

Now it's Personal conference

May 27th 2010, Leeds

Introduction

This report aims to contribute to the debate around the personalisation agenda in children's services. It attempts to summarise the conference and the wide-ranging dialogue and range of perspectives which were articulated from across the Yorkshire and Humber (Y&H) region. Over fifty people attended, from across the voluntary and statutory sectors, including local infrastructure workers, local authority (LA) and PCT commissioners, as well as service provider and parents' organisations.

The event was one of a longstanding series of half-day seminars organised by the Children England Y& H regional group, in partnership with VCS Engage, a regional infrastructure support programme funded by DCSF (as it was then) and managed nationally by Children England.

We were pleased to take a regional lead on initiating debate about personalisation in children and young people's services, especially at this time, just after a change of government. Personalisation was supported by the previous government but the new Coalition seems likely to move forward the change agenda in new ways which we are just beginning to understand and respond to. The event placed the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the forefront of the debate. The actions which were formulated in group discussions are summarised at the end of this report and will, we are sure, be picked up by the excellent networks which exist in this region.

We would like to acknowledge the support and policy input from Emilie Whitaker, Personalisation Policy Lead from Children England, whose generous and well-informed contribution was important in the setting up, planning and delivery of this event.

Lesley Wood, VCS Engage Y&H Regional Development Manager

Millie Cummings, Northern Regional Manager Action for Children and Chair of the Children England Y&H Regional Group

Background

The issue of personalisation was selected as a topic for one of the Children England Y&H seminar series following discussions at meetings of the Children England Y&H regional group. The debates had been lively and those present felt that, as practitioners keenly interested in achieving the best outcomes for children, and still unclear about the potential impact/s of personalisation and individual budgets, it was timely to open up the debate at regional level.

There was also evidence from across the region of patchy take up of initiatives such as Individual Budget pilots and work with development and consultancy organisations such as In Control. Nevertheless the group felt that the agenda was likely to become increasingly important and that the VCS should be prepared to take a lead.

Overall, the intelligence provided by Children England suggested the pressing need for further discussion, for example, about the evidence on outcomes, what support and brokerage arrangements might be needed, and how personalised care might be funded. The event was devised to bring together enthusiasts, practitioners, doubters and critics to raise questions, challenges, hopes and fears, and to make suggestions for moving forward.

Outline of the event

- **Introduction and overview**

Joyce Thacker, Rotherham DCS and VCS 'Champion' on the regional group of Directors of Children's Services, followed by an overview presentation by **Pippa Murray** from In Control, a leading organisation in the field working with local authorities and others to develop models and approaches (<http://www.in-control.org.uk>)

- **Workshops**

- 1. How personalisation might work for children, young people & families**

Jo Harvey, a children's services specialist from Helen Sanderson Associates, an international consultancy working in the field (<http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk/>)

Sue Cawkwell, Regional Director of Kids, an organisation for parents of disabled children, was to have co-presented this session but had to give her apologies- she sent the following statement:

"One thing that I have learnt by being part of a small pilot is that families have tended to go for the 'ordinary'. They want support to access mainstream services and additional help in the form of 'an extra pair of

hands' to enable them to lead ordinary lives. Families and young people are looking for the same choices and experiences as every other family, but some need a higher level of additional support in order to make this possible. In addition to the disabled child and their parents; it's also important that siblings' needs are recognised. Some of the brothers and sisters we worked with had just one wish - to spend some quality time with their parents."

2, Challenges and Opportunities

Gill Crawshaw, from Volition, a Leeds-based mental health VCS organisation, with experience of similar models in mental health, copy of report here



Volition summary
report personalisator

Emilie Whitaker, from Children England, with information on personalisation in children's services, including work in local authorities across our region,



Yorkshire and
Humber personalisat

Panel debate

All the speakers reassembled to answer questions and engage in debate with delegates

Group discussions about ways forward

Sharing and action planning

Networking lunch

Key Findings

Delegates were asked about their hopes, fears and key questions and responded as shown below:

Hopes

- This will create a much more flexible, child and family centred delivery of support.
- That families get a chance to live their own lives
- That CYP will have much more flexible opportunities, **quickly**
- This will give CYP and their families a much better stake in the society
- That CYP and families are empowered to take responsibility for improving their outcomes
- That life chances for children and families are improved
- That **all** parents/carers/families can access what they need and that it is not only for the ones in the know
- Hope personalisation is available for every child that needs it
- That CYP and families achieve the lives they want and that the VCS works collectively

- Hope we can get people to talk to each other more and build the important trust we need to move forward
- Lots of opportunities to think creatively and learn from each other
- I hope that this is the opportunity for creative and innovative work
- An opportunity to make our service more flexible
- That personalisation will allow us to do what a lot of us originally went in to the work to do- help in a creative way that is person-centred and responsive. Funding regimes have tied our hands and stifled the creativity of the sector
- The VCS can rise to the challenge and show that we can do the job well
- That agencies who are very good at person-centred provision and participation are acknowledged and learnt from in all this
- Local infrastructure support network for CYP VCS can be pro-active in raising personalisation with local Children's Trust
- That LAs will support providers in marketing their service
- That personalisation pilots (adults) share learning and develop joint working with children's services
- That LAs are effective in learning from roll-out in adult services when approaching CYP and families- evidence already shows that this is the case, which is positive
- That it works well and doesn't fall in to the same traps and dogma of adult services
- Personalisation will influence all policy development (eg Early Intervention and Prevention) and not **just** be seen as Individual Budgets (IBs)
- Personalised Budgets will enable outcomes of person-centred planning to become a reality- and not hit the buffer of "there isn't the funding to do that.."
- Consistent follow-through from Aiming High- pass the baton on with commitment from budget holders to ensure access is supported
- That it will lead to young people receiving better quality services whilst at the same time either reducing or at least maintaining the current levels of costs
- That Community Anchor organisations are an integral part of the community network required in the personalisation agenda (eg around support planning and managing budgets)

Fears

- That parents become overwhelmed with yet another system to battle through to have to fight for the budget their child deserves
- That the market will not be developed to ensure that people have real choice. LA 'in house' services are very resistant to change and funding cuts may mean that LAs tighten their grip on the resources they have
- LAs reluctance to take services outside for fear of their own staff's jobs
- That VCS and faith sector are excluded at strategic level in determining delivery at local level
- Council gatekeepers will frustrate commonsense and helpful approaches from the third sector
- I fear that LAs have not got the imagination or confidence to engage the third sector in innovative ways of working
- That LAs will struggle to engage in open dialogue/partnership with providers to work together to achieve outcomes **quickly** enough

- New government, cuts to funding, conflicting priorities and a mixed market of service provision- all very complex!
- Budgets, cutbacks, effects on voluntary and statutory sector
- That recession stymies the huge potential of personalisation and damages the VCS
- Same size pot of money- more people/organisations wanting a piece
- Personalised Budgets (PBs) will prove too costly- some areas already halting pilots and PBs have been put on 'back burner' leaving young people in limbo and unable to plan because they have lost their budget allocation
- Managing a transition to IBs/person-centred planning against a background of expected cuts in funding might be too big a step for voluntary and community organisations (VCOs)
- The VCS may not have the skills to unit cost and market their service
- That there isn't sufficient money to make this happen
- That our services may be very expensive
- Will be used to ration services by raising 'thresholds'
- Generic support services for young people might just fade away because they are not specific enough (eg MarketPlace in Leeds)
- That good VCS services will be lost as a result of failing to reach critical mass in terms of individual funding
- That the VCS is negatively affected- services/providers restricted due to capacity and identity of sector diminished with move into competitive business model
- Certain services will go from area due to lack of uptake
- That the LA like what the VCS do, 'pinch' the model to take in house and take VCS funding away, then LA lose the funding and return to the VCS who have to start again (this has happened!)
- That personalisation does not become mandatory in CYP services

Questions

- Are there enough safeguards in place to protect CYP from abuse and financial misconduct?
- What about the families who have children in mainstream schools with needs? And those who are not helped by social care services?
- What about people who are not eligible?
- How do 'hard to reach' people engage with such weighty issues, even with support?
- How will LAs guarantee longer-term funding and respond to the changing needs of young people?
- How on earth do you get LAs to notice the services you can design and deliver for users and so enable users to see/choose them?
- How does assessment for eligibility work in mental health? Particularly for CYP- is it based on traditional medical model diagnostic system and does this work against person-centredness?
- How do I support VCOs to take this on positively- especially in a recession?
- How do we secure third sector infrastructure funding so as to be able to offer service requested by individuals? Has this been solved anywhere? Case studies on the website please!

- Do third sector services need more on full cost recovery models- to cost services effectively and efficiently and demonstrate best value/transparency?
- Who can help VCOs to put charging policies in place?
- How can we make sure VCS voice and influence leads to action? We need a body to challenge and have 'teeth'- **not** the Compact
- Is there a national timetable for implementation of personalisation for CYP?
- How can we link CYP with adult services to promote personalisation?
- How will Personalisation, the Right to Control and Adult and CYP services agendas all work together?
- How are IBs administered in practice?
- If families spend all their budget for the year, how do they re-think new needs for the next year? Does budget reduce? How much money do families actually get? Is it £5,000, £10,000, £50,000???
- What if budget is spent and family hit a crisis?

Issues from panel debate

- How do you ensure safeguarding is adequate when employing a PA? Is there a conflict of interest for them in reporting concerns? As they are less likely to be social or health care professionals and will they know who to report concerns to?
- Personalisation is built upon trusting people and supporting them, through building positive relationships.
- Very important that developments in CYP services learn key lessons from adult care.
- On Safeguarding- more control, autonomy and greater 'say' for young people can lead to greater safety and improved ability to manage risk. Being empowered, encouraged to participate in communities and groups increases safety- young person knows people and they know him/her.
- How can LAs move forward? The VCS can help- it's the way the sector works- could develop cross sector training and shadowing. Can support moving from seeing people as clients to working with them as partners?
- Power needs to shift- professionals may feel threatened- need good case studies to show what is in it for them.
- Health and social care services (and budgets) need to be joined up.
- Planning role is important potential place for the VCS (egs user-led organisations, 'niche' providers such as Sheffield Somali community group). Also could provide support around service brokerage.
- How do we create a more relevant and flexible workforce? Some LAs are setting up registers for Personal Assistants (PAs). Need to develop a whole new approach to recruitment, training, employment arrangements and support for PAs. This would be good done locally- another role for VCS?

- When there are not enough resources to go round does personalisation mean getting families to do the rationing? It needs to be a challenge shared by everyone.

Ways forward (from small group discussions)

- VCS needs to play to its strengths- flexibility and in-depth knowledge of communities- should be taking a lead. Can use our 'place at the table' eg on Children's Trusts, to promote this agenda
- More collaboration, information-sharing and events across the VCS. Useful to engage organisations who are already starting to meet the challenges- to share good practice. Spread information and promote debate around all VCS networks.
- Demonstrate to LAs that we can do things better, and without the bureaucracy
- Important to link with user-led organisations within the VCS
- Still need more information about how it actually works in practice
- Need continuity of positive relationships with LAs and more mutual understanding and respect to work things out together. VCS to position itself strategically- find the right people in the LA (and elsewhere) to collaborate with to overcome LA barriers to positive change
- Need good case studies- demonstrating innovation, creativity and effectiveness, as well as value for money. Develop a strong business case around VCS role.
- Keep up the 'idealism' of personalisation
- Lots of work to do on marketing the sector- use brochures, web content etc. Align with current planning priorities
- Look at the workforce issues- recruiting and supporting a new, flexible workforce
- Need support for introducing unit-cost and charging regimes- demonstrate cost-benefit of economies of scale for this through current infrastructure resources
- Work more actively with parents' organisations- support parents' voice to improve services, Also help to 'skill up' parents and provide information eg clarify 'employment' responsibilities of families
- Learn from existing models, eg in adult services, looked-after children etc

- Keep making the arguments about 'real' commissioning
- Get linked in to infrastructure- locally (see attached leaflet), regionally (via www.vcsengage-yorkshire.net) and nationally (eg via Children England, NAVCA etc)
- Lots of local good practice (Woodthorpe Development Trust), sub-regional group on self-directed support- can be shared using www.vcsengage-yorkshire.net
- Keep thinking through the hard times! Especially 'doing more with less'- being creative in meeting needs
- All organisations to take it on- think through the implications, make decisions, make changes, gather evidence and do the marketing
- Key co-ordinating roles for infrastructure organisations and workers:
 - ✓ Support front-line organisations around managing change eg working out unit-costs and charging policies
 - ✓ Raising awareness and providing information
 - ✓ Sharing good practice and case studies
 - ✓ Organising events and supporting collaboration and partnership
 - ✓ Promoting dialogue within and across sectors
 - ✓ Forge links with user-led and parents organisations and support their voice and influence
 - ✓ Maintain pressure to develop more imaginative commissioning practice
 - ✓ Engage smaller providers. Could work on a preferred suppliers list of micro-providers of services
 - ✓ Support around employment- CRB and ISA checks, recruitment and registration of PA workforce
 - ✓ Brokerage role and support for CYP and families to access services
 - ✓ Lots of work to do on marketing the sector
 - ✓ Cost-benefit of this work needs to be demonstrated

Recommendations

For VCS service providers:

- Find out what is happening around personalisation in your area (see document provided by Children England, above, and contact infrastructure workers <http://www.vcsengage-yorkshire.net/content/updated-network-contact-info> and Commissioning Champions <http://www.vcsengage-yorkshire.net/content/commissioning-news>)- make the links and begin discussions about whether there are opportunities for your organisation
- Look at how you might need to adapt- new marketing approaches, unit-cost calculations, charging policies
- Don't neglect your advocacy role if personalisation is not working for the most disadvantaged families, or if it accentuates inequality, or if it is used to 'ration' services unfairly
- Get involved strategically to share the VCS' skills in person-centred practice and ensure that the VCS provider market is developed and well integrated with children and young people services
- Get well-informed about the policy background (lots of links and info in this report), including the lessons from adult services
- Look for collaboration and partnership to provide economies of scale and mutual support

For VCS infrastructure organisations:

- VCS needs to play to its strengths- flexibility and in-depth knowledge of communities- should be taking a lead. Can use our 'place at the table' eg on Children's Trusts, to promote this agenda
- Support front-line organisations around managing change eg working out unit-costs and charging policies
- Raise awareness and provide information about policy developments
- Organise events and support collaboration and partnership
- Forge links with user-led and parents' organisations and support their voice and influence
- Maintain pressure to develop more imaginative commissioning practice
- Engage smaller providers e.g. preferred suppliers list of micro-providers of services

- Support around employment- CRB and ISA checks, recruitment and registration of PA workforce, cross sector training and shadowing
- Brokerage and support role for CYP and families to access services
- Market the sector. Develop case studies demonstrating innovation, creativity and effectiveness, as well as cost-benefit. Use range of communications to get the key messages across to a range of audiences
- Develop a strong business case around VCS role.
- Share good practice (e.g. Woodthorpe Development Trust, sub-regional group on self-directed support) using www.vcsengage-yorkshire.net
- Keep thinking through the hard times! Especially 'doing more with less'- being creative in meeting needs

For statutory sector:

- Engage the VCS, through infrastructure workers and representatives, as a key partner in developing personalisation
- Get support from the VCS in specific aspects eg recruitment, training, employment arrangements and support for PAs, market development, person-centred practice, service brokerage
- Ensure you are well-informed and linked in with policy developments
- Introduce commissioning policies which develop provider markets imaginatively to meet individual needs

Further information

Evaluation

Over 50% of participants returned evaluation forms. Feedback was very positive, valuing the diverse mix of participants at the event and wide range of speakers. Many thought it was important that the conference was participatory and interactive. Several commented that they were being offered not 'answers', but pointers for their own thinking, development and next steps for their organisations to take.

Useful reading and web links

Presentations and other background reading were available in the delegates pack and will be distributed alongside this report and at www.vcsengage-yorkshire.net, including a Children England briefing with overview information and an update on what local authorities in our region are doing on Personalisation in children and young people's services, and a report from the Commissioning Support Programme about commissioning for personalisation, including useful policy background.

Useful websites and links

- In Control, a leading consultancy in the field, working with several local authorities in this region
www.in-control.org.uk
- Helen Sanderson Associates, a leading consultancy working on person-centred planning and tools
<http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk>
- Centre for Welfare Reform, a new organisation, based in Sheffield, starting to publish reports and case studies mostly from this region
www.centreforwelfarereform.org.uk
- Support Solutions, another consultancy providing training and resources.
<http://www.supportsolutions.co.uk>
- Case Study from Gateshead CYP Partnership on Personalised Funding
<http://www.gatesheadcyptrust.co.uk/processes/funding/index.htm>
- Third Sector Research Centre report on the third sector and personalisation
<http://www.tsrc.ac.uk/Research/ServiceDeliverySD/Thepersonalisationagenda/tabid/646/Default.aspx>
- Department of Health Care Networks
<http://www.dhcarenetworks.org.uk/personalisation/index.cfm>
- ACEVO commission on personalisation
<http://www.acevo.org.uk/personalisation>
- NCVO Third Sector Foresight
<http://www.3s4.org.uk/drivers/personalisation-of-care-and-individual-budgets>
- Commissioning Support Programme documents (***Personalisation: the 7 steps of self-directed support*** and ***Commissioning for personalisation***)
<http://www.commissioningsupport.org.uk/cs/CSP/SiteSearch/ResourceBank.aspx?terms=personalisation&new=1>