



**Cynorthwyo Pobl a'n Cymunedau
Supporting People and our Communities**

SELF DIRECTED SERVICES: A BRIEFING PAPER

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1) Introduction

The terms 'Self Directed Care' and 'Self Directed Services' are used to denote a range of options and methodologies which aim to put service users more in control of the assessment, funding, organisation and delivery of their services.

The movement towards such methodologies is widespread in England, most obviously through the work of the In Control project on Individual Budgets, and has received official government support. A growing number of English local authorities now deliver a substantial proportion of services in this way.

Interest is also growing in Wales as evidenced by the recent formation of In Control Cymru and the interest and/or participation of a number of local authorities in piloting self directed projects. The Welsh Assembly is holding a watching brief on the English experiment but has expressed a desire to move forward with the self directed agenda through the medium of improving the take up of Direct Payments.

2) Purpose of this paper

This paper aims to identify and explain the main approaches to the delivery of self directed services and the funding streams associated with them.

The advocates of the self directed approach claim considerable successes and advantages for service users. There are similarly those who perceive significant risks and dangers in some of the approaches. This paper does not seek to offer an opinion as to the merits or demerits of the various arguments.

3) Self Directed Approaches

As noted above, self directed services include a number of approaches that aim to put service users more in control of the assessment, funding, organisation and delivery of their services. These are generally characterised under two headings which denote (to a greater or lesser degree) relevant funding streams and service delivery methodologies.

- Direct Payments
- Individualised Budgets

There is also a third option, sometimes regarded as a 'half way house' towards Individual Budgets but worth considering as a viable option in its own right:

- Individual Service Accounts

3.1 Direct Payments (DP)

As noted above, this is the approach favoured by the Welsh Assembly Government which has, via the Deputy Minister's letter to local authorities, recently committed itself to improving the take up of Direct Payments. The 2007 Survey of Direct Payments identified 1,360 adults in Wales who were receiving direct payments, just 1.48% of all adults in receipt of social care services. A further 241

direct payment arrangements were in place to children with disabilities, or received by parents on behalf of a child.

In 2004 WAG issued Section 7 guidance which placed a duty on local authorities to offer direct payments to all who may be potentially eligible to receive them. This now includes people over 65 and children. Implementation of this guidance is variable to say the least with many social services departments virtually ignoring it. The reasons for this include a lack of understanding of DP by social workers and other stakeholders, limited training and awareness-raising, and concerns about the risks and responsibilities involved. More detail can be found in the 2007 Survey.

In general, direct payments have the following characteristics

- Individual's needs are assessed by care managers under the unified assessment or other current system which produces an assessment of hours of care and support required.
- It covers only personal and social care needs delivered in a person's home or community. It does not include housing related support, residential, or health care.
- The package is costed at an hourly rate as determined by social services to produce a figure for the direct payment. Other one off, or ongoing costs (such as purchasing a brokerage, payroll or accounting service) should be included if agreed in the package.
- Funding comes from the social services community care fund.
- Cash payments are made directly to an individual's bank account, usually one set up specifically for the purpose
- The individual may employ their own personal assistants, or purchase from an agency, although the local authority may restrict choices to 'approved' individuals or providers. The service user must account in detail to the LA for their expenditure, and show that the service purchased meets their assessed need.

3.2 Individual Budgets

This is the approach promoted by In Control and favoured by the Westminster government, and over 100 local authorities, for the development of self directed services in England.

WAG is not currently supportive of the individual budgets approach but is watching how the system develops in England. Four Welsh authorities, Wrexham, Flint, Monmouthshire and Powys are signed up to progressing IB. Wrexham (as of April 2008) had 10 service users in receipt of Individual Budgets and had declared an intention to move 10 people per month onto similar arrangements.

Individual Budgets are approached in a number of ways; however, using the In Control model, they are generally characterised as follows.

- The individual's needs are assessed preferably through a self assessment process or, if that is not possible, with a circle of support which includes the individual, their family, friends, advocates etc.

- The assessment is linked to a resource allocation system (often a points based questionnaire) from which is derived an amount to make up the individual service fund. (points = £s)
- The fund can roll up together Supporting People money, Community Care, ILF and Disabled Facilities grant and Access to Work. The English pilots also included Integrated Community Equipment Services.
- The individual may choose to access their fund in a variety of ways
 - i) As a direct cash payment to be managed by themselves.
 - ii) As a cash payment to be managed on their behalf (frequently for a fee) by their agent, their trust, their broker or a service provider of their choice
 - iii) They may leave all, or a part of their fund (eg for day services) to be managed by social services/local authority
 - iv) Whoever manages the money it is the needs, choices and preferences of the individual that should be the controlling influence on decisions
- The individual (or their agents) may choose to employ personal assistants themselves, fund access to community services or activities or engage the services of a provider agency. Whichever process is chosen, the individual or agent must still account for their expenditure to the authority and show that the service purchased meets their assessed need. Both the assessment and amount of the fund may be adjusted to reflect circumstances
- Under current arrangements the constituent elements of the fund must be spent in accordance with the specifications/regulations governing their use. E.g. The Supporting People element must be spent on housing related support
- Any periodic surpluses should accrue to the individual's on-going fund although a 'claw back' arrangement may be used, often to fund emergency requirements.

3.3 Individual Service Accounts (ISA)

This approach is being used by some providers, notably in Scotland, such as Inclusion Glasgow and C-Change, where they are referred to as Individual Service Funds.

It will be noted that Individual Budgets require that the local authority change their 'traditional' assessment and funding methodology. As noted above, however, the majority of Wales' local authorities do not appear to be ready to embrace a change to self directed services, whether as Direct Payments or Individual Budgets.

ISAs provide an opportunity for service providers to develop a more transparent and person centred approach to funding and service delivery, as well as potentially demonstrating the advantages of self directed support, within the local authority's current arrangements.

Recent reports in the press (Guardian June 26th 2008) have indicated that local authorities in England will be asked to make similar arrangements for all people in receipt of state funded care and support. This would involve informing all recipients of the cost of their package of care and inviting them to suggest changes that might offer better value or meet their needs better.

This approach may be characterised as follows.

- The provider contracts with the local authority under normal 'block' contracting arrangements
- The block 'grant' is then disaggregated to provide a ring fenced Individual Service Account for each participating individual, based on their personal service specification, which is then administered by the provider as a separate service fund specifically for that person
- Services are planned and delivered with and for the individual and the agency is accountable to the person for the proper management of their ISA. The provider remains accountable to the local authority for administering the block grant under normal arrangements
- Overheads and management charges are capped at an agreed percentage as is an 'insurance fund' for periods of more intensive support or emergencies.
- People who live in shared accommodation may agree to purchase some shared support, eg sleep in, if necessary and appropriate. However individuals should not be compelled to purchase, or contribute towards, specific services they do not personally require simply because they share a property with people who do.

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