

FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRE 2006

In mid 2002 we conducted an extensive family questionnaire to determine how families viewed the way we provided services to their sons, daughters and family members. Overall the results of that survey were very positive, but there were a number of areas where there was room for improvement. An action plan was developed from these findings and we undertook to ensure that families were informed of its progress. These are set out in this document.

It was hoped that we would be able to have regular family questionnaires following on from this first formal and extensive one carried out in 2002. While regular, informal meetings and feedback from families have followed since that time, it was not until 2006 that another formal questionnaire was conducted.

Our aim was to have 100% participation from families as we did with the 2002 questionnaire, but we were only able to achieve a rating of 82.6%. The process used to attempt to reach full participation was -

- 1) *sending out questionnaire,*
- 2) *contact made by CEO and setting up of appointments with each family,*
- 3) *meeting with families to discuss and collect questionnaires.*

While every attempt was made to contact and meet with all families, some chose not to fill out the document as they felt that it was not necessary, and two families forgot appointment times and then could not be contacted as there were away on holidays. Questionnaires were again sent out to these families, but they were not returned. Even so, due to the significant number of responses we are able to report very effectively about the health of the organisation from a family perspective.

Action Plan 2002

Guidelines for families who may wish to be involved in the staff selection process.	This was investigated further and it was clear that involvement would be more useful during the 3 month probationary period when staff were working in clients' homes and families had time to assess how well the new staff person was interacting with clients. Feedback is actively sought from families and it is pleasing to note that there has been less than 5% dissatisfaction with staff selection.
The development of family information kits.	Two family members identified that they would like to be involved in reviewing the family information booklet. Their ideas were incorporated into the revamped booklet. A further review of this document was conducted this year and additional information has been included.
The completion of the new client annual planning process and ensuring that clients, families and staff will be well informed on using the new format. The new process will include the organisation's core values and detail how they will be incorporated into the daily lives of clients.	Achieved, and the review of processes and systems are ongoing. The Talking Together Committee (client consultative committee) is actively involved in advising the organisation of further changes and refinements to our current systems.
The development of guidelines for families when the family member(s) share their home with other clients.	Achieved within individual households
Staff training relating to food handling, nutrition and diet management and menu planning incorporated in the training calendar.	Achieved and ongoing. An extensive annual training plan is in place.

<p>Client Service Managers will speak to families (at a minimum) on a monthly basis to discuss any achievements or issues that have occurred in a client's life.</p>	<p>Achieved for the majority of clients, although for some this has been on a two monthly basis, rather than monthly.</p>
<p>The Chief Executive Officer will have regular contact with families to discuss the organisation's plans and progress.</p>	<p>Achieved with those families where issues arose that directly impacted on the family member's life. For other families, the CEO's contact has been infrequent.</p>
<p>Risk management policy and procedures will be developed to address and minimise areas of risk presented to individual clients.</p>	<p>Achieved. We now have an extensive risk management process.</p>
<p>The development of a quarterly newsletter.</p>	<p>Not achieved on a regular basis. Recently reinstated</p>
<p>A family forum event will be held.</p>	<p>Only one family forum was held, with no further events in the past three years.</p>

RESULTS FROM THE 2006 FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire is set out into eight discrete areas and incorporates the physical environment, the staff, the support provided, the values that underpin the support provided, the way that each person supported by Life's for Living is enabled to grow and develop, the organisation as a whole as well as the organisational structure and raising issues and complaints.

Overall the results are very pleasing, with each category showing a very high satisfaction rate. Issues that were raised in the 2002 questionnaire as major concerns have not reappeared, although others have taken their place. Included in the document is a summary of responses to all the questions.

1. The house

<p>Rating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">63% very satisfactory32% satisfactory3% don't know2% unsatisfactory

While Life's For Living does not take on a landlord role and therefore is not responsible for the actual building, it does support clients to find appropriate housing and alert the landlord when that housing is either inadequate or unsatisfactory. Indeed we have advocated for several changes over the past four years with the result that several people have moved to new homes, and there have been major upgrades to a number of others.

Issues raised in relation to concerns about the building have been passed onto the relevant landlords. In every case these issues have been longstanding and have been regularly reported to the appropriate housing authority.

The cleaning of the house was raised by two families, with suggestion of using a monthly cleaning service. Another family raised the issue of safety in the meal preparation area (since resolved with physical changes to access to this area). Another area of concern for two families was the state of the garden and that more care and attention could be given to its tidiness.

Three families commented very positively on the physical aspects of their relative's house, and it should be noted that in all cases there had been a move to a new house.

Family comments:

'we are very happy with all aspects of our son's house and are confident he is very happy too'

'my son visits more often and states that the house is cool!'

'it couldn't be better'

'a lovely house'

2. The support team

Rating:

49% very satisfactory

43% satisfactory

7% don't know

1% unsatisfactory

Only 1% rated this category as unsatisfactory. Overall this category and the one to follow are the most significant to families as these relate to the people who provide support to their family member and therefore have the most direct impact of everyone's well being. While there is always room for improvement, the high level of reported satisfaction is very pleasing.

Family comments:

'A great team. Thanks everyone. All concerns followed up promptly, good to have continuity of staff'

"complaints handled very efficiently and effectively"

'I am more than happy with all the staff. My life has changed since Life's For Living has taken over'

'Although we are not living in Adelaide communication has been excellent'

'I have full trust in the organisation'

3. The support service

Rating:

48% satisfactory
39% very satisfactory
7% don't know
6% unsatisfactory

This category reflected the highest level of dissatisfaction. Families know that physical appearance and health is of paramount importance. The community is a very quick judge on appearance, and if the people we support are to be included into community life, we need to ensure that every effort is made to enhance their appearance and well being.

Three families raised concerns about personal appearance and care of clothing, while two others said that staff could encourage more independence, rather than doing things for their family member because it was easier.

Another family raised the risks that arose from leaving their family member unsupported at times. (This has since been rectified) several families also discussed the possibility of more leisure and recreation activities, not as an issue, but rather as something that would be beneficial to their family members, while another two discussed the lack of holiday opportunities.

4. (a) Values

Rating:

58% very satisfactory
37% satisfactory
4% don't know
1% unsatisfactory

This category relates to areas of choice, dignity, potential, privacy and self-determination.

A number of families found this to be a difficult category and said that it was hard to judge how well the organisation was doing, but they based their rating on the well being of their family member and their relationship with the staff.

4. (b) Enablement

Rating: 95% satisfactory 5% don't know

This category relates to assisting people to exercise their rights and understand their responsibilities

5. The organisation and its communication with families

Rating: 49% very satisfactory 35% satisfactory 14% don't know 2% unsatisfactory

Dissatisfaction related to staff changes.

Family comments:

'Receiving rosters regularly is most helpful and it keeps me well informed. Thankyou'

'The Client Services Manager is very good at responding to my emails Thankyou. All concerns written in communication book and followed up promptly'

'Getting better about responding to our concerns. When things go wrong they are due to lack of communication on both sides'

'We are appreciative of the practise when new staff are appointed. An email is sent to us which outlines the new person's work history and their starting date. We would like this practice to continue'

6. Office support

Rating:

63% very satisfactory

26% satisfactory

11% don't know

This question relates to the interaction between families and the supervisory staff, management and administrative staff.

The don't know category relates to some staff changes in Team Leaders and Client Services Managers and the fact that families were yet to develop a relationship with these individuals.

Family comments:

'We have found all staff very understanding and helpful'

7. Raising a concern

Rating:

68% satisfactory

32% don't know

Family comments:

'Any time we have had concerns the team have always addressed them on our behalf'

'Satisfied with the outcome. Very willing to listen and work through any issues'

'Once when (family member) raised an issue with me I left a message with management and the issue was dealt with immediately'

'Noted, discussed and satisfied with outcome'

'issues over communication have been handled very well'

'Dealt with perfectly satisfactorily'

'Recently there was a change in the team structure and I was very concerned. Changeover team handled very well. All assurances given have been met'

8. Raising a complaint

Rating:

58% hadn't raised a complaint

21% had raised a complaint

21% didn't know

Parent comments in question 7 also relate to this question

We also invited families to make any additional comments that would like to add.

These are some of their comments -

'It sometimes appears that staff are only with (family member) for a short period of time. This can lead to insecurity with his day to day living. It takes a long time to set up a working compatibility with him and a sound knowledge of his behavioural patterns, so the staff changes are an ongoing issue which causes distress'

'My husband and I are very happy with Life's For Living. It is now one area of my life I don't have to worry about. I visit (family member) twice a week and she is always happy and just as happy for us to leave'

'Generally we are very happy. Its just an odd occasion there is a slip up and it is always handled with care and consideration'

'Very happy with the professionalism of the organisation and its ability to strive for excellence. Always searching for new ideas so as to provide a warm, supportive and yet stimulating environment for its clients'

'I am happy that (family member) seems to have settled in happily for the rest of his life with the valued assistance of Life's For Living'

'Just what a fantastic job you all do and how blessed we are to have (family member) involved in such a wonderful organisation. Go girls!'

'I believe (family member) and I are extremely lucky to have the support of Life's For Living. We both look to the organisation as part of his family'

'I am really pleased with (family member's) living situation and think that good oversight is maintained by Life's For Living'

'More funding = more services to fill the void for people with disabilities'

'My (family member) seems more relaxed and a lot happier since Life's For Living became involved in her life. She appears more settled and life is less regimented'

'Good service particularly with continuity of staff. Some staff have been there for a long time and it makes a difference. Small caring things that staff do are really appreciated. A million thanks everyone'

CONCLUSION

Thank you to all the families who gave up their valuable time to participate in this survey. Your thoughts, ideas and issues can only assist us to continue to strive to improve on the work that we do and the support we provide to people with disabilities.

Any specific issues raised have already been discussed with the relevant Client Services Manager and client teams. Recently Life's For Living completed its Strategic Plan for 2006 – 2010 and we have incorporated aspects of this questionnaire and your ideas into that plan. We will continue to inform you about our progress through:

- the revamped newsletter “Living Proof”
- our web site www.lifesforliving.com.au
- the Annual General Meeting
- regular updates via the management team and Team Leaders
- communication systems in your family member’s households

Lis Burtnik
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