

Putting People First
Personalisation Toolkit

Commissioning for Support Planning and Brokerage: a resource tool



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This document is part of the Personalisation toolkit, which can be seen in full at www.toolkit.personalisation.org.uk

About this tool

This tool is designed for voluntary use by council commissioners and local stakeholders involved in introducing personal budgets for people who use social care support. It offers a practical approach to mapping what support planning and brokerage resources already exist in their community. Using a co-productive approach, the tool sets out to identify what services and supports are valued, what the gaps are and what the priorities are for filling those gaps.

This approach can contribute to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Its scope goes beyond health and social care, reflecting the fact that the full range of services should be universally available to all local people.

This short paper should be read alongside the three other papers commissioned by the Care Services Improvement Partnership as part of its *Personalisation Toolkit*.

Good Practice in Support Planning and Brokerage which offers a more detailed account of the functions of brokerage and outlines 5 areas of activity which should be considered when commissioning. This paper also offers a number of examples of good practice from the Individual Budgets Pilot Programme and In Control sites and from the experience of implementing direct payments.

The *Equal Access Framework* which offers a guide to councils and key stakeholders in considering and addressing the barriers that prevent people from having equal access to the range of support that they need to live the lives they want when introducing self-directed support/personalisation.

This tool also aims to complement the general approach to commissioning for personalisation as set out in *Commissioning for Personalisation: A Framework for Local Authority Commissioners*.

Introduction

Effective support planning and brokerage are crucial in enabling disabled people to exercise more choice and control in their lives. Support planning and brokerage, including easy access to information, advice and advocacy, should offer disabled and older people the opportunity to make decisions for themselves that might otherwise be made for them by other people.

It is important to note that the lives of disabled and older people cannot be neatly divided into health, social care, housing and employment etc – and neither can their needs for support planning and brokerage.

Commissioners' roles are central to ensuring that a range of support planning and brokerage options are available to make sure that people are in a position to direct their own lives. Specifically, commissioners may want to focus on 2 areas of activity:

1) Directly commissioned or provided services should be delivered in a way that enables self-directed support for the full range of local people. Such services should be guided by the principles and values that are set out below

2) In their place shaping role and through their work with their statutory partners and other key agencies, including user-led organisations, commissioners should focus on creating a range of choices for people to access the support planning and brokerage that suits them best. Local Area Agreements could play a central role in this.

Features of brokerage

It is important to set out some key features which should guide commissioning activity for support planning and brokerage. Clearly, the context for this work is the emerging agenda around Putting People First, but the general policy environment offers some clarity about the range of principles that should shape the approach. The following principles or features of support planning and brokerage are proposed:

- a clear value base that promotes self-determination and social inclusion
- an aim to identify barriers to self-direction and social inclusion for all groups of people and put in place responses which tackle these barriers
- independence from decision making about funding in the resource allocation process
- that the person for whom the support planning and brokerage is provided makes the decision (with assistance if necessary) about how the resources are used
- provision of information about the range of support planning and brokerage options is a central part of enabling choices
- information is available in the format suited to the person concerned.

In addition to these proposed underlying principles, it is also important to be committed to co-production in determining the priorities for planning and delivering a range of support planning and brokerage resources. This means that disabled people and families are fully involved in identifying the need for resources, in prioritising the implementation of various services and supports and in evaluating those services and supports already in place.

Approaches to support planning and brokerage

The Care Service Improvement Partnership has offered a framework of five different types or areas of support planning and brokerage activity. A more detailed account of this approach is set out in the *Good Practice in Support Planning and Brokerage* paper mentioned above. In brief the areas are:

Do It Yourself for people and families – many people will be willing and able to carry out some or all of the support planning and brokerage for themselves

Community – in many areas there are a wide range of resources both formal and informal that people can tap into

User-led organisations – it is expected that organisations run and led by disabled people will play an increasing role in supporting people to exercise greater choice and control

Paid staff including support staff – can be the main point of contact and the resource of choice for many people

Paid brokers and information and advice givers – trained and paid brokers are emerging in different parts of the country and should be one of the choices available to people.

In developing commissioning plans and strategies, it is important to ensure that a full range of these options is developed. The basic commitment should be to make sure that the individual is able to make a choice about which type or resource suits their circumstances best. People may choose from more than one area at a time and their choices may change over time. The important thing is for commissioners to arrange for and support the introduction of all of these options.

In order to do this in a sustainable way and to an appropriate level of quality, commissioners and their partners in this process will need to work together and in some detail to work out the most effective ways of delivering improvements in each area. The *Good Practice in Support Planning and Brokerage* paper offers a range of helpful suggestions for activity in each area, but the most important contribution will come from disabled people and families using the sort of process that we set out below.

A proposed approach to identifying support planning and brokerage priorities

Below is a proposed approach to mapping existing support planning and brokerage resources and prioritizing commissioning arrangements that reflect the views of disabled people and families in the area.

We 'road-tested' this tool in a workshop environment with a range of stakeholders and captured their views on what additional factors should be taken into consideration when using this approach. These views are set out in Appendix 1 below.

We have set out a process of 5 steps which we recommend are followed but you may wish to adapt these to your local circumstances.

Step 1: Mapping what is happening now

Purpose: To find out what is happening locally around support planning and support brokerage.

Who needs to be involved: Different groups of people with knowledge and experience of how social care works in a particular geographical area and commissioners from that and related areas. Commissioners should be aware of current arrangements and funding for existing commissioned services.

Materials:

- A geographical map of the local area
- A table that covers each of the 10 brokerage functions for each group of people (see next page for an example)

Process

Start with one group of people, and be clear about what geographical area you are considering. Ask these experts what they know is available for each of the 10 functions of brokerage (see below). Record these both on the table, and on a geographical map. The table records what is present, and the map is used to record where it is in the community.

Brokerage function	What is available now?
1. To find out what is available	
2. To explore what is possible	
3. To provide information (signposting)	
4. To give technical advice	
5. To encourage and develop informal supports	
6. To coordinate supports and resources	
7. To assist the person to manage their obligations and responsibilities in relation to their budget	
8. Facilitation to enable things to happen	
9. To help with support planning	
10. To help the person speak up for themselves or where necessary to speak up on their behalf	

Step 2: Work out what is missing

Purpose: To look at examples of what is working well and to use this information to identify what is missing, what the gaps are locally.

Who needs to be involved: Different groups of people with knowledge and experience of how social care works and who live in a particular geographical area and commissioners for that area.

Materials:

- A way of sharing best practice information (showing DVDs, sharing stories, having a presentation, showing graphically)
- Add another column to the table with the heading **What are the gaps (informed by best practice)?**

Process

Present the information on what is working well, so that the group knows what is possible, as well as what is available.

Go through each brokerage function and ask where the gaps are. This step in the process should include consideration of examples of local or national good practice. This will help people to be aware of and make judgements about the gaps there are locally and instil confidence that filling these gaps can be realistic. This is critically important because without awareness of best practice and innovation it is likely that people will feel constrained by their own experiences. Record these on the table. Ask about gaps in functions, and go to the geographical map and talk about gaps in the comprehensiveness of what is available. Add to the geographical map, perhaps in a different colour, what improvements are needed, and where.

Brokerage function	What is available now?	What are the gaps (informed by best practice)?
1. To find out what is available		
2. To explore what is possible		
3. To provide information (signposting)		
4. To give technical advice		
5. To encourage and develop informal supports		
6. To coordinate supports and resources		
7. To assist the person manage their obligations and responsibilities in relation to their budget		
8. Facilitation to enable things to happen		
9. To help with support planning		
10. To help the person speak up for themselves or where necessary to speak up on their behalf		

Step 3: Agree priorities for commissioning

Purpose: To decide on priorities for commissioning support planning and support brokerage.

Who needs to be involved: Commissioners, and experts from the different groups, who live in a particular geographical area.

Materials:

- A chart to help work out the costs and benefits of different priorities
- A way of voting (voting paper, multi dots)

Process

One suggestion is that a matrix can be used to help with the decision making process.

Recap on the information. Ask the group to think about what their initial priorities are. Map these on the matrix and look for ones that are high impact/low effort.

Make final decisions about the top priorities based on this discussion. It will be important when leading this discussion and determining priorities and that all those involved have some understanding of the resource and other constraints that may impact on commissioning decisions.

Figure 1

High effort/low impact	High effort/ High
Low effort/low impact	Low effort/High impact

Step 4: Making commissioning plans

The task for commissioners is to turn this information and co-produced set of priorities into a realistic commissioning approach that will deliver improvements in the range and quality of support planning and brokerage options available. This task will be made more complex once the above process has been completed for all citizens/user groups.

The suggested approach is for council commissioners, with partners in health, and acting across geographical boundaries where this is appropriate, to draft commissioning plans that directly address each of the identified priority areas. These plans should be short-medium term, with an emphasis on those priorities that have been designated high impact/low effort and are likely to bear immediate fruit. This is because although council will be starting from very different places in terms of pre-existing options, the planned expansion of personal budgets necessitates quick wins and tangible short-term improvements. Examples of best practice mentioned in step 2 should help shape commissioners plans and processes.

Commissioners should utilise the full spectrum of tools available to them in making these plans.

These might include, though are not restricted to:

- targeted grant funding of the voluntary and community sector, including user-led organisations;
- flexible contracting for brokerage functions with private sector providers;
- loan-type arrangements to stimulate social enterprise and small businesses;
- models for supporting micro-provision in the brokerage field;
- using the experts themselves where willing as potentially valuable resources to improve the skills of others to broker their own arrangements. They should be properly remunerated for this work.

Commissioners should be prepared to reshape or decommission services that are not meeting the aims identified.

There is also much that can be done by commissioners themselves to make the information produced through the above process available in accessible formats to all those using services, including self-funders and to effectively signal commissioning priorities and intentions to the market. Online market navigation websites are becoming more common and should be stimulated and pump-primed where they do not exist.

These plans should be made alongside workforce strategies as it may be necessary over time to extract resources from existing systems to fund these improvements. This approach should also fit within joint strategic needs investment process.

It will be vitally important, once drawn up, that these plans are consulted on again with the experts who helped to determine the original priorities. People must feel that commissioners are accountable to them for the decisions made and the principle of co-production should be designed into the process as an ongoing engagement, i.e. when reviewing delivery of these plans in the future.

Step 5: Evaluating the impact of the commissioning strategy

Purpose: To evaluate the impact and outcomes of the commissioning strategy.

Who needs to be involved: Commissioners, and experts from the different citizen groups, who live in a particular geographical area.

Materials:

- Large paper or other form of capturing information.
- The original table and map to update with progress

Process

Recap on the process used to agree priorities, and look back at the table and map. Look at what is different from the experts' perspective. Think together about:

- What have we tried?
- What have we learned?
- What are we pleased about?
- What are we concerned about?
- What will we do next?

Options for using this tool

This approach is intended to offer some ideas about a straightforward process for establishing commissioning priorities for support planning and support brokerage in a local area. There are a number of options for use of this approach which are set out in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1

As part of the process of developing this tool, we tested the approach out with a group made up of representatives of user-led organisations, local authority commissioners and national and local stakeholders with an interest in these issues.

Feedback from this event focussed on 2 areas of activity.

How can we truly involve people in the process

The main responses to this question included

- Inclusive and accessible processes
- Grass roots involvement
- Start small and build up gradually
- A chance to reflect on progress
- Accountability

Leading to these outcomes

- Empowerment and Independence
- Shared benefits

What will it take to make this happen locally

- Joint leadership for change
- Consensus
- Commitment to whole system change
- Getting the right people round the table
- Commitment to shifting power
- Information and preparation
- Sustainable resources
- Independent facilitation

Appendix 2

Options for using this tool

a) Large Group Event

Do this as a large group event, and invite people from a number of communities, and from all groups of citizens.

Go through the principles, and the functions of brokerage in front of the whole group. Then break into smaller groups, based on local areas. Each small group would have a facilitator, a map, and a table. In small groups' record and map out what is available for each of the 7 brokerage functions. Allow 2-3 hours to complete this. Then get the groups back together in the large group to share the best practice information. Get people back into small groups to identify gaps and choose priorities.

Advantages of this approach

- Can gather all the information needed in one day
- Can foster a sense of community with different groups working together in a geographical area
- Can work with user-led organisations to help design and facilitate the day
- Works best with a design day with representation of all groups of people to co-design the day to make it work locally

Disadvantages of this approach

- Works best with skilled, independent facilitation
- Need a large venue and preparation in terms of access and information
- You are asking experts to give up a whole day of their time, and need to recognise this

b) Series of mixed focus groups

The mapping day can work well as a series of focus groups, each in the local area, with mixed representation of different groups of citizens. This could take half a day.

Again, go through the principles and functions of brokerage with the group, and then facilitate the mapping and recording. Then share the best practice information, and identify gaps and choose priorities.

Advantages of this approach

- Can foster a sense of community with different groups working together in a geographical area
- Can be completed by commissioners directly

Disadvantages of this approach

- Takes a number of days to gather the information.
- Need venues in each of the local areas, and preparation in terms of access and information

- Possibly large number of dates and invitations and responses to organise
- You are asking experts to give up a half a day of their time, and need to recognise this

c) Individual meetings with single groups of citizens (perhaps as part of their existing meetings).

This approach involves attending existing meetings of groups of citizens, for example, a local Centre for Independent Living or Age Concern meeting. This could take 1–2 hours.

Again, go through the principles and functions of brokerage with the group, and then facilitate the mapping and recording. Then share the best practice information, and identify gaps and choose priorities.

Advantages of this approach

- Community members giving up the least amount of time as this takes place within existing meetings

Disadvantages of this approach

- Takes the longest amount of time
- Working within the constraints of pre-set meetings
- Groups may need to limit the amount of time allocated in their meeting