

NDTi Insights give you the most important bits of learning from a piece of work by the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi). We aim to make them quick to read; they point to more detailed materials for those who want more information.

Independent Living Strategy

Support planning and brokerage

Who should read this?

This report will be useful for a range of people – most notably for user-led organisations themselves to pick up on the experience of this innovative approach in practice, and also Local Authority Commissioners who are faced with the challenge of delivering a challenging agenda for change within the resources available.

Background

This report is based on a two year demonstration project which took place in three Local Authority areas and involved three leading user led organisations. This project formed a key part of delivering the Independent Living Strategy led by the Office for Disability Issues.

Purpose of Report

To show how to implement effective systems for enhancing choice and control for people receiving social care services in a pragmatic and effective way.

Summary

The Support, Advocacy and Brokerage project was set up by the Office for Disability Issues as part of the Independent Living Strategy that they had written.

It was based on the fact that disabled people often have problems in managing their own lives because of the way that professionals and their organisations work. This project tried to show a different way that care management could work by showing what happened when user led organisations did support planning and brokerage instead of care managers.

Main findings

- User led organisations (ULOs) were able to successfully deliver support planning and brokerage to a wide range of service users. They needed to adopt different approaches for people with different impairments and circumstances.
- Support planning was experienced by service users as more ‘human’ when delivered by a ULO than by a Local Authority (LA), with less bureaucracy involved.
- People whose support plan was facilitated by a ULO were more likely to take their personal budget (PB) as a direct payment (DP) than those whose support plan was delivered by the LA.
- ULOs can deliver positive advantages in reaching local people and supporting them to negotiate LA systems. ULOs need investment in capacity building and involvement in strategic partnerships with LAs to achieve this.
- Existing procurement systems present a significant barrier to the involvement of ULOs. LAs need to explore strategies to address this in order to optimise the contribution of ULOs.
- The involvement of ULOs in delivering services and support to disabled people can bring a number of benefits, at a time when LAs are considering how best to externalise certain functions.



Further NDTi Insights:

Also available in our Insights series is:

“Increasing the Voice, Choice & Control for Older People with High Support Needs”

Other Insights being published soon will cover:

Age Equality

Employment Planning

Mind Wellbeing Evaluation

www.ndti.org.uk/publications/ndti-insights

About this report

A copy of the full report is available at

<http://www.ndti.org.uk/publications/ndti-insights/insights-8-9-independent-living-strategy-projects/>

For more information on the Support Planning and Brokerage Project, please visit the NDTi website (link below) or call Steve Strong on 01225 789135.

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Main findings – continued

- Service users were generally very happy with the PB system, which allowed them more choice and control. Clear information about all aspects of PBs was critical to maximise this.
- Family carers regularly performed a key role in supporting their disabled family member. In most cases the PB system would not have worked without them.
- The development of the provider sector was seen as a priority; PBs were only useful if there were appropriate support services to buy.

Conclusions and key messages

- The current constraints on LA spending reinforce the need to ensure that available resources are spent as effectively as possible. Great emphasis is being placed on the potential role of voluntary and community sector. Within this area of interest ULOs bring some specific features that can be attractive to LAs considering how best to externalise certain functions.
- When delivered efficiently and making full use of voluntary peer resources, ULOs can deliver good value for money in reaching local people and supporting them to negotiate LA systems. ULOs are often engaged with people’s whole lives and this should help LAs in broader areas of activity (e.g. Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Community Budgets) as well as in more focussed areas such as social care, Right to Control and Personal Health Budgets.
- For this to work ULOs need investment in capacity building. This was one of the reasons that Essex County Council seconded a member of LA staff to work for Essex Coalition of Disabled People on the Support, Advocacy and Brokerage project, thus ensuring the ULO had ready access to knowledge of LA systems and contacts.
- This project has shown the potential value of ULO engagement in delivering services historically seen as LA care management responsibilities. But shifting from one way of delivering these services to the other is not a short term fix and the challenges of making these changes needs to be anticipated, resourced and planned for.
- Other ULOs, in other areas, will bring their own strengths and styles of working to their involvement in support planning and brokerage. Such variety derives at least partly from their specific histories, localities and users.
- The evidence from this project is that where people work with ULOs to produce their support plans, they are more likely to choose a direct payment, than if their support planning is led by the LA. This is significant, given the intention of Government policy to encourage a greater use of direct payments as the personalisation agenda is implemented.

