



Supporting the North West on personal budgets

Project Proposals

Context

These proposals for three short-life projects build on ideas discussed by representatives of councils in North West England at the ADASS/Transition Alliance workshop on 22 September 2011 and the follow-up meeting on 10 November 2011.

The projects will enhance councils' capacity to deliver on the 'markers' proposed by Think Local, Act Personal (TLAP) in Making It Real: Marking Progress towards Personalised Community based Support. They will assist in enhancing both efficiency and effectiveness.

The project work will be carried out by representatives from volunteer councils, with a modest input of co-ordination and specialist advice provided by In Control. The projects will run until June, 2012.

Project 1: Minimum Process, Self-rating by councils

Issue

Concerns about "process creep" leading to additional costs and poor user experience.

Aim of project

The project will develop and use a self-rating tool for councils to enable them to evaluate whether their end-to-end-process is fit-for-purpose. This will focus primarily on internal council systems, but will also include other services (user-led/third sector), some of which they commission directly. It will highlight areas of strength and areas where remedial action is indicated.

Basis

The tool will be based around the **points to consider and avoid** of the TLAP Minimum Process Framework paper¹. Each of the four components listed in that paper will be scored, based on the following:

¹ See the page Leaner Approaches to Council Operating Systems on the TLAP website.

<http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Latest/Resource/?cid=9096>

Components: What this part of the system/these services aim to do	Who this part of the system/ these services are for	Examples of system elements and supporting services	Rating (1 to 5 in each case)
<p>Provide support to anyone who needs it. Some of the services have specialist roles or help a particular group of people, but it doing so they fulfil the role of more than one component of a 'personalised system': for example, they may prevent people needing to use institutional services, they may support recovery & maximise independence, and they may help people to stay in control of their support.</p>	<p>Everyone. These are universal services which we all use/buy as necessary. Includes some mainstream services and some with a specialist element, purchased by people who self-fund. The important point is that people are able to purchase these things directly, without the aid of the local authority.</p>	<p>On-line information portals to enable citizens identify their own support solutions.</p> <p>CABx and Centres for Independent Living</p> <p>Support services including. cleaning, gardening and domiciliary services purchased by people who don't need formal social care or who pay for it themselves.</p>	<p>1 = Inadequate council and third sector information services, on-line and otherwise. A very limited range of support services, with significant gaps, either in certain geographical areas or across the whole council area.</p> <p>2,3,4 – to be defined</p> <p>5= Excellent council and third sector information services, on-line and otherwise. Very full range of support services, with limited (or no) gaps.</p>
<p>Prevent people needing to use institutional services.</p>	<p>People with some needs for social care support, and who require local authority advice and assistance. Mostly, the needs will be relatively low-level and the assistance required not complicated.</p>	<p>Procedures and practice in council contact centres (or equivalent).</p> <p>Supported by specialist information and advice services (often 3rd sector).</p> <p>Access to 'simple services and simple equipment.'</p>	<p>1=Very poor, inadequate or overlapping advice and assistance services, with unclear procedures, very limited specialist information and advice services. Poor access to simple services and simple equipment.</p> <p>2,3,4 – to be defined</p> <p>5 = Excellent advice and assistance services, with clear procedures. Comprehensive specialist information and advice services. Good access to simple</p>

			services and simple equipment.
Support recovery and maximise independence.	People with some needs for social care support, and who require local authority advice and assistance. Some of these people are already users of social care services, for example older people who have had a hospital admission or disabled people who are striving to become more independent. Others will be living at home and need support to stay there.	Multi-disciplinary (and multi-agency) teams to work with people in their own home. Enablement or re-ablement services. Tele-care.	1 = Inadequately resourced and/or poorly-managed service. Unclear referral criteria. Some significant service gaps either geographically or for some groups of people. 2,3.4 – to be defined 5 = Well resourced and managed services. Clear referral criteria. Very few service gaps either geographically or for any groups of people.
Assist people to stay in control of their support.	People who have 'on-going eligible needs' for social care support and who are in receipt of a personal budget.	Financial assessment process. Review process. Supported by full public information, publically available on-line and in written form. And by the care management process and practice.	1 = Inadequate, unfair or poorly specified processes, which are not clear or accessible to the public. Not supported by good and timely care management process and practice (including reviews). 2,3.4 – to be defined 5 = Clear and fair processes, which are easy to understand and readily publically available. Supported by good and timely care management process and practice (including

			reviews).
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Process for the Project

The above tool will be road tested and adapted if necessary with the lead officer from **one** volunteer council in the region. Other councils in the region will then be invited to participate by:

- Familiarising themselves with the TLAP paper.
- Undertake a self rating by completing the results matrix (below), using the TLAP paper and the above table as a guide. Directors will be invited to complete the **results matrix**, within a two-month timescale.
- Including comments and any proposed action in relation to each of the four components.
- Where possible, adding comments by users of the system and services. Preferably this commentary will be based on completed POET generated data². Where this is not available, it should be based on an independently validated user-survey.
- Results will be compiled and a short, anonymised report produced by In Control.
- Authorities will be invited to a regional event, where high-performers will showcase good practice.

Results

- Results will be compiled and a short, anonymised report produced by In Control.
- Each participating council will be asked to set out results in the form of a results matrix, as follows:

Element	Score (1-5)	Comment from council	Action proposed by council	Comment from users of the system
Services available to all				
Prevention				
Supporting recovery and maximising independence				
Staying in control of support				

² <http://www.in-control.org.uk/what-we-do/research-and-evaluation/poet.aspx> The POET survey tool includes a question: 'Has the council made it easy for you to do these things...'. Nine aspects of the process are then listed and people are asked to rate these.

Project 2: Choice and Control in the use of Managed Personal Budgets

Issue

Users of managed budgets appear to have very restricted choice and control. This appears to be particularly true of budgets managed by councils (care managers and other council staff) and may be true of budgets managed by other third parties.

Aim of project

The project will assess the quality and scope of activity across the region, will highlight best-practice, and where necessary will make recommendations for improvement.

Basis

There is some evidence from some parts of the country that council managed budgets in particular are little more than re-badged directly provided services and that potential users of these budgets are being advised that in order to get 'real choice and control' you need a direct payment.

Process for the Project

The project work will be carried out by a small self-selected volunteer reference group from the councils, facilitated by In Control. The group will meet probably twice in the course of the project and will otherwise communicate electronically. It will develop a tool in the form of a short questionnaire, which will seek to establish:

- How managed personal budgets are conceived by councils and by their key stakeholders.
- How managed personal budgets differ from a) pre-existing arrangements for directly provided services b) current arrangements for direct payments.
- In particular, what processes, procedures and rules are in place to maximise choice and control for users of managed personal budgets.
- How these things work in practice – what is the user experience?
- What role user-led organisations, the third sector and service providers are playing/might play in maximising choice and control for users of managed personal budgets.

The questionnaire will be distributed within the region, with a two-month timescale for turnaround.

Key target groups for the questionnaire will be:

- Senior managers in adult services across the region.
- Council staff directly responsible for the management of council-managed budgets.
- Users of these budgets and their families.
- User led and third sector organisations.

- Providers of service to people using such budgets.

Results

Results will be analysed and a short report produced. The report will highlight best-practice across the region. Best practice processes in this regard are ones that:

a) embed choice and control.

b) are speedy, simple, light-touch and use minimal resources.

c) are genuinely empowering for all concerned, including family members and providers of service.

In the event that practice across the region proves to be poor, specific recommendations for improvement will be made, based on a review of literature and of practice elsewhere. In Control and the reference group will host a regional event to launch the report and promote best practice.

Project 3: Workforce development

Issue

Key council staff appear to lack the skills, knowledge or confidence to deliver personal budgets as effectively as might have been hoped at this stage.

Aim of project

The project will assess practice across the region, will highlight training needs, will specify the components of a training programme, and will work with council training & development staff to promote delivery of training.

Basis

Earlier work by In Control in the region and elsewhere has shown a poor understanding/acceptance of the value-base of personalisation among significant numbers of front-line staff. This issue is addressed relatively readily through appropriate training and exposure of staff to personal budget users who have achieved positive outcomes and to other key stakeholder (providers, user-led organisations etc) with expertise to offer.

We need, however to be sure of the extent to which the issue is indeed one of poor understanding/acceptance of the value-base, as opposed to a lack of technical knowledge, a lack of information about local resources, the existence of a poorly developed local provider market, or other factors - hence the proposal for a short finding-out exercise in the form of a questionnaire.

Process for the Project

A small volunteer reference group from councils, facilitated by In Control will devise a questionnaire to be sent to councils across the region, with a two month turnaround. The group will meet probably twice in the course of the project and will otherwise communicate electronically.

The aim will be to establish:

- Staff attitudes towards personal budgets.
- The level of understanding and acceptance of the key values of user choice and self-determination.
- Perceptions of difficulties and blocks with the process. Technical or other issues. Perceptions of external/environmental issues (eg 'poor providers,' 'an undeveloped market' etc).
- The nature and success of training programmes delivered to date. The reach of such programmes (are key staff excluded?)
- Views about training activity now needed to address the issues identified.

Key target groups to contact will be:

- A sample of those staff directly responsible for the delivery/management of personal budgets – primarily care managers and social workers.
- The line managers of these staff.
- Council staff responsible for professional training and development.

Results

Results will be analysed and a short report produced. The report will include the specification for a training programme for front-line staff to address the issues identified. Programme design will start from the premise that front-line staff are all 'personalisation ambassadors,' and that the involvement of personal budget users/user led organisations in training is a prerequisite.

The report will be sent to directors and training managers in the region, with an offer of further assistance with detailed programme design and delivery where appropriate and necessary and where resources permit.

