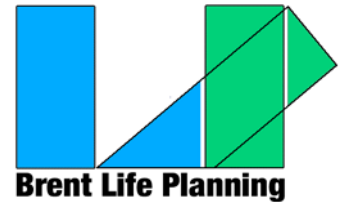


# ***Your broker and you***

## **11 useful things to remember about how your broker can help you.**



- 1 **Your broker works just for you.** Brokers are independent, and not part of the Council's Social Services.
- 2 Your broker won't assess what your needs are, or make decisions for you. Your broker will aim to give you advice, and they will tell you if they think that part of your plan is not a good idea. But brokers don't decide what's allowed or not allowed.
- 3 If you have family or friends who are closely involved in your life, the broker can work with them as well. The other people in your life may be very important in helping you make plans for the future, and in helping the broker understand your hopes, likes, and dislikes. But it's still the broker's job to do what's right for you, not to do what other people think is best for you.
- 4 Your broker's job is to help you plan changes to your life that you want to make. This could include -
  - *Helping you think about what sort of life you'd really like to have.*
  - *Making a plan that will get you closer to the life you want.*
  - *Finding service agencies that could give you the support you need, and talking to them about how they would deliver it, and what it would cost.*
  - *Finding other services that you may need - like housing, equipment, or help with getting a job.*
  - *Finding places and people in your community that may help you have a better life.*
  - *Working out what the plan will cost, and writing a report that explains your plan.*
  - *Going to a meeting with the council to ask for the money you need.*
  - *Making sure that the plan can be put into action.*
- 5 You might want to change your whole life, or you might want just to change one part of it. It's up to you!

- 6 Your broker doesn't have to be involved in all these jobs. You may be able to do some of them yourself, or know someone else who can do them. Before your broker starts work with you, you need to agree which jobs they will help you with.
- 7 Brokers are paid for their work through the *Life Planning* project. The project only has a small amount of money, so the amount of help your broker can give you is very limited. Each person who decides to use a broker is given a fixed number of hours for their broker to work for them. Sometimes extra hours may be added, but you need to try to keep within the agreed hours. So this is a good reason to think carefully about how you need your broker to help you.
- 8 Your broker won't do things unless you've agreed, and won't talk to people without asking you first. If they have a meeting as part of their work for you, they'll let you know what happened and what was said.
- 9 Brokers don't know all the answers. Brokers are individuals with different backgrounds and skills. Your broker will share their knowledge with you, and look for answers when they don't know them.
- 10 If you need a *Direct Payment* to get the money to make your plan happen, the Council will have to agree to it. They will want to see the plan in writing, with the costs explained. They have to be sure that the plan will be a success, is a good use of council money, and isn't too risky. When you go to the meeting with the council you, or your broker, will have a chance to persuade the Council that they should agree to a *Direct Payment*.
- 11 Brokers who are linked to the *Life Planning* project have been approved to provide their services as brokers. The National Development Team (NDT) supports and guides them, and makes sure that they keep to basic standards. If you are unhappy with your broker, and can't sort out the problem by talking about it with them, please contact Steve Dowson on 0161 718 6632.