork at the moment but I am working on how I can manage all this in the future.
- I like the idea that I can negotiate with the Host Provider to take responsibility for some of what I do now if the need arises. The flexibility of the arrangement is one part of my succession plan. For example, if my daughters take over the main role of directing their brother's supports in the future, then it is likely that they would negotiate a higher fee with the Host Provider in return for taking more of the responsibility for engaging staff. I like the idea that the girls will oversee the arrangements for his support rather than taking on a direct management or support role themselves.

It is important to note that each person's arrangement with their Host Provider is different according to the level of service they choose and the type of support offered by different organisations. The percentage of their funding paid to the Host Provider also varies. If you are choosing a Host Provider it is important to look closely at what is offered and to understand what assistance you will receive for the fees you pay. There are over 100 Host Providers in Queensland included on the Your Life Your Choice Host Provider List. Host provides are listed

geographically as well as by name. Some Host Providers offer services across Queensland and other are more locally based.

The following articles are written by four Queensland Host Providers and describe how they work with people to establish self-directed arrangements.

- An individual and custom-designed framework for achieving good lives through self-direction
- A journey with people towards self-direction
- Mamre: a vision of inclusive lives and self-direction
- Moving towards self-direction: a regional Host Provider perspective

The table Levels of Choice and Control is a guideline to assist you to think about levels of choice and control available to you to purchase your supports and services and manage your financial arrangements. This table is a general overview of the important questions; it does not define what all Host Providers offer.