Building a new relationship with children, young people and families
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Acknowledgements

Over the past five years we have had the pleasure of working with more than 40 children’s services across England, as well as the most respected and experienced leaders in the sector and countless children, young people and families. We will be forever indebted to these individuals who have demonstrated a relentless commitment to ensure that personal budgets deliver real choice and control.
Introduction

The Green Paper ‘Support and Aspiration, a new approach for special educational needs and disabilities’\(^1\) and the recent ‘Progress and Next Steps’\(^2\) document from the Department for Education has set out an ambitious programme of service transformation for children with special education needs, their families and disabled children’s services for the next few years. This programme of change consists of many different elements including workforce change, the role of the private and voluntary sector, new approaches to assessment and planning and the introduction of personal budgets across social care, health and education.

At the heart of this transformation is the development of a new relationship between statutory agencies, services and children and families. And critical to its delivery is the development of a joined-up approach between agencies.

This new relationship is based on an approach which sees:

- **The child and the family at the centre**: Families are the experts. They may need knowledge, skilled support and expertise from others to help with their child but it is essential to remember they hold the lead caring role and this should not be compromised by professional intervention.

- **The recognition of a family’s ‘real wealth’**: The child and the family have a range of existing resources that they can draw upon. They may simply need good support to enable them to recognise and utilise these resources.

- **A whole system**: All support needs a joined-up approach focused on strategic outcomes.

- **Clear and simple outcomes**: Outcomes agreed at the outset which set out simply and clearly what services will achieve for children, young people and families

- **A simple pathway**: A set of steps clearly identifying the process for how children and young people will be assessed, eligibility criteria, allocation of personal budgets and review.

This short paper begins to explore the elements of this new relationship.

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1 Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability, Department for Education
https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/CM%208027

2 Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability, Progress and Next Steps, Department for Education
The child and family at the centre

Seeing the child and family as central to the process cannot be a token gesture. Real and meaningful engagement needs to take place. Opinions, contributions, experience and knowledge need to be respected to ensure the child and family are empowered and that there is a true shift from the existing culture of dependency.

From the outset, control needs to be handed to the child and family. This is of course on the understanding that in certain safeguarding circumstances there will be a need for services to take more of a leading role.

In addition to acknowledging that the child and family must remain central it is also important to recognise that communities should also play a part in supporting that child or young person and they too have an important role to play in planning support and contributing solutions.
The child’s home will be in a community of one type or another. Their life is part of this community and this has to be the first place where opportunities to participate, enjoy and achieve are explored. This is what we refer to as ‘community wealth’ and this concept is explored in more detail later in the paper.

While ensuring that the child and family remain central in the process may seem fairly obvious, and professionals may feel that they are already doing this, it is a real challenge to achieve this in a way that empowers rather than further imposes dependency.

If the child, young person or family were truly at the centre, here are some of the things that should be happening:

- The child, young person or family has a copy of the assessment and their child’s plan. They understand the paperwork; the information presented and have a set of outcomes which have been agreed with all services and the school.
- Family representatives participate in some or all budget setting/decision making groups, including the commissioning groups leading the implementation of the Green Paper.
- The child or young person is supported to participate in all developments which will impact on their lives across health, social care and education.
- Local parent/carer forums and groups are key partners in designing the support needed and in helping families to take control of this support.
Real wealth

Seeking solutions, sources of support and opportunity

In Control first set out the concept of ‘real wealth’ in ‘A Whole Life Approach to Personalisation’ which was published in 2008³. Over the past four years we have further developed this concept in partnership with families, organisations and children’s services.

Real wealth is a way of exploring and identifying all the resources that the child, young person or family have and can use to self-direct their lives. For a more detailed definition of real wealth, please see our paper ‘Real Wealth a Source of Support and Opportunity’ March 2012.⁴

The following graphic further illustrates this concept.

⁴ http://www.in-control.org.uk/what-we-do/future-thinking/real-wealth.aspx
The five elements of real wealth

1. **People**: The people they know eg close friends, extended family, work colleagues, social friends and neighbours.

2. **Access**: The place they live, local resources, shops, health services, schools, leisure facilities and community activities they are part of.

3. **Assets**: The money they have control over, their income, benefits, savings, and if they have one, a personal budget.

4. **Skills and knowledge**: Their strengths, abilities, knowledge and decision making skills.

5. **Resilience**: Their well-being, the inner strength that keeps them going when times get tough, their physical, emotional and mental health, and for some, their faith, belief system or religion.

Exploring a child’s, young person’s or family’s real wealth can help support to be planned more effectively. Additional support can then build on strengths and address gaps. Where a personal budget has been allocated then this can be used alongside other sources of support to make the best use of the child and family’s real wealth.

**An example**

A discussion about the different resources that a family has may identify gaps as well as strengths. Exploring ‘skills and knowledge’ may expose the fact that both parents have poor literacy and numeracy skills which have been a barrier to them finding work. The creative use of a personal budget for support for the child for two hours, one evening a week could enable the parents to attend a course during this time thus making them more employable.
How do we help children and families to find solutions?

Exploring real wealth is essentially a person-centred planning approach which provides the space for a structured conversation about what resources already exist and what the gaps are. This conversation can then explore these resources, areas for investment of time or funding, and this then helps to empower families by affirming their strengths as a family.

As a starting point here are some questions that can be used to start such a conversation:

**Access**

This is about you and your family’s access to the world around you. This can mean a physical environment; it could mean information and knowledge about activities, or your rights. You may find it difficult to get out and about and need someone to help you, or it may be someone that helps you use the internet.

**Think about:**

- The places you find hard to access
- How do you know what’s going on where you live?
- What services do you use?
- What is your first language?
- How far do you travel from home?
- Can you use the internet?
- Do you go to the local library?

**Assets**

This includes the money which you have control of, it may include your house or your car. This isn’t about how much you have, it’s about what you have control of. It may be that you need a welfare rights check to make sure you are getting the right benefits.

**Think about:**

- Things that help you to be independent
- How secure is your employment and your income?
- When did you last get welfare advice?
- What financial resources do you all have as a family?
- Do you have a car, a computer?
- Do you live in your own home?
People

This is about your family members, neighbours, friends, work colleagues, the people you turn to when you need help or support, the people you meet at your child's school. The networks you are part of, both formal and informal are really important, however you may feel isolated and may not know anyone where you live.

Think about:

- Your friends, your child's friends, the other parents you meet at school
- Your employers, people you know at work
- What do these people do? Do you share interests with any of them?
- Who do you turn to for help or support?
- Names of your family and wider family – what do they do, how often do you see them?
- Who are the professionals involved in supporting you and your family?

Skills and knowledge

This is about all the things you learnt at school, college or work. The skills and knowledge that helps you to live a healthy and full life. Or maybe it doesn't feel like you have lots of skills, or that you find some things really difficult.

Think about:

- What subjects you liked at school, what things have you learnt?
- What skills do you use at work?
- Who looks after the family finances?
- What do you find difficult?
- Who plans a day out or your family holiday?
- Do you have any qualifications?

Resilience

This is about your inner strength which helps you get up in the morning after a bad night, and keeps you going. For some this may be faith or religion, for others it is the love they have for their family and close ones. Resilience is about your well being - physical, mental, and emotional. What makes you feel special and what makes you feel you are doing well and the best you can.
• What does a good day feel like?
• What are the things that get you through the week?
• What things make you and your family happy?
• Do you try and eat healthily and keep fit?
• Is your 'cup half empty' or 'half full'?

A good understanding of all the resources a child and family bring will provide a strong basis for planning support, and where necessary effective use of a personal budget.

**Real wealth in the wider community**

A community consists of a group of people that share an interest or focus. This could be faith, activity, geography, culture or social interest. In each of these cases, each member brings their own ‘real wealth’ to that particular community. It is therefore possible to think of the combined ‘real wealth’ of all members of that community and this is particularly helpful when exploring support solutions for a child, young person and their family.

The five elements of ‘real wealth’ can be adapted so they are appropriate for a community:

1. **People**: All of the connections, relationships which members of the community have.

2. **Access**: The way in which the community interacts with and accesses the wider world.

3. **Assets**: Community assets of both individual members and the collective community.

4. **Skills and knowledge**: The combined skills and knowledge represented by all the people in the community.

5. **Resilience**: The bond between community members, the strength of informal and formal networks, the ‘rules’ which govern membership of the community eg faith, activity, geography, income etc.
The whole system

The following graphic has been adapted from the ‘Quadrants of Personalisation’ developed by OPM for the Department of Health’s Putting People First Programme. This graphic is proving invaluable in supporting discussions with those involved in implementing the Green Paper. It supports the identification of support across a wide range of opportunities and activities. It provides a basis for understanding why commissioning decisions are made and helps to challenge commissioning practice. It also provides a basis for looking at the ‘whole’ local offer of activity, support and opportunity.
The four elements of the quadrants of personalisation are:

1. **Universal/mainstream services:** Most people find the support they need easily accessible eg shops on the high street, libraries, leisure centres, schools, and employment. We know that many children, young people and families want to be able to access the same services as everyone else. In these circumstances, support should focus on enabling participation in these ‘universal’ or ‘mainstream’ services.

2. **Targeted services and support:** This tends to be delivered for a group of people with a support need in common eg age, diagnosis, situation, income, family crisis or other. In these circumstances group targeted support would include a teenage pregnancy service, a youth club focused on one group of people eg those with a learning disability, education welfare support, bereavement counselling, diabetes service etc.

3. **Social capital and community wealth:** Universal services are not the only way in which we participate in our local communities. Groups, clubs, societies, places of worship etc are all sources of interaction, sharing and mutual support. In the same way as people have a desire to participate in universal services they also have a desire to participate in activities outside this realm.

   In enabling access to these activities it is helpful to think about ‘community wealth’ and we can look at the five elements of ‘real wealth’ to help with this thinking as detailed in the previous section of this paper. It is also helpful to explore In Control’s ‘Community Fund Holding model’ which is described in ‘Community Fund Holding: A model for local choice and control’ a paper published by In Control in November 2011.

4. **Choice and control – self-directed support:** If people cannot access the support described above then how can they be supported? If we begin with the premise that most people want to participate in the wider world and universal services in their own way then any support offered needs to focus on enabling them to do this. It also needs to ensure that it provides choice and control over how they do this.

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We are now moving to a situation where the resources allocated to an individual with additional support needs in health, social care or education can be controlled by that individual through a personal budget. Referring back to the ‘Quadrants of Personalisation’ graphic it is clear that people need different types of support in different circumstances. This support needs to enable them to take part in the wider world through help, treatment, diagnosis, funding or activities. Not only does this enable decisions to be made about commissioning and how funding is used but as a graphic it helps to explain the role of health, social care or education statutory support agencies.

The following graphic follows the direction within the Green Paper of joined-up services across health, social care and education. It sets out all the different sources of support within a ‘joined-up and whole’ system and explains how different elements of a service budget can be used to commission different support.
The four elements of these joined-up services are:

1. **Mainstream and universal services:** Funding used to create an open and accessible offer of mainstream and universal activities and opportunities. The funding is used to ensure these services are accessible to all.

2. **Targeted services:** Funding focused on specific groups based on diagnosis or support need. The funding is shared across the group. Some targeted services may be focused on supporting families to use direct payments.

3. **Choice and control and self-directed support:** Funding allocated as a personal budget to be used to support an individual and deliver specific outcomes as identified in the support plan. This is also about the best use of all resources available.

4. **Community wealth and social capital:** Funding to enable community resources and networks (both formal and informal) to be accessed through good person-centred practice.
Clear and simple outcomes

What are we working to achieve for children, young people and families?

In Control uses outcomes as a basis for explaining what services deliver for children, young people and families. In the past, the national Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes proved a useful structure to follow. However the change in government, and a move to more localised commissioning has meant that these are no longer being used consistently across services. Many areas have an active ‘Children and Young People’s Plan’ however. Within this plan will be agreed outcomes which set out what the partnership of organisations and families within that locality will achieve for children and young people living there.

It is critical to be clear about what agencies are working towards:

- What is the basis for offering the support?
- What do you hope to achieve with your support?
- What are you working to achieve together?
- How will you tell if your support is working
- How do your outcomes fit with those of the child or family?

An example

Through work with the SE7 group of pathfinder sites in the South East, a framework has been developed which sets out outcomes for personal budgets across health, social care and education. These outcomes include:

- To participate
- To enjoy
- To achieve

Every child needs opportunities to participate, enjoy and to achieve. In recognising this we acknowledge that some children and families need more support than others to make these outcomes a reality.
Using a resource allocation system (RAS) based on these outcomes will enable services to set an indicative allocation for a personal budget. The child and family’s support plan will set out clearly how these outcomes are to be achieved and if services are satisfied that the plan will meet these outcomes it will be agreed. Following agreement of the plan and allocation of the personal budget a review then needs to take place to check whether the agreed outcomes are being achieved. Such an approach unites the effort of all services, organisations and people involved. It is an inclusive and transparent approach.

A pathway

The seven steps to self-directed support

It is helpful to look at how all of the elements mentioned previously in this paper fit together and create a pathway for this new relationship with children, young people and families.

The following graphic illustrates this pathway:
The seven steps of self-directed support

To illustrate the pathway in further detail it is useful to look at In Control’s ‘Seven Steps to Self-directed Support’ seen below.

Self-directed support is a concept first developed by In Control in 2003. The approach was originally based on the use of a personal budget but it is now adopted in a much wider set of circumstances that centres on putting the person in control, helping them to make the best use of their resources and additional support. It is an approach that works with or without a personal budget.

1. Need some help? A child and family needs some help and are referred to children’s services.

2. Making the most of resources: This is about exploring the ‘real wealth’ of the child and family and looking for solutions and support opportunities based on existing resources and what is available in the universal and targeted support offers. If eligible, these resources may be supplemented with an indicative personal budget from education, social care and/or health services.

3. Making a plan: Involving all the key people. This process is centred on the child and their immediate family and is about exploring the support that is needed and how their existing ‘real wealth’ and the personal budget (if eligible) can be used to achieve a set of outcomes.

4. Agreeing the plan: Ensuring the plan will deliver the identified outcomes. That the money is managed transparently, the budget is sufficient, that a contingency is in place and that any safeguarding concerns are addressed in the plan.
5. **Managing the support**: Many families may need ongoing support to manage their support plan, and their child's personal budget if they have been allocated one. This support may come from their key worker, lead professional, social worker or a voluntary organisation.

6. **Living their life**: The plan is in place and is being implemented. The child and family have the support they need. They and their key worker know what to do in times of crisis and also clearly understand flexibilities in the plan and how the money can be spent.

7. **Review and learn**: The review process ensures that all is going well. That the money is being used for what it should be and that outcomes are being met. The review process should also include learning from the previous three to 12 months and ensure this is incorporated in any revised plan.

Our experience of working with the government’s 20 SEND pathfinder sites has demonstrated that the seven step approach to self-directed support fits in well with work to re-design the assessment and planning process. A single assessment process starts following a referral to the special education needs and disabled children’s services. Decisions taken following an assessment of need will include an allocation of personal budget. This alongside the family’s ‘real wealth’ and the support and opportunities available through the ‘whole system’ can be drawn together into the single Education, Health and Care Plan which is in effect the support plan.

Utilising the seven step approach with the pathfinder sites has however identified a number of important considerations for services, these being a need to;

- re-design the workforce and make better use of the local community and voluntary sector;
- clarify and state clearly the outcomes upon which the support offer is built;
- work in a meaningful partnership with all services but most importantly with local children, young people and families;
- support those providing services to families so they are able to embrace this new approach;
- undertake a robust approach to costing and commissioning services;
- gain clarity on how the personal budget can be used across services.
Conclusion

As self-directed support and personal budgets have been implemented in adult social care and health we have witnessed a preoccupation with money. This has been heightened by the current climate and while it is understandable that services are focusing on the money this has led to a lack of focus on the existing resources that people already have access to both on a personal and a community level. Focusing on a family’s ‘real wealth’ and ‘community wealth’ sets a clear foundation for a new relationship with children, young people and families which fosters a culture of empowerment rather than dependency. However it is clear that families need to be supported to recognise and fully access this ‘wealth’. The move to a single assessment and planning approach as highlighted in the Green Paper and Queen’s speech further emphasises the need to empower families to seek their own solutions with skilled support, and where necessary, additional funding through a personal budget.

The move to a ‘joined-up’, ‘whole system’ approach across health, education and social care is helpful but this will not work unless services are clear about outcomes, there is a focus on inclusion in mainstream society and mostly importantly the child is seen as a ‘whole’ as opposed to their needs being addressed in three silos of different support need.

In this paper we have set out to explain the key overarching elements of a whole system approach to support disabled children, young people and their families across education, health and social care. It has been based on five years’ work with children’s services and other organisations to make personal budgets and self-directed support a reality. We look forward to continuing this work with our partners and members of our Children’s Programme as we work together to deliver the aspirations of the Green Paper.
Further information

For further information about In Control’s Children’s Programme, please see our web pages at [http://www.in-control.org.uk/children](http://www.in-control.org.uk/children)

These web pages contain all the publications produced by the programme, including:

- **Personalisation: Children, young people and families, Briefing 1, In Practice** (In Control 2010)
- **Personalisation: Children, young people and families, Briefing 2, A Round table discussion** (In Control 2010)
- **Personalisation: Children, young people and families, Briefing 3, Evaluation and Outcomes** (In Control 2010)
- **Enabling self-directed support for children, young people and families** (with Clive Miller at OPM) (In Control 2010)
- **A Strategy for Change: Introducing self-directed support and personal budgets for disabled children, young people and families** (In Control 2011)
- **Introducing personal budgets for disabled children, young people and families in Medway** (In Control 2011)
- **A whole life approach to self-directed support for children and young people**, Crosby, N. and Duffy, S. In Control 2008
- **Real Wealth, A source of support and opportunity**, Crosby, N, In Control 2012

A further paper will be published later this year which will focus on the work needed to be undertaken to develop a personal budgets offer such as resource allocation and workforce training.
Building a new relationship with children, young people and families has been published by In Control Partnerships. It was first published in September 2012.

The publication is free to download from www.in-control.org.uk/children