

Putting **People First**  
Transforming Adult Social Care

# Good Practice in Support Planning and Brokerage



**Gateway ref 9878**

This document is part of the Personalisation toolkit, which can be seen in full at [www.toolkit.personalisation.org.uk](http://www.toolkit.personalisation.org.uk)

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# 1 Introduction

**This good practice paper has been written to capture the emerging practice around support planning and brokerage. As time develops and self-directed support and personal budgets are implemented, practice will develop further. At this early stage of implementation, it is important for all stakeholders to understand the possibilities for increasing choice and control, and carefully consider how they will promote and develop support planning and brokerage in their own areas. There is clearly no one best way of doing this, though all efforts should be careful in inadvertently creating a barrier to people taking control of their lives. This paper sets out a discussion of what support planning and brokerage is, how it can be provided and what emerging good practice there is after a few years of developing self-directed support in England.**

The primary audience for this guidance is people at a local level: council staff, User-led organisations and other third sector organisations. We also think people who wish to buy care and support may find this paper useful in helping to understand support planning and brokerage.

The scope of this paper includes all people who may wish to buy care and support. This can include people who have a personal budget and those who use their own money (often referred to as self funders), as well as those people who may not meet existing eligibility criteria but who would find assistance useful in accessing and using community resources. The purpose of this report is to share the emerging learning from the thirteen Individual Budget Pilot sites and from In Control. Nothing in this report overrides existing statutory responsibilities or policy guidance. Voluntary adoption of any of the examples of practice cited here should be undertaken in light of council's own legal advice.

*'Independent Living includes the right of disabled people to exercise choice and control over any support they need. The route to achieving independent living is, therefore, Self-directed support'*

Joint Statement – In Control and NCIL  
(In Control newsletter Oct 04)

## 2 General Context

**The Individual Budgets Pilot Programme has been a cross-government pilot involving thirteen local authorities which signed up to test radical changes to their social services and related systems with an aim of people who receive support (older people, physically disabled people, people with mental health problems and people with learning disabilities) to take more control over the process and get better support and lives as a result. It has involved complex, challenging system and cultural change being achieved under tight time-scales. Following the publication of *Putting People First* and the subsequent *Local Authority Circular (LAC (DH)(2008) 1)*, the Government has signaled clear intent for the majority of people who receive social services funding in England, to be able to receive that as a personal budget.**

At the same time as the Individual Budget Pilot Programme, In Control has been working with the majority of English councils supporting them to pilot and implement a system of self-directed support.

It has been apparent from all of these initiatives, and from experience of similar initiatives abroad<sup>1</sup>, that the support to individuals in taking control of their funding has an important part to play in the overall success of self-directed support initiatives. The support to help an individual decide what they want and need and how to accordingly spend their personal budget is known as support brokerage<sup>2</sup>. The process of a person developing a plan for the support they need to live their life the way they want and how they intend to spend their personal budget is known as support planning<sup>3</sup>.

Already, there are many misconceptions of what support brokerage, in particular, is. This paper seeks to clearly define the process and functions of support brokerage, describe emerging good practice in support planning and brokerage, and highlight ways to overcome potential barriers in a cost effective and relevant way. Locally, some councils have applied a narrower definition to brokerage, sometimes just covering the activity of arranging support. This paper takes a much broader definition than that.

1 Individualised Support and Funding: Building Blocks for Capacity and Inclusion Lord, J. and Hutchison, P. (2003) [www.individualisedfunding.ca](http://www.individualisedfunding.ca)

2 Self-Directed Support: The role of Support Brokerage within Individual Budgets. Jan 2007. CSIP [www.networks.csip.org.uk/personalisationbrokerageadviceandinformationsupport](http://www.networks.csip.org.uk/personalisationbrokerageadviceandinformationsupport)

3 Person Centred Practice for Professionals, Thompson, Kilbane and Sanderson. 2008. Open University Press

## 3 Policy Context

**Putting People First** sets a clear direction and statement of intent for self-directed support in England. This builds upon over two years of social care policy promoting choice and control including, *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*, the Green Paper, *Independence Well-being and Choice* and the White Paper, *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say*.

What is now commonly known as the personalisation agenda sets a vision where all people who receive social care supports should be in control of their own lives, at the centre of all planning, and controlling their funding in ways which they want.

The Individual Budgets Pilot Programme has now been completed and the learning from this (and from In Control) has helped shape the ideas and commitments in *Putting People First*.

The local authority circular published in January 2008, *Transforming Social Care*<sup>4</sup> sets out, in greater detail, how the whole sector will need to change to make sure this vision becomes a reality. In particular, it highlights the importance of brokerage and advocacy services if people are truly to be in control and at the centre of things. Additionally, Opportunity Age<sup>5</sup>, Sure Start to Later Life,<sup>6</sup> the Housing Strategy for an Ageing Population<sup>7</sup>, and the Independent Living Strategy<sup>8</sup> all make clear references to individualised or personal budgets and the personalisation agenda.

The Department of Health has introduced Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) to enable people to be more active partners in their health and social care rather than as passive recipients of what is provided.

4 LAC (DH) (2008) 1, Transforming Social Care; [www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/Socialcarereform/index.htm](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/Socialcarereform/index.htm)

5 Opportunity Age (our national strategy on ageing) DWP, 2005

6 Sure Start to Later Life (SEU, 2006)

7 Housing Strategy for an Ageing Population (DCLG, 2008)

8 Independent Living Strategy (ODI, 2008)

*A Stronger Local Voice* sets out the Government's plans to achieve these aims. As part of these plans, Adult Social Service Departments have a statutory duty to make arrangements for the establishment of Local Involvement Networks (LINKs). LINKs should bring together local people and organisations to provide flexible ways for communities to engage with health and social care organisations which will help shape services and priorities in ways that best suit the communities and the people in them. These organisations are bound to offer overlap and areas of mutual interest with brokerage.

*The Partnerships for Older People pilots (POPPS)* is a good example of a national government change programme that is likely to need the development of brokerage supports for its success.

*Link Age Plus* has eight councils which are piloting joined up models of information, advice, signposting, advocacy and streamlined access to a whole range of locally based services. The Department for Work and Pensions are funding and supporting these pilots.

*Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People* set out a commitment to pilot individual budgets. To complement this, it also promotes a strong role for User-led organisations; this has been consolidated in *Putting People First* and it is reasonable to deduce from these that local areas will need to work thoughtfully to ensure that User-led organisations are at the heart of brokerage initiatives. Support planning and brokerage is likely to be of benefit to anyone who receives social care funding, those people who privately pay for their own care, people who are looking for unpaid informal support as well as people who use other sources of funding to assist with leading their lives the way they want to. Whilst the language of brokerage may appear new, the functions of brokerage are not and many people will have been receiving this sort of support as part of their existing support arrangements.

## 4 Support brokerage

### A definition

Support brokerage, as a term, has been used in some social care services over the last twenty years or so. In the context of self-directed support, it has become fairly commonly used to describe a range of help for people with a personal budget. Is a definition important? Yes it is; people need to have a common understanding when language is used. As self-directed support is still in its infancy, an understanding of the assistance that people need is continuing to emerge. A definition of brokerage needs to be seen in this context.

### Features of brokerage

Support brokerage is best understood by a range of features<sup>9</sup>:

- a clear value base that promotes self-determination and social inclusion
- an aim to identify barriers to social inclusion and to put in place responses which tackle these barriers
- independent of making decisions about funding in the resource allocation process

- the person for whom brokerage is provided makes the decision (with assistance if necessary) about how resources are used
- provision of information about the range of brokerage options is a central part of enabling choices
- information is in the format suited to the person concerned.

### Functions of brokerage

Support brokerage has a number of functions which imply an array of activities or tasks. It is best seen and understood by this set of functions, rather than seeing brokerage encapsulated within a role of a support broker. Support brokerage needs to be understood as inherently community based. The key functions of brokerage include:

- to find out what is available
- to explore what is possible
- provide information (signposting)
- give technical advice
- encourage and develop informal supports
- coordinate supports and resources

<sup>9</sup> Self -Directed Support: The role of Support Brokerage within Individual Budgets. Jan 2007. CSIP [www.networks.csip.org.uk/personalisationbrokerageadviceandinformationsupport](http://www.networks.csip.org.uk/personalisationbrokerageadviceandinformationsupport)



- assist the person to manage their obligations and responsibilities in relation to their budget
- facilitation to enable things to happen
- help with support planning and person centred planning
- help the person speak up for themselves or where necessary to speak up on their behalf.

This is not an exhaustive list, but a start to scope out what brokerage is.

### Common activities which make up support brokerage

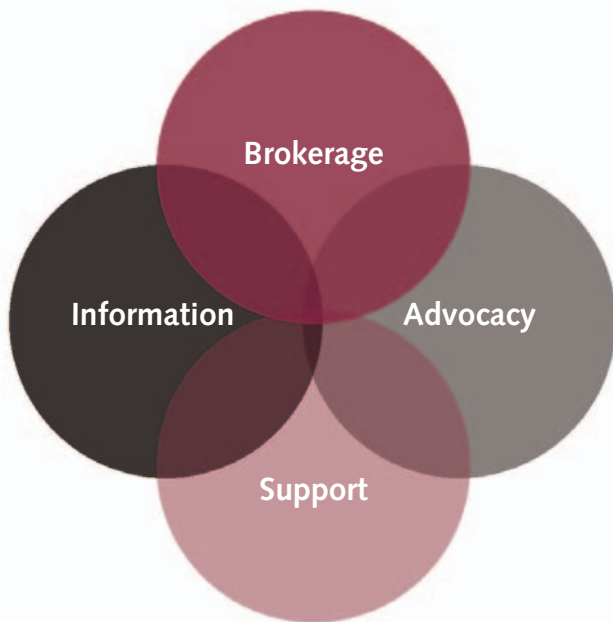
The following list is not exhaustive but is a starting point for the range of tasks that may be necessary for an individual to complete, when directing their own support.

- Complete an individual assessment and receive an indicative resource allocation
- Design a plan (a person centred plan) that represents the person and their chosen lifestyle which clearly identifies areas where support may be required
- Develop a support plan, exploring how the person wants to design their supports and setting out how their funding will be used
- Explore other potential funding and benefits – complete the necessary claim forms
- Arrange and/or co-ordinate any housing options
- Explore the potential within local community resources and assist in making connections
- Co-ordinate the support i.e. employing supporters, agreements with support providers etc
- Negotiate how the funding will be used with potential providers
- Help the person engage and work with the local council
- Complete monitoring systems that are in line with any decision making agreements
- Plan how the budget will be used
- Help to maintain records
- Assist with quality assurance processes that an individual wishes to use or a funder requires.

Many people will need no help at all and will be able to do what it takes to receive and use their personal budget. However, we do think that a significant number of people may need support and a core role for every local council will be to plan to support the development of brokerage in their area. Place-shaping activity – creating or supporting initiatives, infrastructure or opportunities for support planning and brokerage to flourish is a key interest for councils.

## Overlap with advocacy, information and support

When brokerage is seen as a range of tasks and activities, it is quite obvious that there is not a clear and succinct boundary. Indeed, there is significant overlap with advocacy, information and support. Whilst it is important to understand this overlap, it is particularly important to understand the succinct role each one has to play, and in particular, that of brokerage.



In their recent report<sup>10</sup>, Demos stated that early experience in both the In Control sites and Individual Budget Pilot sites shows that people generally need three kinds of support:

- Advice to shape their support plan, which they often get from peers, family and friends, but also sometimes from trusted professionals
- Personal support and services, which they often buy from the local market from

people they trust but who may have formal social work qualifications

- Specialist skills which people value because people have a particular condition or circumstance.

There is a danger in immediately translating this range of assistance and help into a specific role or job. The independent living movement has a rich history of disabled people doing much or all of this for themselves or with the assistance of peers and User-led organisations such as Centres for Independent Living. Whilst this support has been strongly valued by those receiving it, it has not always been successful at extending to parts of the population which are traditionally seen as 'hard to reach', including older people, people with mental health support needs and disabled people from some BME communities. Focus needs to be given to this issue.

The core principles of self-directed support would suggest that the development of any support brokerage should be led and directed by older or disabled people themselves.

Although this paper explores brokerage functions within the context of self-directed support, it is vital that our understanding of brokerage as an element of part of the necessary infrastructural support is developed; we do not see the range of brokerage functions as only required in an individual funding model of social care. The range of supports under the term brokerage would benefit many citizens who are not connected to support services at all i.e. people who privately fund their own support, people with little or no engagement of formal services who do not meet eligibility criteria.

<sup>10</sup> Making it Personal. Leadbeater, Bartlett and Gallagher 2008. Demos. [www.demos.co.uk](http://www.demos.co.uk)

## 5 Emerging practice around support planning and brokerage

**Developments are at a very early stage in England. Whilst a paper such as this is important and timely, it is important that it is not seen as a blueprint which starts to dictate what should be developed. Practice is emerging and developing constantly. History has consistently shown that good practice at one time can quickly become passé and a block to further development in the future.**

Having said that, there are encouraging signs of good practice in relation to many of the functions of brokerage and the purpose of this paper is to highlight these to enable every area to learn and reflect on what developments may be appropriate for each locality – recognising that one size will certainly not fit all. Emerging examples of good practice are themed around some of the brokerage functions.

### Advice, Information and Guidance (including signposting)

*'This is simply giving someone the facts they need in order to make their own decisions.'*<sup>11</sup>

Every person is different; the best examples of brokerage recognise this and tailor information to each specific person's requirements.

This not only includes producing generally accessible information and in a variety of local languages, but also includes tailoring the presentation of it to very specific circumstances. Moveable Feast Arts has used drama and performing arts to help people with significant cognitive impairments understand what personal budgets are.

The typical types of information which people have found helpful are:

- The process of self-directed support
- The stages of personal budgets, including the process an individual local council uses
- Making best use of your budget – not just buying paid support
- An understanding of social care
- Direct payments information
- Welfare rights information
- Appeals process information
- What funding is possible and available
- Information about local services
- Stories of how other people have designed and developed their support.

<sup>11</sup> Self-Directed Support: The role of Support Brokerage within Individual Budgets. Jan 2007. CSIP [www.networks.csip.org.uk/personalisationbrokerageadviceandinformationsupport](http://www.networks.csip.org.uk/personalisationbrokerageadviceandinformationsupport)

CSCI<sup>12</sup> highlights one of the most significant barriers to information giving as poorly presented and difficult to understand information for an individual. In particular, they draw attention to not just making sure that information is accurate and correct but to effective person centred explanations which (for some people) will be necessary alongside printed information. Many people reported that person to person explanations were the most helpful. This method notably gives people the chance to digest the information and come back to ask further questions or seek clarification. CSCI argue that although information and advice giving is not the sole preserve of brokerage it is in essence a crucial function in the concept of support brokerage.

*'People who become brokers (or offer brokerage support) will need to become expert information gatherers and interpreters'*<sup>13</sup>

In many of the areas that have adopted self-directed support, a key element of their learning has been the importance of peer support in helping people to understand the information and advice given. The two elements of both giving accurate information and helping the person to interpret this are key. Peer support does not exist in isolation and often 'specialist information givers' (i.e. those who have had a professional role connected to the system of social care) have a complementary and important role to play too – sometimes, these can be one and the same people.

Much of the focus of advice and information, in essence, relates to navigating the system. Having a network of voluntary organisations, often with long histories of providing information and advice, makes a big difference. Many of the voluntary organisations offering advice and information are well connected to other agencies and working hard at signposting people to the relevant organisation that may be best placed to offer people specific advice or information. A good example of this in the research for this paper included a family being encouraged to contact ACAS (a public service specialising in employment advice) for support and guidance around employing their own support team.

Centres for Independent Living are a good example of organisations that provide information as well as signposting people to get very specific information. In particular, Centres for Independent Living are often well placed in knowing local community resources and ensuring that information is available in a range of local community places and is relevant to members of that local community. Other examples of existing information and advice services include local Age Concern organisations and Relatives and Residents Association, to name a few. Supporting these various services to link up and share a common set of principles around people being in control of their lives is a key challenge in most areas.

12 Support Brokerage A Discussion Paper. CSCI. March 2006. [www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk)

13 Self-Directed Support: The role of Support Brokerage within Individual Budgets. Jan 2007. CSIP. [www.networks.csip.org.uk/personalisationbrokerageadviceandinformationsupport](http://www.networks.csip.org.uk/personalisationbrokerageadviceandinformationsupport)

## Facilitation and enablement

For brokerage to be effective, it is important that it constantly promotes the control by an individual of their own life and that all interventions should seek to encourage and give people the opportunity to learn how to do things for themselves. This function of facilitation is not simply related to the process of facilitation, as it is commonly used, but is about a style that promotes an outcome of each person having the control they want over how they engage with their supports.

As people receiving personal budgets explore and become familiar with self-directed support, the ability to have access to support that is facilitative in style has been highly valued by early personal budget recipients. Sometimes this is seen as a guide or 'navigator' – giving the help to a person so they can do much for themselves as they want to, and sometimes setting things up for a person to continue.

*"[a facilitator] ... one who contributes structure and process to interactions so groups are able to function effectively and make high-quality decisions. A helper and enabler whose goal is to support others as they achieve exceptional performance"*<sup>14</sup>

Examples of facilitative support that individuals and families have received include:

- developing a circle of support network

- working through the various stages of councils' self-directed support processes
- exploration of persons, families, circles of supports ideas
- the development of an Individual Trust
- facilitate meetings both at an individual level or a network or interest group

## Researching what is available

An important feature that runs internationally<sup>15</sup> within the varying brokerage models is the intentional connection to community resources. The function of knowing what is available and how to access local resources is a key component of brokerage. In some areas (Barnsley, Lancashire, Barking and Dagenham) they are actively supporting community networks, i.e. local carers' network, direct payment network, which are proving to be useful support mechanisms for people and their families, particularly in building self reliance.

In Barnsley, a comprehensive community mapping exercise within each ward of a borough was used to build a comprehensive data base of local resources and networks. This proved to be both beneficial in supporting people to utilise these resources as part of their support mechanism, but also as a useful resource for all citizens of that particular community.

<sup>14</sup> Ingrid Bens, *Facilitating With Ease!*, Jossey-Bass, 2000

<sup>15</sup> Transformation of Developmental Services: The possibilities for Citizenship, Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario. Jan 2007 [www.individualizedfunding.ca/#Signature%20Paper](http://www.individualizedfunding.ca/#Signature%20Paper)

Some of the practical activities that seemed to make a difference included:

- Community mapping and scoping exercises
- Identifying gaps within local community resources
- Intentionally supporting the development of community facilities i.e. providing venue space for community groups
- Linking local community support agencies together and sharing learning around brokerage to develop a range of supports for people to use.

Step by Step, an independent brokerage agency based in Rochdale, is developing a 'living network' – a computer based resource that is run by people who are self directing their support and who want to share their experiences, knowledge and advice and offer practical support to other people who are exploring self-directed support. The longer term aim of the living network is to also include a feedback directory of both brokerage supports and service supports. The network is currently supported by the mother of a man who has developed a wealth of experience in relation to directing and organising support with and alongside her son.

Help and Care in Bournemouth are scoping their local community, identifying the gaps in provision and then supporting the development of local community based initiatives as opposed to providing this within the remit of formal social care provision, e.g. 'carers sitting service'.

Part of the role of brokers is to find and develop mainstream services and community opportunities that people require to achieve their plans.<sup>16</sup>

### Technical Advice

The term 'technical advice' can be misleading as it does not necessarily mean a professional with expertise. Many people, without a formal role within the system have a wealth of knowledge from their own experience or self learning to offer others. Often, the best technical knowledge can come from professionals but outside of formal health and social care services (for instance, an electronics engineer who could give advice about adaptive technology for the home). Such a broad range of technical advice is needed, and in many instances this can be from a person or family's experience of finding solutions. This may include information about:

- equipment
- housing options
- legal implications
- financial accounts and managing budgets
- recruitment and selection
- organising health care
- funding streams and applications for funding from government and non-government sources.

<sup>16</sup> Independent Support Brokers: the Why, What and How. Dowson, S. 2007. NDT

These forms of technical advice can be found within local communities in mainstream provision i.e. mortgage advice, legal services, Citizens Advice Bureaux and in organisations that have provided technical assistance historically, i.e. advocacy organisations.

## Planning – developing support plans

A support plan is the means by which necessary information is presented to a local council in order to agree to release funds as a personal budget. It is a way of highlighting the lifestyle choices of individuals, rooted firmly in what works for them as an individual, and demonstrates in practical terms how they will spend their budget in order to achieve their aims. In this way, the support plan reflects the decisions made by the individual, supported by those whom they have chosen to assist them in this planning, if anyone.

The Individual Budget Pilot sites and In Control sites have invested significantly in support planning as a key process within self-directed support. Practice has changed significantly from the very early stages and there are many positive stories to be told by people who have directed their own supports. The task of developing a support plan can and does in many areas, serve two key purposes:

- A person centred and directed process that explores what's important to the person, explores the possibilities within their life and how support can be organised and created to enable them to live their chosen lifestyle
- providing a proposal of how the person is choosing to spend their personal budget in meeting their support needs and the outcomes they hope to gain from using their budget in this way.

Practice varies across England in support planning. At this stage of development, this is to be welcomed. Most practice has much in common; people are adapting and experimenting with materials and processes to find what works best at a local level. Good practice includes:

- Exploring life from the person's perspective as far as is possible
- Using person centred thinking or planning tools
- A focus on what's important to the person and how best to support the person
- Designing support to suit the person's lifestyle choices and which supports the person wants in relation to their needs or desired outcomes
- Assisting people in the design of their support and exploring costs for their potential support, which may also include creative budget planning and prioritising use of the budget
- Where capacity to consent is questioned, exploring and clarifying decision making processes within a person's life, clearly indicating decisions that the person makes and decisions others make and how best to support the person to be involved

- Undertake forward planning (e.g. advanced directives or living wills) that record how someone wants to be supported if they become very unwell or are deemed to lose capacity
- Identifying clear outcomes and providing direction for the individual, family and support staff/providers.

Many areas are using the 'seven steps'<sup>17</sup> as their criteria for signing off a support plan. This is a useful start and is to be encouraged. In addition to this, there is an emerging expectation that support plans should be outcome focused and, in particular, pay attention to outcomes such as those in the self assessment questionnaire or, in children's services, by using those in Every Child Matters. East Lancashire encourages support plans to reference the outcomes and domains in the self assessment questionnaire if an individual has identified them as areas where they need support (as well as any other outcomes the individual considers to be personally important). Personal outcomes are the things that a person wants to achieve or change in their life, as a direct result of being able to get the support that they need. These may be quite different for different people<sup>18</sup>.

In some areas, particularly in services supporting people who have a learning disability, some plans include a lot of person centred information which may relate more to person centred planning than support

planning. Person centred planning should not be confused with support planning. It is a separate process (but with many links and some cross over), and is perhaps best viewed as a process which belongs solely to the person whereas support planning is the compact a person makes with the state in relation to how their personal budget is spent (amongst other things). Like person centred planning, support planning is not a one off activity, and it will be important that people are supported to continue to update and adapt their support plan over time.

Early experience would suggest that there is no obvious correlation with the job title/role of who facilitates the process (i.e. the individual working through their support plan alongside family and friends or using an external facilitator supporting people to develop a support plan) and the quality and effectiveness of the plan. Role or title had no part to play; however, the person's skills in planning and facilitation, attitude, relationship with the person and a person centred approach did have a strong correlation. The values of the person and the level of creativity in approaching options to spend people's personal budget also appear to be key factors.

For people where capacity to consent is questioned, ensuring that support planning focuses on decision making is very important. Good support planning includes exploring decision making processes and clarifies the

17 What needs to be in a support plan? [www.supportplanning.org](http://www.supportplanning.org)

18 Resource Allocation Tool, CSIP 2008



decision making process in the individual's life and, where appropriate, sets supported decision making principles and agreements. In line with the Mental Capacity Act (2006) Code of Practice, good practice in supported decision making can often be key to establishing a person's capacity to consent. Already, there are some initial examples within support planning of following the Best Interest Checklist<sup>19</sup> with and alongside people who have been assessed as lacking capacity to make a specific decision at a particular time.

None of this should be seen as a one off; there is a need to continually address this, particularly when supporting someone with fluctuating or rapidly changing conditions that impact on their capacity for consent (e.g. some dementias but also other situations where people's mental health can change quickly and unpredictably). It is important to ensure informed and ongoing consent and to continually review and refine someone's support plan to ensure it meets their own priorities, needs and goals.

Support planning is already being adapted to consider risk, where this a particular issue. This has either included explicit sections to help people consider risk and how the person is managing risk themselves. This may include support around a person's mental health. In Norfolk, an additional document relating specifically to what could go wrong and how a person may manage that is an integral part of the planning process.

The website [www.supportplanning.org](http://www.supportplanning.org) has many examples and further advice about support planning.

## Coordinating supports and resources

For some people, getting assistance with the actual implementation of their personal budget is a necessity, particularly when they have opted to take it as a direct payment. This practical assistance with managing a personal budget often relates to longer terms supports, and such help includes:

- Offering a payroll service and accountancy service
- Holding people's personal budgets and providing an accountancy service
- Assistance with contracts in relation to the individual organising their support
- Developing quality assurance processes that support the continuing quality of the support agreed by the person (alongside any existing monitoring and regulatory frameworks)
- Offering support to the person's chosen provider in relation to developing creative and person centred services
- Assistance with managing any Personal Assistants
- Encouraging the development of new provider services in relation to the outcomes people are looking for

<sup>19</sup> [www.dca.gov.uk/menincap/mca-act-easyread.pdf](http://www.dca.gov.uk/menincap/mca-act-easyread.pdf)

## Negotiation and mediation

As people become more in control of their funding, support and lives, some people will value support when negotiating contracts with providers or negotiating funding with commissioners, amongst other things. Clearly, assisting with negotiation, and at times mediation, can be helpful when the person is exploring the procurement of services and also in a wider community inclusion context. Many people in receipt of personal budgets (and those who pay for care and support themselves) are particularly worried about this and are anticipating needing help in this area.

There are plenty of situations when negotiation and mediation may be helpful, both in the context of self-directed support and on a wider basis. When viewpoints vary and there are conflicting ideas, people may welcome support in dealing with conflict with:

- the council around personal budgets, or other funders (ie. around the use of the person's budget, signing off a support plan)
- providers – in negotiating contracts and prices
- family
- professionals.

This is one area, where there could be considerable overlap with advocates, who often can sit alongside the person and advocate with and on their behalf.

Historically, despite much progress and policy, there is still a power imbalance between the state and people who use social care services. Support in this function, is one way to help further redress the balance.

In a wider context, mediation and negotiation may also come into play within the person's local community. There will be times when those providing support in support planning and brokerage may be required to mediate and negotiate with community facilities and providers, particularly in relation to access, i.e. gaining access to community supports such as leisure services and general community resources. An example of this may include supporting a person to challenge their local leisure service under the Disability Equality Duty<sup>20</sup> to provide equal access for that person to use the facility.

## Advocacy

In a recent paper written by the Disability Rights Commission<sup>21</sup>, a clear definition of advocacy is provided:

*“Advocacy can be defined as an individual being supported to express views, communicate choices and receive services or participation as a result. It promotes social inclusion and equality”.*

<sup>20</sup> [www.dotheduty.org](http://www.dotheduty.org)

<sup>21</sup> [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

In a similar way to brokerage not always being carried out by people with the title of brokers, the task of advocating is not always carried out by an advocate. Using the DRC's definition, it would be hard to argue that advocacy does not fall within a function of brokerage. However, brokerage does not replace advocacy and there is still a clear need for distinct and thriving advocacy services at a local level. In nearly every brokerage situation we have seen there has been an element of advocacy within it. However, there is an important distinction between the role of an advocate and broker – most often a broker will be involved in the implementation of the outcome of the advocacy in some way, whilst the advocate may not.

OPAAL (the Older People's Advocacy Alliance) recently commissioned a mapping exercise of who is providing what kind of advocacy (as distinct from information and advice) and where for older people. Such activity is important both in identifying gaps and in pinpointing good practice are activities to build on.

## 6 Approaches to Brokerage

Although, internationally, there are a number of different models of brokerage, within England there is an emergence of a framework of five different types of brokerage (from the perspective of who does it) – each with its own set of complexities and questions. The following five approaches to brokerage provide an overview of what is possible and a framework to develop a range of approaches locally which result in choice for people and build on local strengths and circumstances. Importantly the following approaches are not presented as distinct and separate entities, but more as range of interlinking mixed approaches in response to a person's requests for support.

### Approaches to brokerage



Already, there are developments around both paid independent brokerage and existing support providers establishing brokerage services. Whilst these are to be welcomed, it is important that we do not, in effect, just replace a paid system of care management with a paid system of brokerage. There is an important role for User-led organisations, with Centres for Independent Living providing good examples from their direct payment support schemes, and communities groups and networks and people doing it for themselves – these will need intentional support to develop fully as viable options.

This paper explores each approach and analyses them with the following questions:

What does this approach involve?

- What it can look like in reality – a real example?
- What are the pros and cons of such an approach?
- What support is needed for this approach to emerge locally?

## Individual and family

Some or all of the brokerage functions are carried out by the individual and maybe their family and friends. The individual can work through the various stages of the self-directed support system within their area with little or no help. This might involve designing their support, costing it according to their resource allocation or indicative amount and implementing their ideas. If this approach is to work, councils need to make sure that their systems and processes are easy to understand and use, and they are flexible in the way that people carry them out.

This approach assumes that the person (and maybe their family) work through the stages, using the guidance (that could be as simple as a guidebook, or a series of pro-forma's) to help guide people through the process.

There are plenty of good examples of families working through the process independently<sup>22</sup>, once the stages are both clear and simple to use. There are many examples of people and families working through the person centred planning tools, specifically relating to people with learning disabilities and their families without the use of an external professional or facilitator. There are plenty of examples, around the country, of people and families reading example plans, designing their own plan, based on their family members' wishes, then submitting this for approval to the local council. Increasingly, there are examples of older people and their families working in a similar way.

Partners in Policymaking<sup>23</sup> has had considerable success in training, developing and supporting disabled people and family carers to have the confidence to take on many of the functions of brokerage. Indeed, many of the early examples of self-directed support in England came directly from families involved in this programme. Subsequently, some Partners in Policymaking graduates (through Paradigm's Brokers for Change<sup>24</sup> programme) are setting up local brokerage services.

This whole approach aims to ensure that both control and autonomy of the individual is paramount in doing it yourself, and that for many people the self-reliance (and thus reducing reliance on professionals/services) which it promotes is a good outcome, in itself. In Control has described a number of ways that people and their families are able to complete the work necessary, without the assistance of a professional and/or service. These include the following:

- Mentoring from other people and families who have completed the process
- Hearing about and learning from other people's experiences, this may include example documentation devised by other families
- Guides and Toolkits – pro-formas that will guide people through the process and ensure they complete the necessary work as they go
- Training – specific training designed to teach individuals and families the necessary skills to navigate their way through the system.

<sup>22</sup> [www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)

<sup>23</sup> [www.partnersinpolicymaking.co.uk](http://www.partnersinpolicymaking.co.uk)

<sup>24</sup> [www.paradigm-uk.org](http://www.paradigm-uk.org)

Whilst there are a number of examples of this approach emerging across England to date, many of these examples include some degree of a facilitative or supportive role from an external representative. The role primarily acts as a guide or facilitator to the person and their family and offers a 'sign posting' level of support, should the individual or family experience difficulties with this process. Peer support is a very useful model here. In Bath, a clear support planning template has been designed which offers people a series of questions to think about and answer. The template has supported some older people and their families designing their own plan and then submitting it for approval. The outcomes expected within the support plan are clear, unambiguous and easy to follow, ensuring that people themselves can submit a support plan that falls within the criteria for 'sign off' within that particular council.

The development of circles of support has led to many people and their families adopting this approach with the added protection of a close group of people whose support and ideas can assist the person in working through the stages together.

*'A circle of support is a group of people who meet together on a regular basis to help somebody accomplish their personal goals in life. The circle acts as a community around that person (the 'focus person') who, for one reason or another, is unable to achieve what they want in life on their own and decides to ask others for help.'*<sup>25</sup>

### Examples of this approach

Step by Step are beginning to offer facilitation to people in developing both Circles of Support and working towards networks of Enduring Circles of Support.

*"Many people who have lived through the era of service led decision-taking do not yet know they are allowed to plan with their own networks – and nor do a number of key staff who can block them! We can support the start up of people's own Circle meetings, empower them with information, stand alongside them through initial blockages, assist them to navigate good plans through the system and then step back, knowing that they can more powerfully self direct"*

Pippa Harris, Chief Executive.

This facilitation role explicitly focuses on developing a support group around the person and their family, to work together (sometimes with the support of the facilitator) through the stages of self-directed support. Many people have a Circle of Support without consciously knowing it. For others who are more isolated, Step By Step will be striving to assist them to grow their own Circle.

In Barnsley, there are examples of families leading and offering reciprocal support in the context of support groups, ie. sharing ideas, experiences and drafts of support plans etc.

25 [www.circlesnetwork.org.uk](http://www.circlesnetwork.org.uk)

In West Sussex, there are good examples of older people working through the process with their relatives drawing on technical advice if and when needed.

In Control has consciously supported disabled people and families to take on brokerage functions themselves. Many of the early stories about self-directed support came from this approach. Caroline Tomlinson, and her son Joe's story, offer a great illustration of this.<sup>26</sup>

Appendix 1 has detailed examples of this approach

### Advantages

- People develop independence of the social care system
- It builds on people's strengths and gifts
- It can offer people the greatest degree of control
- People are highly motivated to ensure their desired outcomes are met
- People who do not need any help can just get on with it
- It builds people's self reliance
- Can make good creative use of a person's informal networks and help to strengthen existing and build new relationships
- Not resource intensive in the long run

- The pace of work can be determined by the individual
- People are more likely to keep things simple – doing just what they need to do
- People know their own needs well – this should speed the process up
- Some older people, using circles of support, have found that their apparently shrinking natural circles are not so limited as they first thought (e.g. by using relationship maps), and they consequently feel less isolated than they did before
- A mix of family, friends, neighbours and natural supports and paid support can be combined and a balance achieved of what's important to the person and what others commonly agree as important for the person in relation to their health and safety

### Things to consider

- There needs to be up-front investment to provide training and learning opportunities for many people to do this
- This approach relies heavily on the local infrastructure in place within an area, to support and direct people and the families through the stages i.e. the availability of local information and advice services
- The local infrastructure will need to be developed – this will need up-front and ongoing investment

<sup>26</sup> [www.in-control.org.uk/stories/index.php?storyid=5](http://www.in-control.org.uk/stories/index.php?storyid=5)

- The assumption that people and their families want to carry out the level of work required is an assumption and can not be taken as an expectation. Some people who are in receipt of social care expect a degree and level of 'managed care'
- Local information and relevant guidance is crucial to ensure an individual and family is equipped to do this
- A person may find it difficult to challenge ideas of their family, without external support
- People's awareness of what is possible may be limited by what they have previously experienced
- Some people will be too busy to take this role on
- This approach assumes that the person and their family will be aiming for the same lifestyle/supports and the level of conflict will be minimal
- Provide assistance and support to develop circles of support
- Develop, simple, easy to use processes and systems that do not deter people from trying things themselves
- Develop a range of guides, tools and pro-formas that help people follow a process through
- Capture the learning from people doing it themselves and disseminate these stories and information to others
- Ensure that there is an array of effective advocacy services in their area
- Clear partnerships and joint working arrangements (including training and practice development) with other statutory agencies (e.g. NHS organisations) and the private and voluntary sector

### What support is needed for this approach to develop?

Councils will need to invest in their self-directed support infrastructure such as:

- Training for individuals and families
- Fund and support advice and information services
- Stimulate, encourage and fund User-led organisations and peer support initiatives

### Community

People may seek support for some (or possibly all) of the brokerage functions from existing networks or community groups of which they are part or develop a trusting relationship with.

In many areas there are already a variety of community resources including both formal and informal networks of supports. Examples include community area forums, neighbourhood support networks, faith groups and local interest groups such as book groups, neighbourhood watch etc. In the



discussion paper, Community Connecting<sup>27</sup>, a variety of approaches to building inclusive communities and tackling social exclusion is discussed – all of which include a range of methods to enable inclusion. The Asset Based Community Development approach<sup>28</sup> starts off with a clear premise that communities are resourceful, full of opportunities and strengths which just need to be harnessed. It is thus important to understand the potential of local communities, including the range of neighborhood activities and networks in a wider context than that of social care. Government policy<sup>29</sup> is committed to developing and supporting inclusive communities through a variety of central and local government initiatives.

*“The Government’s vision for active communities is of strong, active and empowered communities – increasingly capable of doing things for themselves, defining the problems they face and then tackling them together. It is a vision in which everyone – no matter their age, race or social background – has a sense of belonging and a stake in society.”<sup>30</sup>*

The Government’s Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy<sup>31</sup> promotes the use of Local Strategic Partnerships designed to bring together the different parts of the public,

private, community and voluntary sectors encouraging different initiatives and services to support each other. In this context, the opportunity to gain both support and potential funding to develop and initiate supportive networks is ripe. Examples of how this approach can support individuals is explored later; however, there are examples of local networks and neighbourhood supports, supporting people in the context of Self-directed support, particularly in relation to people who may be within socially excluded groups such as people from ethnic minorities.

As the personalisation of funding develops and the flexibility to explore how people use their personal budget allocation increases, there are emerging examples of people drawing on their chosen community networks for support, as opposed to formal statutory agencies. In Bath, an older person drew on support from her local priest to help explore how best to spend her personal budget in line with her chosen lifestyle. In Norfolk, a local Polish man used his local Polish speaking informal network to explore his lifestyle and how best to use his personal budget.

Timebanks<sup>32</sup> also offer many opportunities for people to receive support and advice in exchange for their time and contribution. Such initiatives should be welcomed and built upon.

27 Community Connecting Kennedy, Poll and Sanderson 2004. [www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)

28 [www.sesp.northwestern.edu/abcd/](http://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/abcd/)

29 [www.dca.gov.uk/dept/strategy/2005vstrat.pdf](http://www.dca.gov.uk/dept/strategy/2005vstrat.pdf)

30 [www.gos.gov.uk/gonw/PeopleSustainableCommunities/Thirdsector](http://www.gos.gov.uk/gonw/PeopleSustainableCommunities/Thirdsector)

31 [www.neighbourhood.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk)

32 [www.timebanks.co.uk](http://www.timebanks.co.uk)

## Local Area Co-ordination

*“A specialist worker dedicated to working with a small number of families using services in one area [to] help people and their families through the current maze of systems.”<sup>33</sup>*

Local Area Coordination originated in Western Australia as a role that sits within the community, outside of traditional services. It has a strong community-development focus and offers assistance to people living within a particular area to help them get the necessary supports to live their chosen lifestyle. The role of a Local Area Coordinator has been applied in some areas in Scotland since 2002, predominately supporting people with learning disabilities and their families. Mid Lothian has applied it to other people, such as older people and those with mental health support needs.

The main features associated with Local Area Coordination, were identified<sup>34</sup> as:

- An empowering value base
- Capacity to develop flexible and respectful personal relationships
- The localized nature, accessibility and relevance of the service
- The ‘hands-on’ practical approach.

Local Area Coordination offers a supportive role to help people achieve changes in their

life using person centred approaches, supporting people to identify strategies for support and often negotiating with services where needed. The role has proved to be successful in its implementation within Scotland and provides good examples of access to small amounts of enabling or facilitative support can make a real difference. Examples from Scotland include:

- helping several people secure their own tenancies
- arranging home care
- supporting people to apply for benefits and other entitlements, e.g. a bus pass
- supporting a family experiencing serious problems with their child’s school
- helping one young man transfer from school to college
- persistently pursuing an Occupational Therapist to assess for and arrange a much needed extension to a family home
- when one man moved house, introducing him to the neighbours and postman.

In Scotland most of the early examples of the introduction of LACs have been funded by the local council, with some examples of Local Area Coordinators being based within local voluntary organisations.

33 Scottish Executive (2000a) *The same as you?: A review of services for people with learning disabilities*, Edinburgh: The Stationery Office.

34 Bartnik, E (2003) *Review of the Local Area Coordination Program Western Australia*. [www.dsc.wa.gov.au/cproot/847/2/final\\_report\\_LAC\\_review1.pdf](http://www.dsc.wa.gov.au/cproot/847/2/final_report_LAC_review1.pdf)

However they are predominantly based in mainstream community settings, not within formal social care teams.

Local Area Coordination is just one illustration of a community approach to brokerage. As our examples show, there are many others.

## Examples

### Barnsley

In Barnsley, as a result of a planned initiative to develop a range of independent support brokerage options, they engaged in a comprehensive process of community mapping which unearthed a wealth of information of local opportunities, initiatives and community resources. They purposefully worked at comprehensive community mapping exercises of local wards within the borough. This involved the research of local community resources both formal and informal and then compiling this information for local people. This has proved to be hugely valued. In developing an understanding of local community resources, organisations such as the local credit unions are being explored in relation to possible resources for people to manage their personal budget. This pragmatic approach has led to many people directing their own support.

### Lancashire

Lancashire Support Services (LSS), a User-led organisation, has supported a network of local disabled people who have all had experience of using either direct payments or personal budgets. LSS has offered training and support to the volunteers and provides expenses. Volunteers (peer advisors) are matched to new people who are exploring the ideas around self-directed support.

Peer advisors offer the unique experience of living the reality of managing a budget and designing their own support, which often provides a trusted perspective for the new recipients. Examples of how this approach has benefited people include matching a peer advisor, who is visually impaired, with a person who is also visually impaired – the peer advisor's unique experience and interpretation of the process helped the man to explore and relate his own experiences so far and develop a creative approach to planning the support for his own life.

A peer advisor who is well connected to the local Asian Forum within the community used his own connections and trusted status within the community to build further connections and offer awareness of self-directed support to over 50 Asian carers.

## Advantages

- This approach ensures that people, where possible, can use their own local networks of support to explore self-directed support.
- Local community capacity and understanding is developed
- It harnesses and makes explicit the capacity and opportunities within local communities
- Local people are more likely to be involved in the lives of people
- Where people have used local support networks this has often led to a greater level of social activities (ie. people using local religious networks found many more social activities than the person had originally thought), leading to a greater level of activity generally in the persons life
- The capacity of communities is further developed with local community expertise and resources being acknowledged
- Councils get a much better understanding of community groups and resources and get opportunities to forge better links with local and informal community groups, and thus better understand them

## Things to consider

- This approach relies on two key elements. One key element is that the person is connected to local neighbourhood networks and is starting to identify them in relation to

using them for support. The second is that local networks are known and people can be introduced to these networks as another opportunity for support.

- A systematic approach to community mapping is necessary – this is not a resource free initiative
- Community groups and individuals can be mistrustful of councils and perceive this as a way of shunting responsibility – excellent communication and relationship building is necessary for this approach to work

## What support is needed for this approach to develop?

- A good local understanding of community resources and networks; in particular knowledge of the key individuals within groups and networks is important.
- Many (if not all) of these networks need support and advice to develop and build the knowledge and confidence to support individuals to want to use them.
- A commitment to and investment in community development is necessary, financial and human resources are needed for this to work.
- A focus on facilitation or mentoring support is essential to ensure that natural community connections are supported, as opposed to a professional attempting to run the networks or take over.

## User-led organisations

User-led organisations are those where the people whom the organisation represents or provides a service to, have 75% of voting membership on the Management Committee or Board, and where there is clear accountability to members and/or service users. For many years, User-led organisations (often Centres for Independent Living) in some parts of the country have been the central organisation for promoting and supporting direct payments, and disabled people being in control of their life. Some User-led organisations have a rich history of providing many of the brokerage functions. There should be no ambiguity that such organisations can offer brokerage support and their strength is that they are local organisations controlled and developed by disabled people themselves (with their rich experiences) and they often have a wider remit within their community, with other excellent local connections. To date, typically, Centres for Independent Living have supported independent living by providing support to make choices and have control through:

- support to help people to self-assess their needs
- support to use direct payments
- advocacy and support for self-advocacy
- peer support
- advice and information.

*'Centres for Independent Living are grassroots organisations run and controlled by disabled people.'*<sup>35</sup>

Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People clearly outlines the case and expectation of the development of User-led organisations which offer support and advice to people and their families. The expectations around Centres for Independent Living include the delivery of some or all of the following:

- Advice and information
- Advocacy and peer support
- Assistance with recruiting and employing Personal Assistants (PAs)
- A payroll service
- A register of Personal Assistants
- Training of Personal Assistants and being an employer

Centres for Independent Living may also:

- run projects encouraging take up of direct payments amongst marginalized groups
- provide disability equality training
- carry out consumer audits of services.

*"By 2010, each locality (defined as that area covered by a Council with social services responsibilities) should have a user-led organisation modeled on existing CILs."*<sup>36</sup>

35 [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/work\\_areas/disability/](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/work_areas/disability/)

36 [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/work\\_areas/disability/](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/work_areas/disability/)

The exact nature of the services provided and their relationship with statutory agencies vary according to local circumstances. However, Centres for Independent Living are well placed to provide many of the brokerage functions, particularly in relation to advice, information and guidance, advocacy support and practical assistance in managing personal budgets. Peer support is one element of support offered via many Centres for Independent Living and other User-led organisations.

Peer support can be defined as: a person sharing their knowledge and understanding with a person who has experienced similar experiences.

Many Centres for Independent Living have a wealth of networks with similar organisations and can act as a facilitator for people to connect to these organisations – often working as a network of networks. Centres for Independent Living are community based organisations and are well placed to provide brokerage support to all people.

NCIL and the Association of Directors of Social Services<sup>37</sup> have drawn up a protocol which says that “The ADSS and NCIL are committed to promoting independent living” and that “where possible and practicable, support services should be provided by local organisations of disabled people”.

The protocol also urges councils to:

- work with [user-led] organisations to develop capacity, e.g. by facilitating, pump-priming or partnership working arrangements
- ensure that local contracting procedures do not discriminate unfairly against small/new/user-led organisations
- ensure that Best Value reviews take account of the added value often contributed by organisations of disabled people, particularly as regards advocacy and peer support
- ensure that service specifications for contracts/service level agreements embody the ethos of independent living
- consider using a restricted/selective tender list, to target organisations controlled by disabled people
- consider working with a local organisation of disabled people as a preferred provider, provided that they are properly representative of all eligible user/carer groups
- consider effective interim arrangements where a user-led support service does not yet exist: this could include seconding a member of staff on a short-term basis or contracting with a support scheme in a neighbouring council.

Such support for User-led organisations will have an important role to play in fulfilling the commitment for there to be a User-led organisation in every locality by 2010.

37 Association of Directors of Social Services/National Centre for Independent Living Joint Statement, 2006

The role, function and size of User-led organisations varies across the country. In addition to Centres for Independent Living, there are good examples in the black and ethnic minority community of organisations run by people from that specific community; many local older people's organisations have promise to develop into what they would call a peer led organisation. All such groups need to be supported and encouraged to ensure a full range of support for everyone who wants it.

The Department of Health is providing £750,000 in grants to 12 organisations across England over the next year to become user-led Action and Learning Sites.

Some of the User-led organisations will use the grant to improve their business and organisational skills. It will also help them make links with – and get support from – local authorities and PCTs and other sources so they can act as a resource in the local area.

Other User-led organisations that are advanced and well established will act as mentors to foster the development of organisations in areas where they currently don't exist. They will help them with set up issues like registering as a business or charity, developing contracts and finding appropriate venues to base their organisation. For more information see [www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/Socialcarereform/Userledorganisations/DH\\_083152](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/Socialcarereform/Userledorganisations/DH_083152)

## Examples

Derbyshire CIL employs disabled people as Community Development Workers. They aim to work with disabled people to give them the knowledge and confidence to be able to live and work in the community as they choose. A very important aspect of their community work relies on the knowledge and experience of disabled people who have already reached this point in their lives. By using their direct experience and knowledge, community work can be a powerful force. The Community Development Workers go out to disabled people's homes and assist with things like housing, benefits, training and education, employment, direct payments and support services. They have access to a comprehensive information database run by DCIL.

Hammersmith and Fulham Action on Disability (HAFAD) provides a range of services for young disabled people. These include holiday activities, work experience and volunteering, and enabling young disabled people to access mainstream youth provision. One group formed a rap band, cut a CD and went on to perform live at festivals across London. Funding for HAFAD's Agenda for Youth comes from a variety of sources, including the National Youth Agency, and local neighbourhood, education and youth services.

The Spinal Injuries Association (SIA), a national organisation run by and for people with spinal injuries, provides a Peer Support Service, and a free phone Helpline (which also has an email and minority languages provision). These are funded by general fund-raising activities. The Department of Health funds the SIA to run self-management courses for people with spinal cord injuries.

### Advantages

- a very good fit to all recent Government policy
- national funding and support available to develop this
- NCIL (National Centre for Independent Living) can support the development of local groups
- Centres for Independent Living often have very good links with other community groups
- User-led organisations tend to be more trusted by disabled people than other organisations
- Organisations run or controlled by disabled people are more likely to develop support from a consumer perspective making it more likely to serve the individual's requirements
- Most areas have some form of User-led organisation already

- Every area has many disabled people with experience of direct payments and managing their own supports

### Things to consider

- Often, User-led organisations have focused on either one or a few impairment specific groups; typically people with learning difficulties and older people have not always been included
- One User-led organisation is unlikely to be enough, or desirable, in any one area; councils will need to consider how they support the development of more than one organisation
- Councils will need to invest time, support and resources to develop User-led organisations, particularly in areas that do not have a history of User-led organisations being involved in service provision or development

### Independent brokers

There is not a commonly accepted definition of what an independent support broker is. For the purposes of this paper, we are defining an independent broker as someone whose role may include some or all of these things:

- has the role of helping people plan and organise the support they need



- does not have the job of rationing resources
- does not have the job of providing direct support services
- providing one, some or all of the brokerage functions described in this paper
- an accountability to the person and to act in their best interests
- typically paid for their work

It is helpful to see independent brokers beyond the role of providing a comprehensive range of supports. People who give information and advice (i.e. welfare rights advisors, housing advice staff) all could be considered as independent brokers.

There are a range of independent brokers emerging across the UK many of whom are supported by the National Brokerage Network<sup>38</sup>. The role of the independent broker has recently been outlined by the NDT<sup>39</sup>. Experience from other countries suggests that independent brokerage will be a significant element of brokerage support and that independent brokers will either work completely independently or form informal networks or formal brokerage specific organisations<sup>40</sup>. The National Brokerage Network is a good example of this.

In their place-shaping role, councils need to be sensitive to local gaps, demands and opportunities. They need to support the development of independent brokerage, but not to such an extent that other forms of brokerage suffer. In particular, any initiative to support independent brokers should see this as an opportunity for people using services, family carers and community members, as well as existing paid professionals.

Arguably, many advocacy organisations have the skills and resources that local people can use to support them in directing their own support. It is thus helpful, to consider no one approach to brokerage as being mutually exclusive (see *figure 2*).

Independent Brokers (and in particular, paid brokerage) need to be considered more widely as either people or services which call themselves Brokers. Citizens Advice Bureaux and other similar community organisations are a good example of an existing service (and one which is significantly funded by local councils and central government). Citizens Advice Bureaux provide a wide range of advice, information and problem solving services through its network of branches and volunteers around the country. They are very well placed to provide such advice, information and problem solving in relation to social care.

38 [www.nationalbrokeragenetwork.org.uk](http://www.nationalbrokeragenetwork.org.uk)

39 Independent Support Brokerage. Dowson, S. 2007, NDT

40 Pathways to Inclusion. Lord and Hutchinson 2007. Cactus Press

## Examples

### Step by Step

Step by Step is a not-for-profit organisation; all workers are self employed – this reinforces their accountability to individuals with whom they work. SBS is a registered charity which is in the process of working towards User-led organisation status. The Step by Step associate team has a wealth of expertise and perspectives, including disabled people, family members and professionals who have specific technical advice and knowledge (i.e. housing options, commissioning and procurement experience). Whilst being committed to staying small, they are willing to work in many different ways and not be hampered by traditional perceptions of what organisations do. They have a strong emphasis on learning and disseminating the learning from theirs and others work. This includes offering support brokerage as it is more widely known. People can access an independent broker to work through a variety of tasks as directed by the person to gain the support they need to direct their own support. However, the uniqueness of this organisation is that people don't necessarily buy into one broker but that they may draw on the skills and knowledge of the relevant person as and when the circumstances arise.

They will also work with people (and with key people in areas who want to make things happen for people), and assist them to explore how they can best draw upon and build resources they need.

### Advantages

- An independent broker is largely task orientated and is directed by the person to carry out the necessary tasks associated with self-directed support
- Where there are complexities that require a lot of tasks then a paid broker can do the 'ground work' and present the relevant options to the person and their family
- In situations where a person may have no informal network of support, a broker can provide the support to carry out the brokerage tasks
- An independent broker is outside of the perceived conflict of interests i.e. connection to resources and or the provision of services.
- The development of independent brokers can lead to a wealth of local expertise of both support services and/or community resources
- Brokers can help to stimulate the provider market in demonstrating how provider services can develop and respond to individuals requirements
- Membership of national organisations such as the National Brokerage Network may support the general learning of good independent brokerage

### Things to consider

- A broker can only broker what they know, a real investment in developing the broker as a resource is needed
- A broker is a resource and thoughts around the level of resource and expertise need to be considered by councils as one person can not know everything
- Financing of brokerage needs to be considered – how to pay for brokers' time and what functions to pay for outside of local resources available to people needs careful thinking and planning by councils.
- It is too early to know what market costs for paid brokerage are and a funding model for it. All areas need to be open to experimentation and a willingness to share their learning
- The lack of accurate information about the correlation of an individual's budget and the broker support and time necessary needs to be explored further to accurately determine future financial implications.
- There is a danger that professionals will take over brokerage. Professional or semi professional brokers are one part of a solution – councils need to be careful that they do not promote this over other options

### What support is needed for this approach to develop?

- Each area needs to be clear about how brokerage will be funded. In particular, clarity is needed around whether a person's personal budget has to pay for any necessary brokerage, or whether additional funding will be made available.
- All councils need to understand that independent brokers can be provided via local third sector organisations; funding could include some infrastructure costs, a block contract or it could be funded on a spot contract basis.
- Brokers can come from all walks of life. Any training initiative to develop brokers needs to include disabled people, family carers and community members, as well as interested professionals.
- Citizens Advice Bureaux and other similar community organisations providing information and advice services should be offered training on social care issues to enable them to offer good information and advice on these issues.

## Paid Staff

Already, there are many examples across a variety of settings of paid workers offering some, if not all of the brokerage functions. This should not be a surprise, as typically, what we now describe as brokerage functions were wrapped in the overall support that people received – just not as a discrete and independent entity.

This is happening across the statutory (care management, transition workers, Connexions advisers, Lead Professionals within children's services, Community Matrons and District Nurses, day service workers, community health staff, residential staff) and independent sectors (the whole range of support staff, person centred planning facilitators, community development workers).

A common theme across both sectors is a collaborative approach between the different workers in offering support in the various functions. This may have been at the request of the individual or the result of both workers developing their understanding of the process together.

This largely, although not exclusively, is determined by the people who were being supported; i.e. older people who need support in their lives are more likely to be supported by statutory personnel than younger disabled people. However, this was often determined by the availability and capacity of local organisations in providing support in the

brokerage functions and their understanding of self-directed support generally.

The issues involved in staff from statutory agencies and support providers is explored in a paper by the NDT<sup>41</sup>. Whilst the obvious lack of independence from the statutory sector can create a conflict of interest, if people are aware of any potential conflict of interest, it does not need to become a barrier to the provision of effective brokerage support. There are good examples of paid workers with a strong relationship to an individual and passion for them living the life they want, providing really good and effective brokerage support, undiminished by who their employer happens to be. Tower Hamlets has a good track record of working across health, social care and voluntary and community sector organisations in developing self assessment, person centred assessment practices and in early intervention support to ensure the voices of older people, especially from different black and ethnic minority communities, are heard and influence their own and others support.

Provider agencies offering brokerage are developing this support and drawing on skills and abilities that they currently use in designing responses to individuals' support packages. It is important to note that where statutory workers are offered to people to work with them on developing or implementing their support plan that this is often seen as a pragmatic start to both developing the infrastructure and an understanding the requirements of the infrastructure.

41 [www.ndt.org.uk](http://www.ndt.org.uk)

## Examples

Paradigm ran a development programme (Brokers for Change)<sup>42</sup> for over 15 organisations across England. This included national support providers, local support providers, self advocacy groups and community groups. The purpose of the programme was for organisations to understand more about brokerage, consider their position on it (i.e. did they want to develop an explicit brokerage service?) and then plan a development accordingly. From this, some providers decided that developing an explicit brokerage service would not be appropriate for them, though they would continue to informally provide many of the functions of brokerage to people. Some have decided to either pilot or fully implement a brokerage service. HFT are piloting a small scale service in the North West and Choice Support are offering a free brokerage service in areas in which they already work and beyond. Each organisation manages their brokerage service separately from their day to day service provision.

## Advantages

- Support providers already provide most if not all of the functions of brokerage
- Support staff may have a very good trusting relationship with people that is worth building on
- Brokerage support from providers may be free – part of their existing service
- Support providers can pass on their skills and experience to User-led organisations looking to develop and expand

## Things to consider

- There is a potential conflict of interest; organisations providing brokerage need to ensure that their brokers are not merely recruiters of new business
- It would be easy for support providers to take over – they have the infrastructure, workforce and often significant financial resources. Providers should be encouraged to support community initiatives and User-led organisations
- Support providers may replicate their current ways of working which may not reflect the ethos of self-directed support
- Council staff who provide brokerage support may have too much power

42 Brokers for Change: [www.paradigm-uk.org](http://www.paradigm-uk.org)

## What support is needed for this approach to develop?

- Councils need to have a careful and balanced approach. They should be mindful of the opportunities for provider led brokerage, but in promoting brokerage development, they should ensure that financial support is directed to those individuals and groups who may not usually have access to funding
- Despite their experience and expertise, providers will need access to training as much as other groups. In particular, training which helps them to understand the ethos of self-directed support will be crucial
- Provider led brokerage has a part to play – however, it is one type of brokerage and should not become the dominant type
- Care managers may become a broker of last resort. For people where there is significant statutory service involvement (i.e. with various Mental Health Act sections), care managers may take on the role of broker

## 7 Training of Brokers

**It is important to remember that all of the functions and tasks of brokerage are already being provided, and often by people who are very skilled at this. It is not a new set of tasks to learn for many people. The focus of people being in control of their life, understanding the social model of disability and the promotion of independent living is still a new focus for many people. In many of the various pilot sites, whilst there has not been a significant amount of work around brokerage training, there has been a commonality of content. Typically, this has included:**

- An understanding of self-directed support
- Person centred planning and approaches
- Support planning
- Technical Knowledge i.e. housing options, recruitment and selection, funding streams, direct payments
- Understanding community based resources.

The National Brokerage Network promotes a training package which includes reflective practice and an ongoing commitment from the broker that continual self development is expected. In addition to this a mentoring and supervision programme is also promoted.

If brokerage is analysed from a functional perspective then it makes sense to directly relate training to the functions of brokerage, however many areas have focused on support planning training as a priority. There are various approaches to support planning including Planning Live<sup>43</sup> events – which offers one approach to facilitate people's support plans with the person and the people they choose to support them, alongside other people. In addition to this, Paradigm promotes a support planning resources guide that encourages a range of people to learn the essential elements of a support plan and then plan directly with the person and their family.

Although support planning training is necessary there is a danger that the focus of training investment is only invested in the support planning function. The other functions of brokerage such as information, advice and guidance are also essential in developing a robust infrastructure.

Any investment in training needs to include a wider range of people than is typical at the moment. This should include older and disabled people, family carers, interested community members, mainstream staff as well as care managers and other staff connected to self-directed support.

<sup>43</sup> [www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk](http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk)

Care managers play an important role in signing off plans and participating in reviews. It is important that they have training opportunities which help them fully understand self-directed support, the process of support planning and self assessment.

Some training will need to be specific to the function or role of a group. For instance, it is important that care managers have training in self assessment to ensure that they fulfil this role (and others) in the spirit of self-directed support, and how this relates to and differs from existing systems of assessment, e.g. Single Assessment Process and the Common Assessment Framework.

Within Advocacy services, they are developing a national advocacy qualification. The planned qualification was born directly from the introduction of the IMCA (Independent Mental Capacity Advocate) and IMHA (Independent Mental Health Advocate). The introduction of these new advocate posts also brought an expectation that those acting in this role would complete training to a nationally agreed standard. This has then led to the overall development of advocacy standards and a potential national training qualification. This may provide a useful framework for brokerage to emulate. However, at present, brokerage is in its infancy and more time, experience and practice is needed before there could be confidence of what would be included in a similar initiative for brokerage.



## 8 Funding of support planning and brokerage

**Formal brokerage supports are still relatively thin on the ground. It is too early to comment with any degree of certainty around the funding of brokerage and the cost effectiveness of any one brokerage model.**

### Existing resources

It is imperative that existing services, particularly those in the mainstream, resources and facilities are used wherever possible. Such resources are likely to be funded already and offer good value for money. This could include Citizen's Advice Bureaux, LINks, third sector organisations providing advice and information, funded via grants, local and national help lines (i.e. Mencap Helpline, Seniorline run by Help the Aged). Local community organisations often have an advice and information function. Often this initial bit of advice or signposting is what many people need and is key to their doing it for themselves.

### Specific funding for User-led organisations and other community organisations

Grant funding or block contracts to User-led organisations and community groups offer good value for money. Often their reach is much broader than statutory services, and in particular, they are part of a preventative role

for people who may not be eligible for funding from councils. This paper contains good examples of how such funding has been used to develop peer support mechanisms, using volunteers. The funding of this type of infrastructure support will be key to self-directed support becoming common place. It is a good use of grant monies, and block contracts have a part to play. In particular, consideration should be given to seed funding to enable such groups and organisations to either get off the ground or develop a new arm or service.

### Examples of brokerage funding

#### Independent Living Norfolk

Grant funded to provide free support planning assistance

#### Liberation Partnership

Brokerage funded by a grant when a pilot, expect this to be through a contract shortly

#### Southampton Centre for Independent Living

Mix of grant funding, contracts and fund-raising

#### Help and Care

Mixture of Local Authority grant and contract funding and some funding from NHS

### Independent Support Brokers

Some free work, others charged at National Brokerage Network rates of £20 per hour. Sometimes working for free at the outset until a person can pay. Funding either coming out of the personal budget or on top of it.

### Macintyre

Provided as part of the school fees – i.e. part of an overall charge for support

### Herefordshire Council

Grant funding information and advice services so they are free; expect other brokerage to be paid out of personal budgets

## Formal brokerage services

Paid for brokerage will definitely be part of the landscape of self-directed support. Some people will pay privately (as is the case now in a limited number of situations); other people could use part of their personal budget to pay for brokerage. At this stage, it is helpful for different models to emerge and councils need to be mindful of the support which may be needed for all different approaches of brokerage to flourish. Seed funding and core funding to help develop brokerage services or individual brokers may be necessary, and might be an effective use of the Social Care Reform Grant.

The National Brokerage Network suggest an appropriate hourly rate of £20 per hour for paid for brokerage, with an indication that

people with very significant and complex needs may need to pay up to £3000 for a full range of brokerage services. This may be the case for some people, but will not be tenable for the majority. It is, therefore, particularly important that development initiatives are funded which promote people doing it for themselves and using community organisations and resources.

## Provider led brokerage

Existing service providers wishing to develop brokerage could, in the first instance, use their own resources to fund brokerage development. Already, there are good examples of this with Choice Support and HFT investing significant funds to develop their own brokerage services. In encouraging this route, it is likely to ensure that local council resources can go to individuals or groups who may not have had access to funding before.

## Sustainability

Whatever methods of funding for support planning and brokerage are tried, it is important to pay particular attention to sustainability of the range of choices. On top of pump priming developments, long term solutions will need to be put in place which ensure that community based brokerage services receive on-going support to continue their important role.

There are differing views about whether funding for support planning and brokerage can be included in the Resource Allocation System (and thus the personal budget). There will be certainly be difficulties in ensuring that the level of resources are available to achieve this intention when personal budgets are scaled up for all people to the level intended. Some councils are beginning to look at more effective ways of using the costs of their existing infrastructure to try and achieve this, but these initiatives are still at an early stage.

It is important that councils use the full range of resources available (social care and other sources) in trying to ensure a viable level of support for the full range of support planning and brokerage activity on a sustainable basis.

In addition, the opportunity to create strong and cohesive communities through Local Area Agreements via the Local Strategic Partnership is relevant to ensure that is not just seen as a council responsibility but a whole system, whole community shared responsibility. This way, new or different opportunities for funding, including pooled budgets, can be identified, explored and secured.

# Appendix 1: Good Practice Examples

## Brokerage Approaches – Individual and Family

The following example is an illustration of one family's approach to the functions of brokerage in exploring the use of personal budgets.

### Brokerage Functions completed:

- Researching what's available
- Facilitation (Trust Circle)
- Planning and developing support plans
- Sourced technical Advice
- Negotiation and mediation
- Advocacy
- Coordinating supports and resources – development of quality assurance tools

### Steve and James' Story – A parent's words

*'Best thing since sliced bread – In Control does exactly what it says on the tin!'*

Steve had received his education out of borough as many young people do and although this proved to work for Steve, it made coming back into the borough difficult as Steve knew very few people in his local area. As a family we had always envisaged

Steve living his own adult life as independently as possible.

As a mum I did lots of research into the possibilities for Steve. At the time the idea of self-directed support was thought to be too difficult by our social worker.

I began by approaching our local Housing Department and asked about the possibility of Steve renting a house or even my house and then working with Social Services to organise the support for Steve and any flat mates. The Housing Department were really keen and were surprised that they hadn't been asked before. (They had assumed that youngsters either didn't want to live independently or were not able.)

Social Services were keen to help but needed to use recognised service providers for the care package. Social Services helped find potential house mates for Steve. The social workers offered names of young people who they thought may be interested in sharing Steve's house and I organised a variety of events for Steve to get to know people and for us to see if the partnership would work. This we later realised was not the best way, as the names were of people who were desperately looking for places imminently and after only a few meetings it was difficult to judge compatibility. Also, it relied heavily on the social workers to know them well, and with all the young people being from out of

county placements this was unlikely.

The house was run under very traditional lines, and it soon became apparent that it was not working for Steve, nor any of the others.

The local council decided to invest in Dynamite (a project run by Paradigm, under the auspices of In Control) and I was approached because the situation was not working out for Steve in the way we had intended. Initially we had a trial run of a personal budget using £200 to plan an activity and this was a big learning curve for us as immediately alarm bells rang. Who could we employ to take Steve on a trip?

I'm so proud. Steve and James run a large home and garden, they cook the meals, clean, have a social life. Friends stay for weekends and have karaoke evenings. They have dreams of working in the community and, although that last task will be the hardest for Steve, I wish him well and pray for even the smallest success. Finally, our sons have just returned from Disneyland Paris, and I still can't believe they went on Space Mountain, a scary ride! We have the photos to prove it!

I think of it as a flowing river: stand back and enjoy but be aware there are boulders and currents at certain times – and sometimes it can be a tranquil lily pond. All that matters is that our sons have an enriching future which they are involved in shaping.

Once we began Dynamite it became clear that we could take a much greater role in being in control of the situation by employing the team of supporters ourselves, therefore really designing the team around Steve and the other young man James who lived with him. It looked like the ideal solution.

I used services locally like Independent Living Norfolk to begin the design. As this was new, the answers were not all figured out. But between myself, local supporters, our Local Authority lead, and Nic from Paradigm we worked out solutions. As we began the journey, the technicalities of what we wanted to do involved some real challenges and some creative thinking from us all!

We found that for the young men to become employers via direct payments they needed insurance and this raised a capacity issue. We looked at possible options and found that a Trust can act on their behalf as the employers. We worked together to set up Individual Trusts for both young men. This also meant that it wasn't simply the mums who were making decisions and had all of the responsibility.

We wanted the supporters to work around both of the men in terms of supporting their lifestyle, which included a very different shift pattern to a traditional pattern. Together we worked this out, which allows the young men to access the community like any other young people. Steve and James received their own personal budget allocations and the two families decided that, although their budgets are different and representative of their own needs, we would like to put the budgets together to get the most for our money.

We had close friends who work in the legal field and they supported us with legal issues. We drafted a contract between the two men to ensure that, although both personal budget amounts were being used together, should the situation not work, either person could leave taking their personal budget with them. Together we wrote the support plans to ensure that the plans were absolutely focused around Steve and James. As a mum I knew nothing about being an employer but I found that if I asked I would eventually find an answer. Both Trusts worked out a clear chain of command for the support team to make sure that everyone was clear about how the support team would be managed. We worked out expectations, job descriptions, rates of pay etc. We wanted supporters who enjoyed the same kinds of things as Steve and James, so we looked around locally and decided to target the local universities, and wanted people who could teach the men to run a home.

We worked with local supporters and organisations such as ACAS who helped us figure out some of the employer issues. The really important aspect of the local support is that it provided us with someone to bounce ideas off and felt that we weren't alone. We have worked together to get the most from the budgets, making savings as we go along. There are many examples. As parents we decided to cover any sickness and annual leave within the support team, making savings instead of using agency staff. We worked out that it is cheaper to pay mileage than taxi fares. We have made huge savings in comparison to when social services managed the service.

We still have some technical issues that crop up and together we work through them until we find a solution. We had determination, local support and a local authority lead who worked with us to find solutions. Recently we purchased a car and will recoup the money within two years if not sooner on the savings from taxi fares and mileage. Don't get me wrong we have had our ups and downs. It's time consuming, phone bills can be high, and some things may work for one and not another. The latest news is that we are now planning for our sons to leave part time college to go to the Assist Trust where they will be supported to find employment.

## Brokerage Approaches – Community

### Step By Step Living Network

*'The aim of the Living Network is to encourage and support individuals and family members to become their source of their own expertise'.*

Member of SBS

The Living Network is the development of both a web based and 'real' living network of recipients of personal budgets. It provides the opportunity for people to share experiences on both Step By Step as a brokerage agency, and on issues that personal budget recipients feel would benefit people who are considering self-directed support. This may include tips on creative support plans, good local resources for housing advice, amongst many other things.

The Living Network is supported by a family broker who has experienced personal budgets

and is keen to support and share their family's experiences with others. Although the Network is in its infancy, it is currently being offered as a source of support to people to promote the concept of 'self brokerage' – people and families working through the tasks/activities of brokerage themselves.

### Brokerage Functions offered by the Living Network:

- Information, advice and guidance, including a unique recipients view
- Signposting to local community resources
- Researching what's available
- Facilitation
- Plan and devise support plans
- Access to technical advice via Step By Step
- Negotiation and mediation
- Advocacy
- Coordinating supports and resources – Quality Assurance

The longer term aim for the Living Network will include feedback and quality assurance measurements as an integral part of their web site. People will be able to rate their support and consequently advise other individuals and families on good quality services.

The Living Network aims to be wider than just a web based programme and will also provide people with the chance to come together in person, share ideas and gain access to other people who have experienced self-directed support and to increase the number of peer brokers.

Step By Step supports the Living Network cautiously and carefully to ensure their organisation's role is one of facilitation, not ownership. They do this by offering travel expenses, payments for refreshment and venue hire as well as support to network members to take part.

The development of the Living Network provides a level of sustainability in terms of promoting and supporting people and their families working through the process of using their Personal budgets themselves.

### Brokerage Approaches – User-led organisations

#### Cheshire Centre for Independent Living (CCIL)

CCIL has been in operation for 10 years supported by Cheshire County Council and offers a successful direct payments service. In a neighbouring local council the development a local User-led organisation was in its infancy, existing as an 'interested steering group'. This steering group developed and established the User-led organisation operating as a local direct payments service called Lancashire Support Services (L.S.S).

Together the two organisations were successful in being awarded the contracts to provide:

- Information and Advice
- Peer Support
- Payroll Service

Operating with the support of CCIL, a clear partnership arrangement offered LSS a new organisation, a programme of support, mentoring including sharing policies and procedures, current tailor made software and coaching to both Trustees and Advisors.

The key learning from this approach is the willingness of a User-led organisation and third sector agency using its expertise, knowledge and experience to support the development of a similar organisation instead of monopolising the area.

#### **Brokerage Functions offered by peer volunteers include:**

- Information, advice and guidance including a unique recipients view
- Signposting to local community resources
- Researching what's available
- Facilitation
- Plan and devise support plans
- Technical advice
- Negotiation and mediation
- Advocacy

## **Peer Support – Lancashire Support Services**

Lancashire Support Services (LSS) is a User-led organisation modelled on a Centre for Independent Living.

LSS has trained and supported 40 peer support volunteers who are all recipients of direct Payments or a personal budget. The volunteers are all experienced in planning and designing their own support, co-ordinating the best way to manage their budget, working as an employer and developing quality assurance processes to ensure their support works in the best way possible. The volunteers have an insight into both the benefits of direct payments/personal budgets and the reality of managing either the budget itself or the responsibilities attached to the budget.

Within LSS, peer volunteers are seen as an integral element of the advice, information and support offered to new potential recipients of personal budgets. They are seen as a safeguard and counter-balance to staff from statutory services with their differing, personal experiences and understanding of self-directed support. LSS has developed close links with local third sector agencies to develop the peer support service. This helps to ensure that they support and represent a diverse range of people from local communities. LSS has worked with Galloways (an organisation supporting people who are visually impaired), Deaf Way (an organisation that supports people who are audio impaired) and Preston Asian Carers Forum amongst others.



LSS employs a co-ordinator to support the peer support service using a profile matching approach and they work hard to match potential new recipients with experienced peer volunteers with shared experiences, similar interests and local knowledge of good community supports. This includes working across agencies to ensure people have access to a wide range of local peer volunteers.

Examples of how this approach has benefited people include:

Mr Jackson who was thinking about taking a Direct Payment; he has a visual impairment and was advised by the council to explore the possible benefits of working with LSS. LSS began exploring a potential suitable peer volunteer to help Mr Jackson explore his options and decide if this was something he wanted to pursue.

Mrs Chadwick who is an experienced peer volunteer who was also visually impaired and had significant experience in the use of direct payments was approached to support Mr Jackson. Together they explored the potential benefits of a direct payment from his perspective. Mr Jackson then chose to take a direct payment.

The LSS and the council are currently exploring the possibility of developing a rate to pay peer volunteers, particularly as volunteering, is not built into people's direct payment or personal budget allocation and some people may need additional support monies to do this. One additional benefit of the peer volunteering role is that many volunteers have increased their own local social networks.

## Client Account

LSS has developed an innovative approach to supporting people with their direct payments or personal budgets as a response to those people who would have had their payment taken away due to misuse of the money (for example using the payment for alcohol, drugs or gambling).

Mr Noakes found being accountable and in control of the budget had a detrimental effect on his mental health and led to him using the budget for non-agreed use. LSS, as a response to supporting him with his personal budget, took on the role of 'agent' and opened a bank account which holds his personal budget and LSS (as the support organisation) took on a management role, agreeing to pay invoices as directed by the person. LSS would gain interest on holding people's personal budgets which will require clear guidelines and a service level agreement with the council. LSS are looking to pilot this approach exclusively with the people who have been taken off direct payments. This is a likely option for the future in terms of brokerage supports offered.

## Training and Support

Through European Funding, LSS are currently running training for people who have chosen to recruit their own PA support. The training is designed for employers and covers assertiveness and communication skills. Longer term, LSS are considering offering this kind of training as part of their menu of supports for people to purchase from.

### Brokerage supports offered by LSS

- Advice and guidance
- Facilitation – including developing circles of support
- Navigation
- Training
- Coordinating supports and resources i.e. payroll, employment advice, client account holding and managing the money
- Community connection type role
- Contracting with external supports for people i.e. employment solicitors
- Advice around creative recruitment i.e. using video media etc
- Info for people to work through the process themselves i.e. fact sheets, templates etc – supporting DIY
- Advocacy
- Connection to a PA register- features like an on-line dating agency
- Self Advocacy skills, assertiveness training

### WLPSG – Development of PA register

West Lancs Peer Support Group has developed a local PA register which runs similarly to an on-line dating agency. The site enables people to search for potential PA supporters who live locally, exploring

personality, skills and knowledge etc. The register is an open one and no organisation makes decisions as to who goes onto the list. LSS peer support service works at advertising this register locally at church fairs, fresher's week etc.

### Future ideas about developing model of support brokerage

LSS/CCIL plan to act as a 'community brokerage agency' and develop three levels of brokerage supports for people. The analogy given is similar to that of the RAC – different levels of 'supports':

Level 1 – Low level support – supporting the DIY approach, info and guidance

Level 2 – Medium support – all above and facilitation, support planning etc

Level 3 – Full support may include support with all tasks necessary for the individual to complete, to gain a personal budget and to maintain support around managing the budget.

People may begin with a high level of support because the process is new and then over time they may then work down to the minimum level as they develop their own experience in managing a personal budget and/or support teams as time progresses.

LSS/CCIL are also looking to develop and hold an accreditation process around PA supports, provider support and brokerage supports used

within Lancashire and Cheshire. The long term aim of this will be that ultimately it will be led by peer volunteers within the peer support service and all recipients of personal budgets who are willing to share their experiences. This will ensure a local feedback process is in operation and will run similarly to an 'opinion poll type feedback'.

### Longer term

LSS and CCIL are clear about their positions in the developing market and see themselves as integral to developing an infrastructure in supporting people and their allies with personal budgets. They have the local infrastructure to support a person from the point of receiving the budget to employing their own support team. They are aware of the potential conflict of interest around their own provision in brokerage management type supports.

### Independent Living Norfolk

Independent Living Norfolk is a user-led direct payments support service and is managed by the Norfolk Coalition of Disabled People (NCODP). The purpose of the organisation is to enable and empower people who are considering direct payments or other self-directed support arrangements to achieve the best independent living outcomes.

ILN have provided brokerage support to many people and their families through both a pilot project developing self-directed support for young people with learning difficulties and

more recently offering support to people who experience mental ill health via the formal Individual Budget Pilot.

Independent Living Norfolk provides advice and assistance to help people plan their support. They are clear about what they can offer people who are exploring self-directed support:

- Help people to think about and write their support plan, including helping to work out their budget
- Help people to think about how they will take control of their life
- Help people to think about what risks there might be and how they can manage these risks.
- Help people to think about the support they may need to manage their self-directed arrangements, for example, a circle of support, independent living trust or advocate
- Help people to find out general information or put them in touch with organisations and agencies that may be able to provide them with services, advice or information.
- Help people to organise their direct payments money
- Help people to find personal assistants
- Help people to work out the money they pay
- Interestingly, ILN are equally clear about the roles they will not take on:
  - Make any decisions on the person's behalf
  - Agree any services on the person's behalf with individuals, agencies or organisations

- Take people to visit agencies or other support providers
- Choose any personal assistant, agency or other support provider on their behalf
- Provide people with a personal assistant, agency or other support provider
- Tell a person's agency, support provider or personal assistant what to do
- Take responsibility for any risk that a person identifies in their support plan.

### A typical example of how ILN provide support includes the following:

“Usually contact with an individual comes from a referral to our organisation, either by the person (information leaflets and contact details of our organisation are routinely given to everyone considering a personal budget) or via the Development Worker (Social Service appointed staff who have been working on the pilot projects to help to develop and implement the Individual Budget pilot projects).

- Home visit arranged to discuss individual budgets and support planning.
- Research provider provision/costs of one-off purchases if required
- Home visit to discuss costs, work out budget, discuss draft support plan
- Support the individual to complete some compulsory forms including:

- Keeping Myself Safe (this looks at things that might go wrong and how the individual will address this)
- Terms and Conditions
- Summary Budget Plan – this lists how the budget is being spent and on what

Finally we support the individual to write an Action Plan to ensure that, once approved, their support plan comes into practice”.

ILN has proved to be a significant source of support to people and their families within Norfolk.

## Brokerage Approaches – Paid Staff from a provider

### Help and Care

Help and Care was established in 1985 as a small charity to work with older people and local communities. The organisation provides a variety of support initiatives that have been developed as a direct response to the requests of older people who reside locally.

The supports currently offered by Help and Care include:

- Information, advice and guidance service including Gateway – a telephone helpline and information service staffed by a mixture of paid advisors and local volunteers
- Housing Improvement Agency and Handy Works scheme

- Technical officers – specifically relating to architectural planning in line with home adaptations
- Roots – a local gardening service provided to older people and staffed by volunteers who are experiencing mental ill health
- Advocacy services
- Facilitation and support to local networks including Way Finders and peer volunteers
- Sitting service
- Telephone befriending service
- Walking group
- Advocacy
- Volunteer 'Money Friends' (people with financial experience who offer support to people around finance)
- Hospital screening projects

#### Brokerage Functions offered within the organisation:

- Information, advice and guidance
- Researching what's available
- Facilitation
- Technical advice
- Plan and develop support plans
- Negotiation and Mediation
- Advocacy

Help and Care strive to ensure the information, advice and guidance function is up to date and locally relevant. To this end, Help and Care employs a researcher to continually update the information and produce a variety of fact sheets ranging from Carers' Rights and Assessments to Finding a Local Tradesperson. The fact sheets can also be explained verbally via the advice workers, volunteers and/or telephone helpline.

#### Help and Care's Hospital Project

The project began in response to the issues facing older people awaiting discharge from hospital. Help and Care were asked to analyse the current system for older people and proposed the following model of a role of hospital screener. The role itself is designed to be an independent filter in terms of exploring alternative supports to people who either are not FACS eligible for adult social care support, who are self-funders and/or people who do want to access formal social services supports.

#### Brokerage Functions offered within the organisation:

- Advice, information and guidance
- Researching what's available
- Facilitation
- Technical advice
- Negotiation and mediation
- Advocacy

The role includes meeting older people whilst in hospital, spending time in understanding their situation and then offering information, advice and guidance around ways to support the person upon discharge and longer term. Although not typically associated with brokerage, the role includes an initial assessment that determines a person's eligibility to adult social care – promoting the right of entitlement to a community care assessment runs throughout the process.

The screeners begin the process by understanding the person and their lifestyle from their perspective. They offer information and guidance around any areas that the person feels will support their chosen lifestyle and discharge from hospital. Notably, the information provided relates to all aspects of the person's life not simply issues associated with hospital. The screeners are available to discuss the information and to answer questions in relation to the person's own circumstances.

Typically many people who use the support of the screeners are often given information and advice that they would not necessarily have been aware of, such as benefit advice, local volunteering schemes etc. As people explore their discharge from hospital, the screeners explore the possibilities of local supports to ensure that the person feels equipped to go home. The screeners discuss the kind of support the person thinks would be useful and then together they explore possible options. This may include the initiatives offered by Help and Care and those offered within the local community, ranging from the home improvements scheme to local organisations that support people's pets.

The screeners also have access, via partnership arrangements, to a variety of short term support schemes to enable a safe discharge from hospital. These are schemes that are subsidised by the council including Home from Hospital and Welcome Home – initial short term support provided via a support agency.

In addition to this, Help and Care also administer an emergency alarm system supplied by ElderCare, a free initial (6 weeks) emergency alarm service, which provides reassurance that support can be contacted should the person require it. The person can then choose to keep this service via an individual contribution if they so wish.

All of the above are organised by the person and Help and Care without the intervention of adult social services. Examples of the range of support people have chosen to use when exploring their discharge from hospital via H&C include:

- Using a peer volunteer to accompany the person to their local shops for a few weeks once the person is discharged from hospital, to build on confidence to continue to live independently.
- Accessing the telephone befriending service to ensure the person has access to support, if and when they may need it.
- Access to a volunteer to support the person in caring for their pets for the initial weeks after discharge.
- Access to a Money Friend (Volunteer) to support the person to sort out their finances after the bereavement of a partner.

- Connection and introduction via a peer volunteer to local interest groups/clubs that may support the person in going to social activities
- Organising a volunteer to get basic shopping in preparation for their return home
- Support to access local organizations for support around drug and alcohol counselling services
- The support to challenge a private landlord after experiencing discrimination and homelessness.
- Access to explore potential funding streams, grants etc for home repairs, holidays etc.

In the initial phase of the new roles, internal studies demonstrate that the referrals to adult social care within the hospital structure reduced by 80% after the introduction of Help and Care. Overwhelmingly, the information, advice and guidance offered to people has had a huge impact in relation to people both using Help and Care as a facilitator in organising the person's support and in relation to people choosing to organise their support themselves.

### **Paid staff – local authority care management**

In one council, a range of brokerage functions is carried out and offered by care managers or care coordinators depending upon the choice of the person. Care managers offer people the support with all of the stages of self-directed

support including:

- Support with self assessment
- Support to design a support plan
- Support to secure and negotiate services and/or support either by the person commissioning the services themselves or the local authority commissioning services on behalf of the person using their personal budget.

### **Norfolk**

Within Norfolk a range of supports has been explored to ensure people have maximum flexibility in deciding how they would like to explore self-directed support. People can choose the support that they prefer and in offering this level of flexibility, people have chosen a diverse range of people.

Documentation has been produced to support people and families working through the process themselves with small numbers of people choosing to do this.

The council has negotiated service level agreements with a variety of local agencies in the voluntary sector which have historically been used by local people for information and advice, i.e. local user-led organisations (such as Independent Living Norfolk). In addition, they have also offered council staff, such as care co-ordinators, to provide brokerage support.

There are good examples of a collaborative approach in offering brokerage support to people, particularly with people who experience mental ill health drawing on

support from an independent supporter alongside care co-ordinators. The following example is a good illustration of this collaborative approach.

In Norfolk, Miss C was offered a personal budget and although she had a good relationship with her care coordinator, she took the opportunity to explore the possibilities of how she wished to use her budget with an independent support planner. The planner worked for the local Centre for Independent Living. She found it very helpful to talk about her hopes for the future with a fresh person. One objective in her support plan was to recruit a personal assistant to assist her with accessing activities in her local community – she asked the Centre for Independent Living to help her to recruit an assistant. Miss Charles had a history of self harm and with her care coordinator, over time, had developed various coping strategies to minimize this behaviour.

She realized that any personal assistant she might employ would need to know these strategies but was embarrassed to discuss this with the support planner who was a relative stranger. Miss C asked her care coordinator to broach the subject with the support planner, which she did, and then all three were able to sit down together to work out what to say to any prospective personal assistant. It was agreed at this meeting that the personal assistant could contact the care coordinator if she had any concerns.

Norfolk is also keen to explore many other options to ensure people themselves direct the support as opposed to the council

deciding one particular route. The following example illustrates the benefits of remaining flexible and responsive to people themselves.

Mr Artym, who experiences mental ill health, and whose first language is Polish approached social services looking for alternative support to enable him to live his life. A personal budget was offered and he started to explore what this would entail. He chose a local voluntary sector organisation which he felt would be best to support him in thinking about his future and the kind of support he wanted.

Mr Artym made initial contact with an informal support network of Polish speakers within the county. He approached a person from within this network and asked them if they would be interested in supporting him in figuring out what he wanted. Mr Artym and his supporter were given information and useful resources to explore the lifestyle he wanted and the possible support he would need. Together they produced a support plan that highlighted areas that were not working for Mr Artym and together, they explored options of supporting him to change this. In doing this, Mr Artym was introduced to a further social network of Polish speakers by his supporter. Thus, in the process of developing a support plan, Mr Artym's social network was expanded considerably.

### **Bath and North East Somerset**

Bath and North East Somerset Council (BANES), has developed personal budgets for older people and developed 'in-house' brokerage support. The broker's role is split



into three distinct areas: a planning phase, an exploration phase of exploring the options and then an implementation phase.

In-house brokers are employed to offer people the support in planning and exploring the options to develop a support plan.

BANES has explored options around external support within the voluntary sector and has had initial success with this where people have chosen to use the external agency. The council has also developed a clear template for support planning to ensure people can develop their own support plan should they want to.

BANES is also beginning to work with local provider organisations, particularly in relation to people who self fund their own support. Local providers offer help with planning and exploration with people to ensure their own support purchased is right for the individual. The council is now in the process of developing information for local people that provides a navigation template around how to develop and secure support for you as an individual. This will not only support the development of Personal budgets but also work for people on a much wider basis i.e. people who are self funding.

Where an individual chooses to manage their own budget, they can use local direct payment support services to do this; however the option of the council managing the person's budget on their behalf, is also provided. Where an individual chooses to have the council manage their budget, the broker then negotiates and procures the service with local providers on the person's behalf. This

approach ensures that individualisation of support can be developed where people do not choose to manage their own budget.

Following a care management assessment, people have the option of help from a support planner. People can choose the level and type of assistance they want in developing the support plan. Most people have chosen to use the local support planners to design their support plan. Once the person has explored their own support plan, they can make a decision around whether to manage the money themselves or to have the council manage the money. If the person chooses to manage the money themselves, local support is offered in relation to managing a direct payment via the direct payment support services. If the person chooses the council to manage the money then they would commission a service on the person behalf. However, the brokers have a role in developing this, by costing and negotiating the persons support in line with the person support plan.

## Independent Brokers

### Barnsley

In developing their brokerage infrastructure, Barnsley Council has worked alongside the National Brokerage Network to explore long term options. Initially the council recruited in-house brokers and ensured that they were not connected to any funding approval systems within the council. This approach had success initially and has helped the council and local organisations develop their understanding of

brokerage further. The council is now working alongside local third sector organisations to develop a strategic approach to offering brokerage support.

They have recently developed a local coalition of third sector partners acting together as a consortium with a lead body (a local Age Concern group) to build capacity within the third sector and local communities to develop and deliver flexible and accessible brokerage services.

This independent brokerage service will host paid brokers and local personnel from local organisations who offer some time to the service within their existing capacity. In addition, an investment in volunteer brokers will be a central function of this organisation. In the long term the brokerage service will offer an overview to who is available within the area to offer brokerage support to an individual. This could be a paid broker, a local development worker based within a third sector organization, a volunteer broker or the information to work through the process yourself.

In addition to the development of this brokerage service, the council is also looking strategically at existing organisations that currently receive funding to offer advice, information and guidance. The long term aim is to develop a shared understanding of the advice information and guidance needed in relation to self-directed support.

A further development that has emerged from local brokers understanding of the range of information necessary for people and their families is the need to be aware of and

understand local community resources. They have worked at developing comprehensive 'community mapping exercises' of local wards within the borough. This involves the research of local community resources, both formal and informal, and then compiling this information for local people. This has proved to be hugely valued. In developing and understanding local community resources, organisations such as the local credit unions are being explored in relation to possible resources for people to manage their personal budget. This pragmatic approach has led to many people directing their own support.

### **Barking and Dagenham**

Initially, Barking and Dagenham began by recruiting brokers and basing them within the local Centre for Independent Living and providing funding for this. People then had a choice of support from a care manager, a broker within the Centre for Independent Living, and the support to develop their own plan. As people's knowledge and confidence grew in relation to self-directed support, the council wanted to offer further choice to people.

They have now developed two approaches to brokerage supports.

### **Support Planning**

Support planning is offered as part of the information, advice and guidance function. The task of supporting people with exploring their lives and developing a support plan is

offered by a range of third sector organisations, alongside people employed within the council. The third sector organisations are developing the skills and knowledge to offer this as part of their current contracts. When this happens, there is not a new cost for this advice and guidance as it is part of an existing contract for support.

### Brokerage

This element includes recruitment, procuring services and implementation of the person's support plan. This is currently offered via a range of third sector organisations and developing social enterprises. The cost of this support is currently being explored and is likely to involve a menu of supports from which people can choose the level of support they feel would best suit them. In addition to this, local providers offer a range of support to people who choose to purchase their services and at present this is an option for people particularly in relation to individual service funds.

Strategically, Barking and Dagenham are now working to establish where the range of brokerage functions are already offered within the borough (a mapping exercise) i.e. local Citizens Advice Bureaux and looking at sharing learning across these organisations; in particular, clarifying the advice and information that may be necessary to ensure a comprehensive range of advice is available to people. Although things are at a very early stage, they are also exploring the option of offering people the choice and finance

to pay for their brokerage support (not support planning) from the organisation of their choice.

## Self-directed support in West Sussex

### Creating and implementing support plans

As one of the 13 pilot sites engaged in the development of Individual Budgets, West Sussex Council focused their work on older people. The council considered the process of enabling people to draw up and carry out their support plans as involving a range of quite specific activities, and they did not adopt the term 'brokerage' as a description for this work.

West Sussex was concerned to widen the range of opportunities open to people with individual budgets, to seek informed advice and guidance with support planning. Their programme began with extensive discussion with representatives of local third sector bodies, and a series of consultations with older people was carried out for the council by Age Concern West Sussex. The latter reported some key findings:

- Many older people did not want lots of professionals to be involved. They wanted one person as expert adviser assisting them through the process.
- Many older people trusted the advice and support offered by council staff.

So far, in the development stage of the introduction of individual budgets, the most common sources of assistance used by people were informal family carers and the council's social work staff. In addition, the body providing support to direct payments users began to adapt and expand its advocacy and advisory activities to include assistance with producing support plans.

Subsequently, a number of local voluntary and community organisations, specifically those that offer home visiting as part of their existing work, accepted invitations to work with the council on a support planning pilot project. Using introductory training and guidance developed by the Individual Budget Team, these organisations offer assistance to people in drawing up their support plans. They can provide further independent sources of information and advice to people, weighing up the major decisions and exploring local possibilities for making best use of their budget.

This project will be evaluated with reference to the take-up of these advisory services by Individual Budget users, their satisfaction with the process, and the costs associated with the work.

### **Supporting people to carry out their plans**

Where people opt to take their personal budgets in cash, direct payments are available and is backed both by the council's policy of

encouraging take-up, and by the experience of the Independent Living Association (ILA – a local User-led organisation affiliated to the British Council of Disabled People) in providing practical support. This covers not only the relevant advice and guidance, but services such as financial administration, payroll agency, and the facility to refer to the Criminal Records Bureau.

A number of individual budget users opted to have the council hold some or all of the budget and purchase services on their behalf. The Adult's Services office set up a Managed Individual Account (MIA) to track the use of the money on the required services. In seeking to extend the flexibility with which it can make purchases for people, the council has begun to explore 'outcome-based commissioning'. In this model, the council purchases services within a contractual framework that creates an opportunity for people to negotiate directly with the provider, to determine the details of the service and its delivery. The aim is to extend the opportunities for people to exercise choice and control, especially where they do not choose actually to manage the funds personally.

In supporting people to create and implement their own plans, the council's focus will be on the development and adaptation of existing skills and activities, and on greater awareness of the possibilities offered by the wide range of resources that exist in local communities around the county.

## About Paradigm

Paradigm provides a range of consultancy, training and development services to organisations, groups and people in the social care field. With a strong and clear value base that always seeks to promote the best interests of people and ensures that they are in control of their lives, Paradigm works across the UK, Europe and beyond with local and national government, support providers, User-led organisations, housing, education, individuals and their families.

We run a wide range of conferences and workshops, and produce a range of publications for professionals and people who use services. Our website is available at [www.paradigm-uk.org](http://www.paradigm-uk.org).

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