

Healthy Communities Committee Personalisation and Personal Budgets

The Healthy Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee looked closely at the delivery of personalisation and personal budgets by Southwark Council. This report provides an overview of the work carried out by the Committee and recommendations to support the delivery of the current programme.

The Committee would like to thank all of those who submitted written evidence and presented oral evidence to the Committee as part of this inquiry.

This inquiry considered the issues around the introduction of personalisation and personal budgets; the impact on residents, carers and providers.

It aimed to consider the current barriers faced by each set of stakeholders and make recommendations that can ensure a smooth and successful journey from assessment to final plan.

Summary of key recommendations

1. Service standards and timescales should be adopted in regards to carrying out an eligibility assessment, completing a support plan and the provision of services. This should be monitored and information made available on an annual basis.
2. Residents should be given a named case officer, who will work with them throughout the process, except in exceptional circumstances, and where the officer has to change, residents are kept informed.
3. Named council officers should be trained to provide support services to those accessing personal budgets. This should include training around support planning, brokerage, direct payment management support, managed account service, payroll service, personal assistant and employment support services.
4. Assessments should be carried out in an individual's home, and carers should be identified and offered their own assessment to be carried out at the same time.
5. The Council should look to develop a preventative strategy that includes financial support for the maintenance of open door services for vulnerable and elderly residents, to help them remain healthy and active, and ensure that they are not isolated.
6. The Council should create a suite of materials with accessible information for carers, as well as providing this clearly on the Council website.
7. There should be a commitment for carers to have the same case workers throughout the process, except in exceptional circumstances.
8. The Clinical Commissioning Group should be encouraged to ensure that GP services are promoting carer assessments.
9. The Council should look to work in conjunction with Healthwatch to provide regular monitoring and feedback on the process for carers in receiving an assessment through to plan delivery.
10. All VCS organisations should be kept fully aware of where they stand with regards to contracts and transitions to personal budgets.

11. The Council should provide specific information about personal budgets, particularly focused on eligibility criteria to help residents understand what services they can access.
12. The Council should work with CAS on the creation of an e-marketplace which will collate all available services for personal budget holders.
13. The Council should look to support providers on how best they can market themselves – potentially linked to creation of the e-marketplace.
14. The Council should consider the potential of maintaining a reduced grant for service providers, particularly building-based services, to support the moves from block grants to personal budgets.

Personalisation

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) describes personalisation as 'recognising people as individuals who have strengths and preferences and putting them at the centre of their own care and support.'

Southwark Council recognises that a traditional service-led approach to support has often previously meant that people have not been able to shape the kind of support that they receive, and personalisation now allows for individuals to tailor their support to their requirements.

Following the Coalition Government of 2010-2015's introduction of personalisation, Southwark has been working to implement and embed a personalised approach to adult social care. In 2011, the Council agreed a vision for adult social care, focused on maintaining the principles of independence, choice and control, while recognising that there were significant changes in the public sector and the need to increasingly operate with a reduced public purse.

Southwark has undertaken work to transform care and support to enable people to live independently and well for as long as possible. This includes:

- Developing and implementing a dedicated telephone response for all queries about care and support
- Funding a range of community support services in the voluntary sector
- Ongoing and increasing investment in short-term support through practical re-ablement and intermediate care support services
- Developing a re-ablement service in mental health
- Focusing the approach to assessment for ongoing care and support on outcomes for individuals and working with people to develop a support plan that shows how a personal budget will be used to meet someone's identified social care outcomes
- Creating the Southwark Resource Centre
- Transforming day services, including developing a Centre of Excellence
- Creating an offer of free telecare

Residents and personal budgets

Southwark has made significant progress in providing local residents with personal budgets providing 68.66% of clients with personal budgets by 2013/14. Performance is in line with the London average of 67.5% and above the national average of 62.1% of people using community services with a personal budget. In 2013/14, 97% of community service users who were eligible for a personal budget accessed one.

There are four main stages to a personal budget:

1. **The assessment:** enabling the service user and staff to identify and understand the eligible needs that will need to be addressed in the support plan
2. **Support planning:** The support planner and the service user work together to identify the outcomes the service user wants to achieve, and the user decides how they would like their budget managed. A plan is developed from this.
3. **Agreement of support plan:** The Council agrees the support plan
4. **Implementation of the support plan:** If a direct payment is required, this is signed and the service user receives the schedule of monitoring, the personal budget is paid and the plan is actioned.

At present, there are no national requirements on timescales for the completion of the support planning process, and Southwark does not currently record the length of time the process takes for a person to have a complete and active support plan. The original estimate was that the process takes between 8 and 12 weeks.

At the July 2015 meeting of the Healthy Communities Committee, Jay Stickland, Director of Adult Social Care confirmed that there had been a long waiting list, with over 260 people in the process of assessment for personal budgets, but that this has now been reduced to 20 people with a two week timescale for beginning the process.

The Local Account 2012/13 included a number of case studies of individuals who accessed personal budgets through Southwark Council.

Isayas Solomon

Isayas Solomon used a self-managed personal budget which allowed him to directly employ two personal assistants, rather than previously having to use carers from an agency. It allowed him to feel in control of the support he received.

He also enjoys the flexibility of the budget which has helped to improve his quality of life.

Derek

Derek developed his plan so that he can employ a key worker from the day centre he attends as a personal assistant, so he is able to attend the day centre, but also have other ways to be sociable and feel part of the community.

Whilst there are positive stories about the personalisation journey, there does not seem to be regular surveying of those who complete the process to understand their thoughts.

Members of the Committee however raised numerous examples from their own casework where residents had experienced difficulty throughout the process of trying to obtain a personal budget.

This included the time taken to complete the process, and the difficulty in finding relevant information and resources.

The Committee received a number of materials from Richmond Council to assess the difference in approaches between other Boroughs across London.

Richmond Council has established an Adult Social Care Charter, which sets out their principles for supporting residents through the personalisation process. They have also developed standards of service, which sets clear timescales for the provision of support. This includes:

- Answering 80% of telephone calls to the Access Team within 20 seconds and resolving enquiries within one working day where they cannot be dealt with immediately
- Resolving 80% of enquiries to the Access Team with the first point of contact, with a named person so the resident can follow up if required.
- An appointment will be made within two working days if a resident is eligible for support, and the visit will take place within the next eight working days. Any equipment will then be provided within the next seven working days.
- The overall aim is for there to be a maximum wait of 20 days for an assessment
- A reablement service provided free of charge for six weeks

- For long term and self-directed support, a single point of contact will be assigned and any family carer who supports the resident will be offered their own assessment.
- A support plan will be completed within four weeks of the assessment

Whilst Richmond is a very different Borough from Southwark, members of the Committee felt that there were many approaches that we could benefit from exploring further in our own Borough.

Recommendations to support service users

- Service standards and timescales should be adopted in regards to carrying out an eligibility assessment, completing a support plan and the provision of services. This should be monitored and information made available on an annual basis.
- Residents should be given a named case officer, who will work with them throughout the process, except in exceptional circumstances, and where the officer has to change, residents are kept informed.
- Named council officers should be trained to provide support services to those accessing personal budgets. This should include training around support planning, brokerage, direct payment management support, managed account service, payroll service, personal assistant and employment support services.

Carers and personal budgets

Healthwatch, the independent consumer champion for patients and the public, conducted a focus group in January 2015 with carers looking at the initial awareness, the process and its outcome on the carer.

Their key findings include:

- There is a lack of awareness and information surrounding a carer's assessment
- The process itself could be long and confusing, and eligibility criteria is unclear
- There was a lack of continuity with point-people in the Council which meant relationships were difficult to build

Recommendations for supporting carers

- Assessments should be carried out in an individual's home, and carers should be identified and offered their own assessment to be carried out at the same time.
- The Council should look to develop a preventative strategy that includes financial support for the maintenance of open door services for vulnerable and elderly residents, to help them remain healthy and active, and ensure that they are not isolated.
- The Council should create a suite of materials with accessible information for carers, as well as providing this clearly on the Council website.
- There should be a commitment for carers to have the same case workers throughout the process, except in exceptional circumstances.
- The Clinical Commissioning Group should be encouraged to ensure that GP services are promoting carer assessments
- The Council should look to work in conjunction with Healthwatch to provide regular monitoring and feedback on the process for carers in receiving an assessment through to plan delivery.

Providers and personal budgets

Between 15th July and 29th August 2014, Community Action Southwark (CAS) ran a survey on organisations' experiences and expectations around personal budgets.

Key findings from that report include:

- Only 20% of respondents have half or more users paying via personal budgets.
- Organisations are providing information and advice to users, as well as providing support planning and budget management services.
- There is concern around eligibility for personal budgets and awareness of eligibility criteria.
- Nearly half of organisations expect to lose contract or grant money.
- The majority of organisations think personal budgets do not provide enough cash to cover prior levels of support.
- Marketing is seen as an issue for organisations.

Recommendations for changes to support providers

1. All VCS organisations should be kept fully aware of where they stand with regards to contracts and transitions to personal budgets.
2. The Council should provide specific information about personal budgets, particularly focused on eligibility criteria to help residents understand what services they can access
3. The Council should work with CAS on the creation of an e-marketplace which will collate all available services for personal budget holders.
4. The Council should look to support providers on how best they can market themselves – potentially linked to creation of the e-marketplace
5. The Council should consider the potential of maintaining a reduced grant for service providers, particularly building-based services, to support the moves from block grants to personal budgets.