

“Working with TLAP is like taking a breath of fresh air in the woods. People, resources and activities / events keep me grounded, raise my awareness and understanding while also showing what a better world might be like.”

Survey respondent

THINK LOCAL ACT PERSONAL SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REVIEW 2019-20

Headlines

January 2021

Prepared by Linda Jackson,
independent evaluation consultant

TLAP EVALUATION: INTRODUCTION

Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) commissioned an independent review of the TLAP partnership to understand its impact. It is based on TLAP's theory of change, which identifies the reach and role of the TLAP partnership, underpinned by a shared vision of personalisation and co-production.

This report summarises what makes TLAP unique, how TLAP makes a difference to social care, and the impact of the partnership on policy, practitioners and practice.

Fieldwork consisted of 19 depth interviews with partners and key stakeholders, and an online survey with 229 respondents.

The recommendations are being taken up by TLAP and adopted into its forthcoming work programme.

All work was undertaken by an independent evaluation consultant, Linda Jackson, during 2020. The complete written report is available on request from info@tlap.org.uk

DRIVERS OF IMPACT

- 76% strongly agreed or agreed that **TLAP produces and champions resources, materials and learning grounded in lived experience**
- 75% strongly agreed or agreed that **TLAP identifies the conditions that underpin quality, person-centred care**
- 72% strongly agreed or agreed that **TLAP increases the profile of personalised and community-based care and support in wider policy**
- 70% strongly agreed or agreed that **TLAP challenges, empowers and provides validation for the sector to explore and adopt approaches to increase people's choice and control**

'TLAP has most definitely been the champion of personalisation...It has a lot of trust within the sector, a lot of local authorities that look to TLAP for guidance, which it has done well.' Review interviewee

'The fact that co-production is at the heart of TLAP's work gives confidence that the resources are grounded in people's lived experience.' Survey respondent'

INDEPENDENT, HONEST BROKER

The evaluation shows the external value placed upon **TLAP's independent, brokerage role** and how that is an additional and important driver of impact:

'TLAP feels like an honest broker. It's not neutral, but it doesn't feel to me that TLAP is lobbying government for change, it feels like it is more working with. I think some of the stakeholder groups and members which work with TLAP find it difficult not to take a strong position. But TLAP is in more of a broker position, to find common ground between the parties. Committed to progress and change and having a positive impact on lives - but doing it in partnership rather than lobbying.' Evaluation interviewee

"On balance I think TLAP is between rock and hard place in telling truth to power. Moving in this space is very difficult. Our organisation would like to thank TLAP for occupying this space." Survey respondent

THE WIN-WIN OF THE PARTNERSHIP

The TLAP partnership is valued for its reach and range, its inclusivity and opportunity to bring diverse voices together around personalisation. It is an active partnership, with partners feeding into and drawing from it.

- 86% of partner respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they or their organisation **has drawn upon the resources, networks and other forms of support available as a TLAP partner.**
- 75% of partner respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they or their organisation **actively contributes to the TLAP partnership.**
- 78% of partner respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they or their organisation **is able to model good practice in co-production as a result of being a TLAP partner**
- 75% of partner respondents strongly agreed or agreed that being a TLAP partner **has a positive impact upon them or their organisation.**

'And I looked around, and it was a light bulb moment, I thought, we need to be connected to bigger networks that would add the greatest weight to our work. And I asked TLAP if we could become partner and they said yes, you can. At the beginning it felt odd, I mean, how helpful can we be? But I think we bring a huge range of perspectives and I've learnt loads and have found lots of useful events. And I hope our organisation has been able to pitch in as well. There are not many places where you get to find yourself at tables with much more influence than you have, and much more smaller organisations than you [to hear about] some smaller fantastic innovations happening.' Evaluation interviewee

GO-TO EXPERTS IN PERSONALISED CARE

When asked whether they would **recommend TLAP to their colleagues as go-to experts in personalised care and support, 80% of survey respondents answered 'yes'.**

'TLAP is recognised within the sector as an organisation with expertise on personalised care and support, and also on co-production. For this reason, they are usually seen as the 'go to' organisation for advice or practical support in these areas.' Evaluation interviewee

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT - AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING, KNOWLEDGE

When looking at the impact of TLAP on individual/organisational behaviour change:

- 72% either strongly agreed or agreed that access to TLAP resources improved their **awareness** of personalised and community-based care and support
- 77% strongly agreed or agreed that access to TLAP resources improved their **understanding** of what good personalised care and support looks like
- 71% strongly agreed or agreed that access to TLAP resources improved respondent's **knowledge** of how to embed personalisation into practice

'They've been a constant in terms of a source of expertise, knowledge, ability to point to shared learning.' Evaluation interviewee

'The written resources have been a great way to bring that inspiration back into my workplace and support my efforts to get others interested.'
Survey respondent

'Publications and resources on the website are excellent - setting out values and evidence base. My go to place to find information about self-directed support.' Survey respondent

'Conferences and workshops were the best way to network, now newsletter and webinars to stay connected.' Survey respondent

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT - PUTTING KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE

Almost two thirds of survey respondents - 64% - said that **as a result of accessing TLAP resources they or their organisation had put their knowledge into practice.**

This finding:

- attributes behaviour change as a direct result of TLAP's work
- suggests that TLAP could be more confident about its impact it on those that engage with the partnership
- suggests there could be value in TLAP asking their partners and networks to come forward more regularly with examples of how they have put their knowledge into practice

'The 'I' statements and 'We' statements [are] super important and super useful as a commissioner.' Survey respondent

'Making it Real is a brilliant toolkit; we've made good use of it and updated our pledges... it gives us a quality mark which was believable. Our staff and the people we support really got it and bought into it and use it, and they use the 'I' statements.' Evaluation interviewee

'I have used [Making it Real] with commissioned services.'
Survey respondent

'We have signed up to Making it Real and implemented a plan to ensure [it] was embedded throughout my organisation.' Survey respondent

'We use Making it Real perspective in our policy and improvement work.' Survey respondent

EXAMPLES OF IMPACT — ON SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORT

The evaluation generated a wide variety of examples of impact upon **self-directed support, as a direct result of accessing TLAP resources:**

'[We have] set up national committee of people with disabilities to help devise responsive, digital self-service approach to Direct Payments.' Survey respondent

'We've started work on reviewing Direct Payments to make them a flexible reality for all.' Survey respondent

'We're empowering people with learning disabilities or mental health needs to access personal budgets as this can open the door to great services and support.' Survey respondent

'[We] used resources to bring together key evidence and processes for business cases for ISFs. These helped get legal and procurement colleagues on board. ISFs are now in place in two LAs I've worked in. These are now offering another choice for people with learning disabilities and enabling a more personalised, creative and sustainable move away from block contracts.' Survey respondent

'[We have delivered] joint commissioning activities and service-user led improvement groups have shaped the support mechanisms around Direct Payments.' Survey respondent

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT - AT SECTOR AND NATIONAL LEVEL

The evaluation anticipated lower levels of impact at sector level and upon national policy due to the **many factors outside of TLAP's control that could halt or hinder progress towards personalised care.**

Indeed, evaluation participants described at length the challenges they faced on a daily basis and which often frustrated their ability to influence or quicken the pace of change.

Given this context, perceptions of impact against sector and national indicators were notably strong. It also emphasised **the value placed by respondents upon TLAP's positive vision for personalisation in future.**

- 66% strongly agreed or agreed and 16% somewhat agreed that **TLAP supports and strengthens co-production in the wider social care sector**

- 64% strongly agreed or agreed and 20% somewhat agreed that **TLAP equips providers, practitioners and commissioners with info/support**

- 58% strongly agreed or agreed and 17% somewhat agreed that **TLAP influences and shaped policy and legislation**

- 57% strongly agreed or agreed and 22% somewhat agreed that **TLAP equips, motivated and empowered the wider workforce**

- 55% strongly agreed or agreed and 23% somewhat agreed that **TLAP's work helps to narrow the rhetoric-reality gap between policy ambitions and the realities of people with lived experience**

“Working with TLAP is like taking a breath of fresh air in the woods. People, resources and activities/events keep me grounded, raise my awareness and understanding while also showing what a better world might be like.” Survey respondent

“I value your support and organisation. You fill an important gap for me, you help join things up and when I am involved with you I feel less isolated and more connected to the whole.” Survey respondent

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

People were invited to provide recommendations on how the TLAP partnership might increase its impact in future. These were wide-ranging and could even contradict each other - reflecting the wide variety of people and organisations engaging with the partnership.

The overarching request from participants in the evaluation was for the **TLAP partnership to continue to work with partners and government to shape a positive and strategic vision for social care, to create hope in the wider climate of delivery**. This reflects the high value placed upon the existing work of the TLAP partnership, particularly in terms of its push to create a positive vision for change.

Alongside this are six more specific recommendations based on the evaluation findings (as opposed to recommendations from individual respondents). **These are recommendations for the TLAP partnership in its widest sense rather than the TLAP core team alone.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. TLAP partnership talk more confidently of its impact and of the drivers of impact by:** raising awareness of impact at a strategic level; and driving key messages throughout the partnership.
- 2. TLAP partnership to reinvigorate the partnership and create more opportunities for two-way relationships by:** hosting more online events/space; reviewing and agreeing TLAP's scope and reach; reviewing the partner role; partners raising awareness within their organisations.
- 3. To review co-production practice and embed co-production more widely by:** widening the pool of people with lived experience to increase the diversity of voices; supporting wider and more systematic roll-out of co-production across local authorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4. Build momentum around personalised care by:** continuing to share examples of good practice; using these to demonstrate how they contribute to a national push for change; and continuing to raise awareness of progress towards personalisation
- 5. Reframe personalisation as relevant to tackling wider challenges facing social care by:** targeting case studies and materials at social service department leaders, particularly with examples of how personalised practice led to better outcomes (including financial outcomes); and exploring how personalisation is value for money
- 6. TLAP team to standardise data collection processes by:** collating key output data; and consider running a slimmed-down version of the survey on an annual basis

'TLAP motivates me to keep focusing on creating more personalised services.' Survey respondent

METHODOLOGY AND THEORY OF CHANGE

Appendices

Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) vision is that people live well; have a life not a service

What makes TLAP unique?

What does TLAP do?

What are TLAP's short term outcomes?

What is TLAP's longer term impact?

TLAP **convenes** and **harnesses** the expertise, experience and influence of partners, providers, commissioners and people with lived experience from across the sector.

As such, TLAP is built upon a **strong, credible and unique partnership** and is underpinned by **the golden thread of coproduction**.

TLAP **identifies** the conditions that underpin quality person-centred care, as expressed in *Making it Real*.

TLAP **produces and champions** resources, materials and learning which is grounded in lived experience and co-production

TLAP **challenges, empowers and provides validation** for the sector to explore and adopt approaches to increase people's choice and control

TLAP **influences and shapes** policy and legislation around personalisation

TLAP's work increases the body of people and organisations who:

- have access to good practice;
- know what good looks like; and
- put personalisation into practice.

Behaviour change

The **community** contains high quality, person and community-centred models of support

The **workforce** are motivated, equipped and empowered to deliver high quality personalised care

The **rhetoric-reality gap** between policy ambitions and realities of lived experience is narrowed

External drivers, barriers and risks

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The reach and role of the TLAP partnership - underpinned by a shared vision of personalisation and the 'golden thread' of co-production – was identified as the primary mechanism to effect change at policy and practitioner level.

The wider context of social care means that there are many steps between TLAP and the people who access care and support. This raises several challenges around how to measure several longer-term objectives around changing government policy and local practice, not to mention TLAP's vision for people to 'have a life, not a service'.

Given this, the evaluation framework sought to look more directly at the impact of TLAP upon the people and organisations that directly access TLAP's support as resources - whether as a partner or through the wider network – to understand the extent to which this engagement had changed their knowledge, awareness and understanding of personalised care, and indeed whether any had been tipped into practice.

In this way, the theory of change showed there was a critical *behaviour change* component at the heart of TLAP's work.

METHODOLOGY

Theory of change scoping took place between January and March 2020. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, fieldwork was delayed from April until September 2020. Data collection took place across three strands:

- **Review interviews:** 11 depth telephone/zoom interviews with board members and partners
- **Evaluation interviews:** eight depth telephone interviews with partners and key stakeholders
- **Online survey:** 229 people responded to the online survey (which was live for three weeks over October and November). This represented a 5% response rate from TLAP's database of newsletter subscribers.

Analysis and reporting took place in November and December, with a final revised report submitted in January 2021. Work was undertaken by [Linda Jackson](#), an independent evaluation consultant.