



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Peter Mason
Deputy Commissioner

Operations Memo 2020-15

TO: DDS Qualified Providers

FROM: David David, Director of Service Development and Support, Operations Center

CC: Jordan Scheff, Commissioner, Peter Mason, Deputy Commissioner, Katie Rock-Burns, Chief of Staff, Scott McWilliams, Chief of Fiscal/Administrative Services, Ken Cabral, Director of Family Services, Amber Burke, Director of Employment and Day Services, Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Directors, Resource Administrators, The Alliance, The Arc CT,

DATE: January 22, 2020

SUBJECT: FY 2020 Employment and Day Services Update

Below is an update from Commissioner Scheff regarding Employment and Day services. Please share this memorandum with any applicable staff at your agency.

As the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) continues our journey as an Employment First agency, we have embarked on a process of Reimagining Employment and Day Services. This has been a rich and informative process facilitated by our Director of Employment and Day Services, Amber Burke, and her team of Transition Advisors: Martin Zaugg, Darrell Spears, and Brian Gresko. Focus group sessions were conducted with families, providers, DDS staff, and are completing the process with the people we support. We have already received significant feedback highlighting areas that are working well, areas of challenge, and thoughtful ideas on the future of employment and day services.

Once we have completed our focus groups, we will be sharing more specific information about the feedback and next steps. We also plan to reevaluate our current steering committee, add members and develop subcommittees to make recommendations. Our subcommittees will center on:

- Choice, Control and Flexibility
- Service Structure, Transportation, Business models that work, Technology
- Leadership, the Culture of Employment and Day Service
- Workforce Development, Learning forums for DDS Staff, Provider Staff, Community, Individuals and Families

If you are interested in the steering committee or one of the subcommittees, please reach out to Amber at Amber.Burke@ct.gov.

There is one consistent piece of feedback coming from all the focus groups, which the Commissioner wanted to address now, in order to provide clarity.

In a memo dated October 18, 2016, DDS notified providers of a policy change related to Day Support Option (DSO) programs. The memo stated that, effective 11/1/16, “only individuals with a LON score of 6, 7, 8 may access DSO programs. Requests for exceptions to this DSO access must be approved by PRAT.” This policy change was intended to ensure that employment options were considered for every individual before a “traditional,” non-vocational program was accessed.

The feedback we have received indicates that our system has operationalized this framework as a rigid rule regarding service options for individuals based on LON scores. We believe it is important to ensure that people are offered opportunities for employment. It is also important to acknowledge there is a need for flexibility in our system to truly meet individual and family needs. Our system is not intended to provide “one size fits all” options. We are committed to person-centered planning and giving individuals a continuum of supports from which to choose. The policy change shared in 2016 was not intended to express a blanket denial of individuals with LON scores lower than six who are requesting DSO programs. It was simply envisioned to prompt a discussion of potential employment program opportunities for individuals receiving supports from DDS.

I hope this memo provides clarity on the department’s perspective on Employment and Day Services. As we move to the next generation of services for those we support, our goal is to create an infrastructure that will enhance peoples’ lives throughout their lifespan. In order to successfully accomplish this, a synergistic approach requires a collective and invested dedication to this work.

As always, I thank you for your commitment to this agency and look forward to our continued partnership.

If you have any questions, please contact me at David.David@ct.gov or (860) 418-6040.