



THE CAXTON FOUNDATION

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12 May 2014

Jane Ellison MP
Under Secretary of State for Public Health
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

Dear Minister

I am writing to update you on the progress achieved by the Caxton Foundation over the past 12 months.

I was clear when I met your predecessor that at that time, whilst I and the CEO had been in post for only 2 and 3 months respectively, the organisation was not working effectively.

Our concerns at the time were:

1. To improve the governance of the organisation – to develop a vision and strategy and to review the administrative processes of the organisation and the competence and capability of the staff.
2. To improve communications with our beneficiaries and to improve their understanding of our ability to assist them.
3. To understand better the needs of our beneficiaries.

We have taken a number of actions to improve the situation but progress has been slower than the Board had wished largely due to capacity. We have taken decisive action in changing key members of staff to improve the service that we are able to provide to beneficiaries but this has meant that there has been some disruption in our service. However, the timeliness of our response has improved considerably; comparative management information is currently being gathered to evidence this improvement. As you are aware we run this organisation on 3 wte staff; they are full stretched to provide the current service and in addition this year they have had to take on the additional burden of work on the census and distribution of reserves for MFT and the production of a business case for the provision of a regular payments scheme for Caxton.

However I am pleased to advise you that we have now appointed an additional ½ wte for Caxton and expect as a consequence to see a great improvement in the communications with our beneficiaries and the information and service that we are able to provide to them.

www.caxtonfoundation.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1142529

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We have also taken action to improve services to beneficiaries:

1. We have recruited a trustee with experience of living with Hepatitis C; we are very grateful that you agreed to the appointment of our chosen candidate, **GRO-A**.
2. We have drafted a vision and strategy for the organisation – this has an emphasis on improving independence for beneficiaries whilst recognising the very distinct difficulties faced by our beneficiaries. We are in negotiation to provide them with additional services providing advice on re-ablement and employment.
3. We have established a partnership group – I am however concerned that we have not yet recognised the full range of our stakeholders and the group at the moment consists of members of the campaigning groups whose agenda is somewhat different from Caxton's. The full range of our stakeholders will be mapped over the next 3 months; in the meantime we shall be holding a general meeting open to all beneficiaries in October and seeking their views on what would be a useful agenda for them.
4. A business case has been agreed in principle to establish a regular payments scheme. We appreciate that the DH was unable to increase our allocation to allow the full scope of the scheme to be piloted this year. Nevertheless the Board will be discussing at its meeting in June a potential modified scheme.
5. We are seeking to improve our management information in respect of the clarity, timeliness and consistency of our services and to advise our beneficiaries accordingly.
6. We have started to improve our website to help potential beneficiaries understand how we can provide help to them. We do however need to take a step forward in this area, establishing effective communication loops with our beneficiaries and acting on that feedback.

Our objectives for the current year are all aimed to improve the clarity, transparency and timeliness of our services and to make it more relevant to potential and actual beneficiaries. A major improvement in communications and information across all stakeholders is key to this aspiration. Additionally we will give every consideration to providing a limited regular payments scheme for those of our beneficiaries who are living well below the poverty line and to engage for them additional advice and guidance that could improve the quality of their lives.

If you would wish for more information on the current work of the Caxton Foundation I should be pleased to assist. With many thanks.

Yours sincerely

Ann Lloyd CBE
Chair

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