

Personalisation

Personalisation heralds a major change in the delivery of support services and supported housing. It offers people the opportunity to transform their lives, giving them the power to choose and control how they are supported. It requires new ways of working that will have to be achieved against a background of funding cuts. Although this will challenge commissioners and providers, it also offers opportunities.

The move to self directed support and personal budgets has been gaining momentum and there are now more than 30,000 people in England with individual budgets. There are many examples of personalised services in social care and this is now rolling out to supporting people services. There are also plans to increase personalisation in health services. There is a lot to be learnt from the pilot schemes; this paper provides an overview of the key areas.

Key Findings

The majority of people using personalised services report having more control over their lives and an improved quality of life.

Making the change has not been without challenges especially for support staff, but there are examples of staff reporting improved relationships with service users.

Despite concerns about rising costs, there are examples of personalised services delivering improved outcomes with the same budget and in some cases generating savings.

Funding streams and eligibility criteria can sometimes slow the process of change.

Changing the Culture

For personalisation to succeed relationships have to be redefined to ensure the individual is at the centre and is 'driving' the process. The cultural transformation this requires needs to be led from the top.

Although staff may be apprehensive, evidence shows it can be a positive experience. *'Customers being able to choose staff has been brilliant. It has increased ownership and social inclusion.'* **Look Ahead & Tower Hamlets Pilot**

Steps to success

- Ensure all staff have a broad understanding of personalisation
- Involve front line staff at an early stage in the development of new services
- Provide a comprehensive training programme for front line staff
- Support staff to develop skills to manage risk – as you move from a 'defensive to defensible' approach

Individual service users also need support - from access to information to help with decision making. Commissioners and providers can help by:

- Ensuring staff are skilled at person centred planning
- Utilising techniques that promote new ways of thinking
- Supporting input from family and friends, where this is what the individual wants
- Providing accessible information about services. The Harrow pilot developed **shop4support** - an online 'shop' which gives direct access to information about support providers, their services and prices.

Commissioning services

Successful commissioning is achieved when commissioners, providers and services users work together. In Control's *Model Framework* provides practical advice to support this process. Commissioners need to understand the market to be able to manage and monitor provision. There are a range of market intelligent tools available to help including:

Shaping the Future Together Foundation for People with Learning Difficulties, *Controcc* Hartlepool, *Working Together for Change* Department of Health and *shop4support* London Borough of Harrow

There is evidence that the market is becoming less diverse with the growth of large providers offering standard products and economies of scale. Commissioning models need to encourage small providers as well as larger ones to encourage innovation and ensure individuals have choices.

Delivering services

The first step should be a review of the business and operating model. The SWOT analysis needs to cover:

- Current and changing demand for services
- Position in the market- i.e. niche or generalist, high quality top end or economy high volume provider
- Local strategies and commissioning plans
- Reputation and competition – do you need to improve your marketing?

Questions to consider

Whether to develop 'niche' services, client specific or generic services?

The move from block contracts to spot purchase offers the opportunity to offer services to 'self selecting' clients. This will enable providers to build a bigger, more diverse client base, producing a more robust business model. This has the added benefit of giving customers more opportunities to mix with a wider group of people.

Whether to diversify into new services areas?

Personalisation offers the opportunity to deliver a wide range of services from traditional social care and support to new areas- for example fitness training, gardening and hairdressing. Providers who move into new services will need to decide whether to provide these services directly or whether to collaborate with other organisations.

Whether to develop partnerships with other providers?

Partnership arrangements can bring many benefits including:

- The ability to provide services that neither organisation can provide alone
- Generating savings through sharing infrastructure costs e.g., finance, HR and admin.
- Pooling staff resources and training

Operational considerations – lessons from the pilots

- Changes to block contracts are best achieved by moving to 'core and flex' models as the first step to personalising services
- For existing staff there may need to be change terms and conditions for employment. For some new teams of flexible 'workers' new HR systems may need to be set up.
- Keep systems simple and bureaucracy to a minimum; this can increase efficiency and produce savings
- Pilot new services where possible
- Learn from other sectors – e.g. retail models used by the private sector
- Use 'LEAN' techniques to ensure your teams and processes are customer focussed

And don't forget that it's all about - **Helping people to transform their lives!**

For more information see www.jba-housingcaresupport.org.uk

Good Luck!