

COMMISSIONING THE FUTURE: WORKSHOP 5

# People who use services taking a lead in shaping commissioning – Brokerage

Facilitator's Notes, July 2012



**'Commissioning The Future – Workshop materials to start a new conversation between people, providers and commissioners of services' represents the work of the Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) National Market Development Forum. These materials have been designed to help those involved in strategic commissioning rehearse and explore new ways in which the public care market might develop. The exercises are offered in the context of – and can help you deliver on – the TLAP Making it Real markers of progress for personalised, community based support.**

This 'Commissioning The Future' pack offers all involved in strategic commissioning an opportunity:

- To rehearse the issues they face.
- To do this outside the context of a particular negotiation, contract or agreement.
- For all people to play different roles than they do in 'real life' and explore the issues from a range of perspectives.

Each exercise represents real issues that are faced by all involved in commissioning public care. They support commissioners, providers and people who use services and carers to adopt some of the key skills and behaviours advocated in "Stronger partnerships for better outcomes: a protocol for market relations".

# People who use services taking a lead in shaping commissioning – Brokerage

**Group size:** 18 participants

## Resources:

- Room large enough to set out a meeting for 9 people, with space around the meeting for chairs for an additional 9 participants.
- Scenario background information (Resource 1).
- Summary of scenario background information written on flip chart paper (Resource 1).
- Activity cards x 2 for each role (Resource 2).
- Meeting Agenda (Resource 3).
- Newspaper article (Resource 4).
- Flip chart and marker pens.

## Learning aims to explore:

- Developing mutual understanding between the various stakeholders about their respective pressures.
- Working together on an equal footing on decisions about how public money will be allocated and spent.
- Working in the more complex context of new roles and processes and making it work for all involved.

## Scenario outline:

People in Newchester who use personal budgets have said they want more time and support than the council's staff can give for planning and reviewing how they may use their personal budget. They have asked the local authority to build these costs into the resource allocation system (RAS). This scenario is therefore designed to explore the costs and implications of extending brokerage services in this way for people in receipt of personal budgets.

The exercise is a discussion about improving the availability of support services that can be useful in identifying the range of choices open to people commissioning their own services. It has been convened by the local authority in response to the request above, and brings together people who use personal budgets (and family/best interest supporters where appropriate), representatives of people who do not find the direct payment arrangements suitable for them or their family member, the local authority managers responsible for care management and reviews; local providers of support including advocacy services and support brokerage, and lead commissioners.

It is considering how to establish brokerage that is affordable across the board: both the proposal about building the cost of planning and support into the RAS, and the type of brokerage/ support that may be required by those not in a position to manage their own or their relative's affairs to the same extent. It needs to consider whether the short-term up-front cost is a necessary step to ensure long-term efficient use of the budget.

**The aim is to agree what the priorities are for the further development of brokerage and related support.**

# How to run the workshop

Total time: 3 hours

TIME	ACTIVITY	METHOD	RESOURCES
15 minutes	Welcome, introductions, aims and scenario	Ask participants to introduce themselves very briefly stating their name, role and one hope for the session.  State the learning aims and scenario outline for the session as shown above.	
10 minutes	Setting the scene	Read the background information aloud to the group.  Have the bullet points written on a flipchart and displayed so that the key points can be seen by the group as you read the information and throughout the session.	Background information  Bullet points written on flipchart (Resource 1)
15 mins	Newspaper article	Give participants copies of the newspaper article. Ask them to read it and then to work in fours or fives to discuss this and the background information. The key points from each group can be noted on flipchart during the discussion and placed on the wall for display afterwards.	Copies of newspaper article (Resource 4)  Flipchart paper and marker pen for each group
5 minutes	Activity cards and meeting agenda	Distribute two sets of the activity cards so that each participant is given an activity card and a copy of the Meeting Agenda. The people who use services activity cards should be given to three pairs to ensure that they are fully represented at the meeting. Be mindful of the confidence and comfort levels of your participants when allocating activity cards.  Some participants may not feel that they have the experience and knowledge required to take part in the activity if allocated a role other than their own.	Activity cards (Resource 2) x 2 (+ 2 extra sets of the service user cards)  Meeting agendas (Resource 3) for each participant
15 minutes	Meeting preparation in pairs	Participants should find the other person in the group who has the same activity card as themselves. The pairs should then work together to discuss what they, as the person described on the card, would like to get out of the meeting. They should note points that they would like to raise and questions they would like to ask.  Participants should decide who will take part in the meeting and who will support from the side (become the coach and supporter) – see The Meeting below).	

TIME	ACTIVITY	METHOD	RESOURCES
85 minutes	The Meeting	<p>The chairperson (as stated on activity card) chairs the meeting to the given meeting agenda. As noted on the chairperson's activity card, it should be made clear to all participants that the chairperson should aim to ensure that the group achieve a consensus or agreement by the end of the meeting, and that all participants are responsible for contributing to this aim.</p> <p>One participant from each of the pairs takes part in the main meeting. The other person with the same activity card sits or stands behind them and acts as a coach and supporter to expand upon or reveal feelings not expressed by the meeting attendee.</p> <p>(If appropriate and where there is sufficient time the meeting can be stopped briefly at various intervals so that one or more participants can be interviewed.)</p>	
10 minutes	Feedback in pairs	<p>The participants with the same activity cards work together for a second time to discuss how the meeting went from their perspective.</p> <p>Did they raise all points and ask all questions as planned? What were they happy with and were there any frustrations? Would they do anything differently next time?</p>	
40 minutes	Whole group feedback and next steps	<p>Ask for feedback from the whole group and note useful points on flip chart.</p> <p>Ask participants what their next steps might be in terms of taking their learning forward.</p>	Flip chart and markers

## RESOURCE 1

# Background information

(To be read aloud to all participants. Bullet points can be written onto a flipchart for display during the reading and throughout the activity).

The Newchester local authority has a policy of offering personal budgets to all residents who are eligible for social care and support, regardless of whether they have full capacity themselves to manage the money. It has been recognised that placing the choice and control with the person who has the support need is the best way to ensure that the supports that are purchased actually suit the person and their chosen lifestyle, resulting in greater satisfaction and less waste.

Outcomes and safeguarding for local people using personal budgets have been closely monitored. Where people have managed the money themselves, whilst there have been a few mistakes or misuses, these have been quickly dealt with and where absolutely necessary, finances are now handled by independent local organisations or brokers. In these cases the decision-making remains as far as possible with the person who has the support need, or their best-interest supporters.

People who use personal budgets have now said that they want more time and support than the council staff (social workers or care managers) can give for planning and reviewing how they may use the personal budget. These people and their families have asked the local authority to build the cost of this planning and support into the resource allocation system (RAS), arguing that it is a short-term up-front necessity in order to ensure long-term efficient use of the budget.

There are no additional funds to support this change so, with the challenging financial cuts that are required in every area, the local authority needs to consider this request and establish whether the proposal may actually create savings in the long term, without negatively affecting the level of support it already offers to people using personal budgets. The council would like to be seen to transform its structure further so that it becomes a facilitator and critical friend for a more diverse and creative range of provision. This should still meet people's needs and expectations, and enable those who want to do so, to take even more responsibility for commissioning their own support whilst maintaining the local authority's capability to offer a "safety net" should things go wrong.

However, there are also strong representations being made by the local Alzheimer's Society on behalf of carers of people with dementia, that the direct payment system really doesn't work for them and additional support won't change that. They want priority to be given

to ensuring local authority staff are able to manage care arrangements properly rather than just enhancing further the support offered to the more able group of people and their families using personal budgets.

## Bullet Points for Display

### **Policy of offering personal budgets to all eligible residents:**

- Support suits person.
- Greater satisfaction/less waste.

Outcomes have been closely monitored.

People have said that they want more support for planning and reviewing the use of their personal budgets – this cannot be accommodated under current arrangements.

### **The council would like to change structure:**

- To become facilitator and critical friend.
- To offer more diverse, creative range of provision.

### **Alzheimer's Society, on behalf of carers of people with dementia:**

- Direct payment system doesn't work for them.

## RESOURCE 2

# Activity Cards



### JOINT COMMISSIONING MANAGER FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

**(YOU WILL BE CHAIRING THE MEETING – It is your role to ensure that the group come to some kind of consensus or agreement by the end of the meeting)**

You have been with the authority throughout the implementation of personalisation and are very supportive of the changes made, but have had some reluctant staff to convince, at times, about the feasibility and safety of reduced involvement by professionals. The case reported in the press article is reviving those concerns.

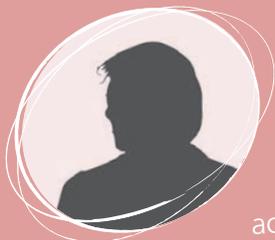
Setting the Resource Allocation System (RAS) was a complex task and any proposed changes to it will need to go through the political process in the local authority as expenditure control is a key concern. You will want to ensure that the more flexible approach being proposed about support is not a “blank cheque”, and that any additional investment in care budgets doesn’t result in your staffing being reduced to levels you would consider unsafe for completing core tasks.

You are also aware that legal services have been made nervous by a recent prosecution of a personal assistant (PA) for defrauding their client, and they are wanting to work further on the role of PAs and the local authority’s accountability for them or otherwise.



### PROVIDER 1

You are a Housing Support Provider, working mainly with people with a learning disability or mental health support needs. You are a strong supporter of personal budgets and direct payments and they have many benefits in enabling your people who use services to “have a life not a care package”. You are considering expanding from your core services to offer a wider range of support services in the community.



## PROVIDER 2

You are a large domiciliary care provider, working mainly with older people and have mixed views about the use of personal budgets. You feel you are working well with direct purchasers and self-funders in achieving outcome based approaches that make good use of the allocated funds but experience makes you sceptical about whether it can really work well for all people who use services, even with extra support.

However, you find the rigid control and bureaucratic systems the council applies to its own remaining purchases are time consuming to manage, unsatisfying for staff and unresponsive to the requests of people who use services. You want to use this opportunity to promote streamlining of processes, including resolving the slow payments that have been causing you cash flow problems at times, as well as participating in the debate about the development of the market.

You have some reservations about the "Trip Advisor" idea and whether it could be appropriately monitored.



## PROVIDER 3

You are a smaller provider of domiciliary care and have started to specialise in mental health support including dementia care. Some services users and families manage direct payment successfully, but you can see others struggling. You're also aware that some families are not in a position to administer one because of their distance from their relative, and so want to see a continuing reliable managed care service from the council.

Generally you think the "Trip Advisor" idea would be beneficial to a smaller, more specialist business like yours, providing there are appropriate safeguards.



## PERSONAL BUDGET USERS AND BEST INTEREST SUPPORTERS

Participants are a mix of people directly managing their own personal budgets, and family members doing so on the service user's behalf.

The general theme is that, while you are finding personal budgets and direct payments work well for you or your relative, you think their effectiveness for delivering good outcomes in your life can be further improved if better support is available both at the start of the process and at review points. You want the costs of this to be included in the Resource Allocation System (RAS) so that it can be flexibly used.

You also want to discuss with both the local authority and providers how the market can be stimulated to offer a wider range of more responsive services. You are interested in developing locally a scheme you have heard of elsewhere for a "Trip Advisor" style website where people who use services can log reviews of the care and support they receive.



## ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY

You want to make sure that the needs and interests of people with dementia and their carers get equal attention with those of younger adults with disabilities.

Locally you have a number of families in contact with you who don't find a personal budget easy to manage and would prefer traditional support from social services. You're aware of findings from a 2011 national research report (Laing and Buisson) that not all older people given personal budgets were willing recipients – some signed up because it was the only way they could continue to receive existing support. In some cases, changing to a personal budget resulted in less home care; personal budgets must not be a "smoke screen for cuts to social care funding".

You don't dismiss the potential benefits of direct payments for people with dementia but you think the existing system needs more fundamental change than just additional support. It needs:

- To be much less complex and intimidating.
- Better information and support to people considering taking it up.
- Better understanding of dementia by professionals.
- Better range of dementia-focussed services offered in the local care market.



## LOCAL AUTHORITY PERSONALISATION LEAD

You feel that your local authority has made good progress with the key activities of personalisation, including hitting the targets for rates of personal budgets and achieving good levels of direct payments. You're aware of how support is currently being provided and that many people are happier using personal budgets, but you are also aware of the concerns from older people's organisations that the needs of families who are not able or not willing to manage direct payments themselves are not being sufficiently recognised.

On the whole implementation of direct payments has gone well. There have been some complaints about their management, both from social workers who have uncovered misuse of funding, and about people refusing to pay sick pay or maternity pay to directly employed staff, but these have not been the dominant feature. Similarly, there have been few complaints from people using personal budgets, and where these have arisen, the authority has enabled the person to withdraw from holding a personal budget and has fulfilled its duty to make adequate provision by another means.

## RESOURCE 3

# Meeting agenda

The meeting is a fairly informal discussion, but is structured around:

- What the priorities are for each party – what is absolutely essential and what might be less important and could therefore offer savings potential to pay for more support planning?
- How working practices and contractual requirements can be refined, restructured and possibly combined to be more flexible and efficient.
- How to respond to the full range of expectations from different people who use services and be able to make room for variations in those expectations over time. It needs to end with agreement on the priorities for further development of brokerage and related support.



**Think Local, Act Personal** is a sector-wide commitment to moving forward with personalisation and community-based support, endorsed by organisations comprising representatives from across the social care sector including local government, health, private, independent and community organisations. For a full list of partners visit [www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk](http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk)