

Systems, Practice and Support of Professional Social Work under Self-Directed Support

A Resource for Local Authorities wishing to provide Guidance for staff

Context

This paper is one in a series from In Control. It is intended to provide Local Authorities with a **model**, which they can use to inform local practice, and in particular to assist in the writing of guidance for their staff. The material is all open-source and can be borrowed or adapted as desired. We ask that In Control is credited if this happens.

Local circumstances and priorities differ. This means that we are unable here to provide detailed staff guidance that is applicable universally: instead we provide what we believe to be an appropriate basis for guidance, which we will supplement with suitable local examples as these become available.

This paper is based largely on the work of a group of “Total Transformation” authorities working together to define and specify the contribution professional social workers might make to Self-Directed Support (the paper which sets this out is referred to below as the *Social Workers’ Contribution* paper.) It also draws on a parallel project on safeguarding and on a number of other Local Authority sources.¹

The guidance is structured in the form of a table which is based upon In Control’s **seven-stop model** of Self-Directed Support. This is followed by an important section on **Helping People to Stay Safe**, which applies throughout the process.

Terminology

This paper uses terms in the following ways:

- A *social worker* is a qualified professional, subject to registration as such by the General Social Care Council, and thereby to the GSCC Social Care Code of Practice
- *Care management* is a function, one of a set of tasks in the old social care system, and one which can be carried out by a variety of people, social workers and others.
- We use the term *citizen* to denote a member of the community, with attendant rights and responsibilities. Citizens who are in receipt of a personal budget from the Local Authority are *Personal Budget Holders*; they are *Individual Budget Holders* if they receive budgets from multiple funding sources. We avoid the terms *client* and *service user*.

¹ *Self-Directed Support, Social Workers’ Contribution* (available at www.in-control.org.uk) provides an account of the contribution social workers can make to transformed systems. The present paper draws the practice implications from the role defined there. This paper also draws on a number of sources in relation to safeguarding practice, including the ADASS paper, Safeguarding and Personalisation. This is also available on the In Control site.

Social workers' contribution

The following table takes as its starting point the seven step model of Self-Directed Support and the social work tasks defined in the *Social Workers' Contribution* paper. It sets out the systems, practice and professional support implications of these tasks. Three important points need to be made at the outset:

- Social work of course happens in a variety of settings, alongside a range of professional colleagues and with a number of different core responsibilities. Local arrangements will need to flex in response to these differences.
- All Local Authorities have a pre-existing series of policies and procedures. In drawing on what follows, Authorities need to cross-reference and to make changes as necessary.
- The process for an individual does not always follow the seven steps simplistically: sometimes there is a need to track back and re-visit earlier steps to assist the citizen to reach a satisfactory solution to their support needs.

Step	The social work role <i>(as defined in the Social Workers' Contribution paper)</i>	Systems, Practice and Professional Support
<p>Step One: My money, finding out how much</p>	<p>Professional social workers have a role in helping some people understand and complete the supported self-assessment process; and in coming to terms with the emotional impact of life changes and their need for support. Social work training encourages a more holistic view of the person in their social and economic environment, and this perspective is often crucial at this stage.</p> <p>LAs will need effective systems for ensuring that social workers are called upon where they are needed. The key challenge here is to try to help the person accurately portray their level of need, without under- or over-estimation.</p> <p>If a family carer is involved, they will be invited to complete a carers' assessment.</p> <p>(It is important to remember that the full assessment process as required by law is not confined to this step, but also includes elements of writing and signing-off the support plan, steps two and three).</p>	<p>A system that defines the circumstances where professional social work intervention is required in helping someone to understand and complete supported self assessment. These will be in one or more of the following situations:</p> <p>When the person asks for such help.</p> <p>When the person's family or others supporters ask for such help.</p> <p>When contact centre or other Local Authority staff judge that such help is required.</p> <p>These judgements must take account of the fact that professional social work is rarely the only source of assistance for someone; in many circumstances others are better placed to help. Professional social workers are however well-placed to help where the person seems to present particularly complex circumstances or where guidance is clearly needed and there is no-one else to available to provide this.</p> <p>In supporting someone to understand and complete a supported self assessment, social workers will always:</p> <p>Take account of the emotional impact of life changes on the citizen seeking support.</p> <p>Do their utmost to ensure that the citizen understands why they are being asked to complete the procedure, and in particular to understand the implications for Resource Allocation.</p> <p>Assist the citizen to make good use of the process to begin thinking about the outcomes they desire, and their support plan.</p>

		<p>Ensure that the citizen understands the next steps in the process, the likely timescales and who they can turn to if they need further help.</p> <p>Further guidance can be found in the Entitlements Library and on the Resource Allocation section of the In Control website at www.in-control.org.uk</p>
<p>Step Two: Making my Plan</p>	<p>The skill set and interests of many professional social workers are ideally suited for this set of tasks, and in some instances the social worker will be the best person to do it. Social workers, are trained to help people to assess, manage and take appropriate risks, and as LAs move away from overly risk-averse policies and procedures, social workers are well-placed to assist with more person-centred ways of managing risk.</p> <p>Professional social workers should also possess the skills to support and facilitate other people to make best use of their own interests and skills, and should be aware of other support planning options available locally.</p> <p>Professional social workers need to try to ensure that the whole process is integrated and iterative - from the perspective of the citizen: the support plan is the heart of this process, but the full process runs through the seven steps from assessment to review, and back to the start again if necessary.</p>	<p>A system that defines the circumstances where professional social work intervention is required in helping someone to think about and make a support plan. These will be in one or more of the following situations:</p> <p>When the person asks for such help.</p> <p>When the person’s family or others supporters ask for such help.</p> <p>When other Local Authority staff judge that such help is required.</p> <p>These judgements must take account of the fact that professional social work is rarely the only source of assistance for someone, and in many circumstances others are better placed to help.</p> <p>In assisting someone to make a support plan, social workers will keep in mind that a support plan seeks answers to the following:</p> <p>What is important to the person?</p> <p>What is important for the person?</p> <p>What do they wish to change?</p> <p>How will they arrange their support?</p> <p>How will they spend their money and manage their support?</p> <p>How will they stay in control?</p> <p>They also need to ensure that the person understands the next steps in the process, the likely timescales and who they can turn to if they need further help.</p>

		<p>There are many sources of help available in relation to support planning. See:</p> <p>The Supports Library on the In Control website at: www.in-control.org.uk ; the HSA website at: www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk and the Support Planning and Review website at: http://www.supportplanning.org.</p>
<p>Step Three: Getting my plan agreed</p>	<p>Core social work skills are of great relevance and many of the decisions needed will be familiar to social workers from other areas of practice.</p> <p>Social workers should be effective and experienced in challenging support plans when these are not completely fit for purpose, and in so doing helping people to make real, informed choices.</p> <p>In agreeing someone's plan the Local Authority social worker will need to "think outcomes," in particular the seven outcomes set out by the Care Quality Commission.²</p>	<p>A system that supports social workers to make judgements about support plans based upon an understanding of the person, their strengths and needs, and what is achievable for the person in their situation, making best use of their Individual Budget.</p> <p>Plans need to be broad in scope and ambition, whilst focusing upon the specific outcomes the person desires, and on how these will be achieved. A good plan need to cover, or at least consider all of the following ground:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Money available Help in decision making Help in further planning What is working/not working now Personal identity and goals Hopes, fears, preferences – short term Hopes, fears, preferences – long term Key non-negotiables for the individual Support to realise the plan Communication issues Staying healthy and safe

² See the appropriate page on the CQC website at <http://www.cqc.org.uk/guidanceforprofessionals/socialcare/councils/councilinspectionreports/howweinspectandrateyourcouncil.cfm>

		<p>Contingency plans</p> <p>Finally, the plan needs to ensure that all eligible needs are provided for.</p> <p>There are many sources of guidance available in relation to what makes a good support plan. These include the documents <i>Top Tips</i> and <i>In the Driving Seat</i>, which provide ideas for structure and content. A paper entitled <i>Quality Assurance and Support Planning</i> suggests a number of alternative approaches, with implications for the role of professional social workers. See:</p> <p>the Supports Library on the In Control website at: www.in-control.org.uk and the HSA website at: www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk</p>
<p>Step Four: Organising my money</p>	<p>Social work core skills will be highly relevant for many of the decisions required for someone to complete this step. They are in a good position to advise and assist people about the different “management options” for their Individual Budget, and about where to turn for specialist support to make use of each of these.</p> <p>Social workers are often in a good position to mediate between the person at the centre and the Local Authority as commissioner, and this role will be just as important in the transformed system.</p> <p>Social workers may have important specific roles in relation to arrangements such as Individual Service Funds, where there may be a need to advocate on behalf of the person, and to work alongside providers to help them change the ways they deliver</p>	<p>A system that defines the circumstances where professional social work intervention is required in helping individuals make use of local resources to manage their Individual Budget. This needs careful specification as there are a wide variety of support systems available across localities. Local procedures need to ensure that social workers have a good awareness of:</p> <p>Options for management of Individual Budget</p> <p>Options for different contractual arrangements</p> <p>Legal constraints, e.g. on use of Direct Payments and the Well being powers of the Local Authority</p> <p>Opportunities offered via local IB Support Services, independent brokers and provider organisations</p> <p>Employment law and Human Resource issues, payroll support etc; and where to source specialist local support on these</p> <p>Knowledge of local provider arrangements, and</p>

	<p>support.</p>	<p>in particular any existing contracts and Individual Service Fund arrangements. Where social workers need more specialist advice, they need to know where to go for this.</p> <p>For more information on the management options for Individual Budgets, see the Controlling Your Budget page of the In Control website, at:</p> <p>www.in-control.org.uk</p>
<p>Step Five: Organising my support</p>	<p>Professional social workers have broad based skill sets, which are responsive to both individual and system, and which should be particularly well attuned to the complexities of effectively linking the two.</p> <p>This may be especially important where someone has no-one else in their life to provide help.</p> <p>Social workers are selected and trained in part on the basis of their ability to think broadly and in a lateral manner: the old care management system has not always utilised these skills to the full, but they are attributes that are critical to the success of Self-Directed Support.</p>	<p>A system that defines the circumstances where professional social work intervention is required in helping someone to organise their support. This system needs to pick up and respond to indications from the earlier steps in the process that the citizen requires such assistance.</p> <p>The professional social work task here will include some or all of the following:</p> <p><i>Managing support:</i> some people need the worker to assist them to organise and manage their support, to problem-solve and mentor them as necessary. This may require support with a mix of life and social skills, time management, financial planning and relationship management.</p> <p><i>Service design:</i> some people will need assistance to design and build a service around them – in effect to take the support plan and to use it as a guide to commission support that works for them.</p> <p><i>Empowerment and organisation:</i> the worker needs to assist the individual to plan the practicalities of day-to-day support, setting out agreeing and sometimes negotiating how particular activities and services can help to achieve outcomes.</p> <p><i>Overcoming disability discrimination and advocacy:</i> the worker needs to ensure that supports and services are accessible to the</p>

		<p>citizen, and challenge appropriately when they are not.</p> <p><i>Communications:</i> the worker needs to seek to make available and communicate about the full range of local support options, and how these may help meet the requirements of the individual and their plan.</p> <p><i>Counselling and emotional support:</i> the worker will always need to be attuned to the individual’s emotional and psychological state, and may sometimes need to intervene or to offer solutions.</p> <p><i>Overseeing the implementation of the support plan:</i> in some (but by no means all) cases, the social worker will be the key person in making the plan happen on a day-to-day basis. Careful consideration is needed before assigning such a role to the social worker, and measures need to be in place to ensure that it is the citizen and not the professional who is in control throughout.</p> <p>There are a wide variety of documents and materials that can help social workers in these tasks. Many are in the Tools for Change and the Rules & Systems library sections on the In Control website at:</p> <p>www.in-control.org.uk</p>
<p>Step Six: Living Life</p>	<p>Under a Self-Directed Support model, there needs to more engagement with the wider community. Social workers are often well placed to take roles in terms of the provision of “market intelligence” for individual PB users. They are in a good position to provide a form of on-going “quality check” on what is in place.</p> <p>Under the pre-existing system social workers have been in a relatively weak position vis-a-vis more senior</p>	<p>A system that is sensitive to individuals’ changing circumstances and needs, and alerts social workers (and others) where there is a need to intervene.</p> <p>In these circumstances, social workers need:</p> <p>To ensure that people have the fullest possible information about local support options, and knowledge about how to go about purchasing these using their Individual Budget.</p> <p>To have the ability to intervene with supporters/service providers where necessary in order to progress chase or problem-solve.</p>

	<p>commissioners and other managers who have had a more explicit financially driven focus. Social workers need the support of their senior managers to undertake the sometimes difficult and complex tasks involved at this stage, as well as putting the systems in place to assist individuals to become “citizen-commissioners.”</p> <p>Social workers must be empowered to agree day-to-day changes to the person’s support plan so that these can happen quickly and effectively; and the circumstances where such delegated powers are not appropriate must be clearly laid down.</p>	<p>To be alert to step in to help the person re-visit and revise their support plan where it is not working.</p> <p>Social workers also need to be able to help citizens make judgements about how to live life in ways that are forward-looking in terms of their desired outcomes, which are pragmatic and which take a positive attitude to the management of risk. Social workers clearly need to be aware of safeguarding policies and procedures, and of what to do if concerns arise.</p> <p>In order to do all of this effectively, social workers need to be aware of and able to facilitate support from agencies and other workers with strong roots in local communities and community organisations.</p> <p>Shop4Support is a high quality web-based tool to help citizens make use of Individual Budgets to manage budgets and live life. Information is at:</p> <p>www.shop4support.com</p> <p>For information on helping people stay safe, see the Safeguarding pages of the In Control site:</p> <p>www.in-control.org.uk</p>
<p>Step Seven: Seeing how its worked</p>	<p>As Self-Directed Support is introduced, many Local Authorities wish to see their social work staff lead the review process.</p> <p>The journey to make effective use of a Personal Budget over time concerns <i>life changes</i>, some very positive, others in terms of finding ways to come to terms with disability or old age. Social workers are well placed to guide people through such changes; they have the training and professional orientation to assist people to take stock of their progress on these journeys, and to advocate on</p>	<p>A system that supports social workers to broker meaningful conversations about the success or otherwise of someone’s plan and support arrangements, and enables them to propose alternatives where these are needed.</p> <p>To do this social workers need to work with a process that enables them to ask questions about how the Individual Budget holder is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Living their life Spending their budget Staying in control of their life Getting and managing their support

	<p>their behalf if necessary where changes are indicated.</p> <p>We need to be clear that the social work role here is two-fold: as facilitator of the process of the formal review conversation; and as officer of the local authority with responsibility to ensure that the plan remains fit for purpose. Over and above this, social workers should encourage citizens to lead their own “informal reviews” whenever they see fit to ensure that matters are proceeding to plan.</p>	<p>Making a contribution</p> <p>Staying safe</p> <p>Looking to the future</p> <p>All of this thinking and reflection then needs to be translated into practical action and the person may need help to consider what they will do next, and how will they share learning from the process.</p> <p>This is a crucial aspect of the social work role under a system of Self-Directed Support, potentially drawing on the full range of interpersonal skills and knowledge of local systems and processes. The key guidance about this process is a paper by Helen Sanderson and Simon Duffy in the Rules & Systems library of the In Control website.</p> <p>www.in-control.org.uk</p>
--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Helping People to Stay Safe

“Safeguarding” is an important part of social workers’ role, some would say increasingly so. In 2008, the Government reviewed the No Secrets regulations, and published *Safeguarding Adults*.

In Control’s response to this document was published in January, 2009 as *Personalisation and Safeguarding* (available on the website, www.in.control.org.uk). This paper makes it clear that “done properly personalisation makes people safer, in six different ways:

1. Personalisation is focused on strengthening citizenship and using the most appropriate measures, balancing freedom and control to help people stay safe.
2. Personalisation improves the current care management system by the use of Self-Directed Support, which provides a comprehensive approach to risk management.
3. Personalisation enables people to move away from ineffective and institutional systems of control, which create a dangerous illusion of safety but which have proved inherently risky.
4. Personalisation provides an ideal model for responding to complex cases of vulnerability and abuse where careful risk management and person-centred practice are essential.
5. Personalisation creates the best possible framework for preventing abuse by strengthening communities. Connection with friends, neighbours and other local people who know and care about us are very often by far the best means to stay safe, and we should do everything we can to strengthen these connections.
6. Finally and most importantly, personalisation makes life safer for people by helping them to take back responsibility and thereby get control of their life and move away from harmful environments.

The paper goes on to suggest that creative risk management is a thread which must run through the seven step process: the above table should be read with this clearly in mind.

Local Authority guidance to their staff needs to:

- Clearly define the role and responsibilities of professional social workers in terms which reflect the positive role they play in terms of aiding “risk enablement” for individuals, and for the detection and prevention of abuse.
- Make it clear that it is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of adult protection procedures, and to provide alerts through the agreed channels with appropriate urgency.
- Make it clear that suspected or actual incidents of abuse will be investigated and potentially prosecuted by the police and criminal justice system as a crime.
- Set out the important role that professional social workers have within many of these situations where they can assist, especially in instances where prosecution is viewed as inappropriate. Social workers are well equipped in these instances to work alongside the

police to resolve complex social and family issues of risk and responsibility, and to bring into play “gentler measures” through the planning and problem solving approaches outlined in the table above.

- Play a part in the creation of a ‘no-blame culture’ where there is a collective response to abuse, and not one which scapegoats individual members of staff.

In Control will be working with Local Authority members to publish and promote such guidelines as they are produced over the coming year.

Acknowledgements

This guidance was written by Andrew Tyson, with help from the following colleagues:

John Gillespie and Louise Close of In Control

Bronwen Williams of the London Borough of Newham

Wendy Leach of Lancashire County Council

Andy Lyons of Leeds City Council

Ralph Edwards of York City Council

Jeanette Thompson of Sheffield City Council

Draft 6

October 8, 2009