Towards a sustainable model of social care through personal empowerment and community building.

Submission from Wales Alliance for Citizen Directed Support Provider Network [www.wacds.org.uk](http://www.wacds.org.uk)

Overview

- This paper discusses the development of Citizen Directed Support in Wales.
- It looks at both the existing model of professionally delivered social care and also the developing personalisation agenda.
- It argues that it is necessary to consider issues of sustainability when looking at the future of social care in Wales.
- It argues that the success of future models of social care will depend on not only the delivery of personally empowering services for people but also building and maintenance of supportive communities with which people can take on responsibilities and build relationships of mutual support.

1. Power, vulnerability and the support of vulnerable adults in the community.

1.1 The current social care approach is dominated by what Simon Duffy describes as the Professional Gift model (Duffy, 1996 p. 22). This model places the service user as a passive beneficiary of professional services delivered as a result of government policy and funded through community taxation.

1.2 This model reinforces a cycle of disempowerment.

- Individuals become dependent on services that are highly rationed and are delivered by professional agencies.
- Professionals become focused on meeting the needs of governmental commissioners who establish ever more complex regulatory systems.
- Government has insufficient resources to meet ever more pressing need and expectations of service users,
- The public becomes more anxious about people who seem different and more resistant to engaging in ordinary in mutually supporting relationships with people without professional assistance.
- This is turn creates increasing levels of dependency.
1.3 This model is market focused and resource intensive, it is very vulnerable to financial cut backs. It is currently under enormous pressure given the current recession. Within this growing crisis for all groups within the Professional Gift system, and all stand to equally lose out.

- The individual and their family do not get their needs met.
- Professional agencies are supporting anxious people while dealing with loss of work and income.
- Government retains the duty of care, while losing the ability to meet this effectively.
- The community faces a further loss of social capital.

1.4 These conditions create potential for transformational change, and as Bill Torbert suggests ‘transformational power can only be successfully exercised under conditions of mutual vulnerability.’ (Torbert, 2006 p. 214)

2. ‘Personalisation’ and the potential transformation of social care in the UK.

2.1 The Professional Gift model is currently being transformed across the UK through the process of Personalisation. Julie Jones of the Social Care Institute for Excellence suggests that:

- Personalisation means thinking about public services and social care in an entirely different way – starting with the person rather than the service. It will require the transformation of adult social care. (Carr, 2008 p. v)

2.2 This process is being pushed by the UK government, the Department of Health website states:

- ‘Across Government, the shared ambition is to put people first through a radical reform of public services. It will mean that people are able to live their own lives as they wish; confident that services are of high quality, are safe and promote their own individual needs for independence, well-being, and dignity’. (Department of Health, 2009)

2.3 Building a model of self directed support in England has focused significantly on the introduction of individual budgets so that people requiring support can control the funding necessary to commission their services directly and to actively purchase their own packages of support rather than being the recipient of government arranged services, this again has strong support from the UK government:

- In the future, all individuals eligible for publicly-funded adult social care will have a personal budget; a clear, upfront allocation of funding to enable them to make informed choices about how best to meet their needs, including their broader health and well-being. (Department of Health, 2008 p. 5)

2.4 The organisation ‘In Control’ has been a major driver of this change, through which it is seeking replace the ‘Professional Gift model’ with the ‘Citizenship Model’. This places the individual central within their community who contribute taxation to government to fund services. Government then provides a transparent mechanism through which the individual secures an individual budget for their services. The person works with government (who retains the duty of care) and other supporters to negotiate and purchase the services that they need.
2.5 This process has the potential to transform the power relationships within social care services.  

- The individual becomes truly the customer, and becomes central to the management of their own services.
- Commissioner and provider agencies must work collaboratively with individual service users to build the support that they need.
- Family and friends have a significant role in helping the person to arrange their support and live their life.

2.6 While both In Control and the Department of Health through the Putting People First policy arrangements places personalisation in the context of the development of community and citizen led agencies, much of the implementation focus has been on the implementation of individual budgets.

2.7 This movement to individual budgets is now widespread in England and gathering pace in Scotland. However it does have its critics:

- ‘By only considering the relationship of individual users with services (for example, through individual control over service budgets) we risk achieving independence at the expense of inclusion, focusing on consumer relations to the neglect of caring relationships. In practice, equal access to opportunities for those needing and giving care depends upon collective as well as individual participation in services.’ (Moullin, 2008)

2.8 It takes more than just money to have control over the services that you use, for example:

- ‘Rene, in the last 5 years of her life experienced Alzheimer’s disease. During this time she needed increasing help with her personal care from a domiciliary care service, she had money to pay for it which she had control over. As her mental capacity became impaired the level of negotiation with the professional agency increased in complexity. Thankfully she had one son who she lived with who could do this for her, she also had 3 other children who also helped and debated for hours what was in her best interest.

2.9 For Rene what ensured that her support worked for her was not her money, or her rights, but her relationships. She had people who were willing to advocate on her behalf and also a wider community of people who showed an active interest and would intervene if necessary. She had social capital, through which her financial capital could be effective.

2.10 This point is further illustrated the range of Personalisation events held across the UK. Here there are personal stories told by individuals and their supporters about how personal budget’s had transformed their lives, these stories are inspirational. These stories are seldom told by individuals, they
are mostly told by groups. These new services are impressive but are brought into being, either together with a mum with vision, or with a friend who said ‘go on you can’, or by someone saying ‘I knew I could because ‘…….’ would help’.

2.11 The individual’s relationship with their community creates the energy to bring about change, and the resilience to make it sustainable.

2.12 The Welsh Assembly and a number of Local Authorities in Wales have been very resistant to adopting an approach that lay’s to strong an emphasis on individual budgets, and is absolutely resistant to appearing to follow England into an agenda that appears to dismantle a commitment to collective public service.

2.13 Gwenda Thomas Deputy Minister - Health and Social Services said at the National Social Services Conference in June 2009:

- ‘Providing personalised and timely services we all support this end, though in Wales we do not think it is best delivered by escalating market dynamics!’ (Thomas, 2009).

2.14 Personalisation represents a force for change; however we need to look carefully at a process that sets personal empowerment firmly within the context of the individual’s reciprocal relationships with others around them.

3. Stronger Communities Sustainable Lives

3.1 Is the way we provide social care today sustainable? What will happen to our communities, services, and the people needing support given the changes that are likely to take place in the future?

3.2 How will the way we think about services and each other need to change to respond to these changes?

3.3 The way that we are delivering services are just about balancing the future pressures that we have anticipated; these include the aging population, increasing survival rates of
people with complex disabilities, and increasing customer expectation. We are currently balancing these with, greater efficiency, using new technology, and increasing person centred practice.

3.4 However let’s look at the pressures that will impact on our communities over the next 10 to 30 years?

- **Climate Change** – as well as providing extreme weather incidents and flooding, it will create significantly greater immigration pressure from people who have few resources. There will also be greater potential for conflict between community groups some of whom want family members to be given rights to enter the country and those unwilling to welcome further demands on over stretched services and resources.

- **Demographic changes**– the age distribution of our communities is changing, by 2020 there will 50% more people over 85 and fewer than 3 people for every person over 65.

- **Energy Demands** – By 2020 the UK is likely to import approximately 80% of it’s fuels, the need to mitigate climate change will also be impacting on the price of energy significantly.

- **Financial Pressure** – The recession has caused pressure on public expenditure. The Welsh Local Government Association is projecting a real terms reduction in public investment of 17.4% by 2014. (Philips, 2009)

- **Food Security** – Climate change and increasing demand from growing populations, and changing land use will cause fluctuating food prices which will increasingly impact on the poorest off.

- **Increasing inequality of wealth** - The gap between rich and poor in the UK is steadily widening. The ERC suggests; ‘In some urban areas over half of all households are on the breadline, while wealthy areas generally have become disproportionately wealthier. Wealthy households are concentrated in the outskirts of major cities’. (Economic and Social Research Council, 2007)

- **Personal and Community Safety** – A growing rise in individualism together with weaker family ties are leading to more transient communities.

3.5 The services that we provide work because they are built on communities where the many pay for the support of the few – proportionately few people require assistance, and many people have time or money to arrange services to meet their needs.

3.6 Considering the above do we feel that this
assumption will hold for the future?

- *It does look unlikely, there will not be; the money, the people, the consensus, or the stability to deliver this top down model of service.*

What about a personalised future of personal empowerment through individual budgets?

- *We will require stronger more supportive local markets within which people can get support to negotiate and arrange personal services; this is likely to need greater, not less stability and cohesion.*

3.7 We need a new model of community support? It is very hard to imagine anything but a future where the many must provide support to each other – many citizens will require assistance but that assistance will have to come from each other, organised and supplemented by community support services. If this is to happen then our model of service delivery must change from one built on effective service delivery to one built on co-production with citizens and community groups.

3.8 Thus if this is the future then we need to be building more resilient cohesive communities as part of our duty of care to vulnerable people. If we don’t do this now we will find it harder and harder to perform our role as these futures become realities. Moreover the building of these communities may not just have benefits for vulnerable people, because these communities may also be what is required to build local action to address climate change, maintain community safety, and re-build active citizenship.

3.9 In fact when we look at it this way, we in the social care community are well placed to build resilient communities that can create greater social security and cohesion while providing efficient sustainable social welfare services. Thus our problem may well be a great opportunity.

4. Building a model of Citizen Directed Support for the future

4.1 We need to change our perception of the services that people use to live their lives. Our focus on Assessment and Care Management and commissioned services has made our professional view of the support people use to live their lives limited and incomplete.

4.2 We focus on expensive heavily resources services which are highly regulated and monitored. The contribution of carers and the public is largely recognised in terms of how it offsets the need for professional services.
4.3 We need to become aware of the reality of the support in the community.

- Informal support and relationships in reality make a much bigger contribution to well-being in our communities.
- When this support is absent it also makes a much larger contribution to feelings or fear, isolation and worthlessness.
- Our current ways of working maintain an artificial barrier between our work and the wider community.
- Thus this creates a ‘them and us’ feel and ultimately people’s expectations are well beyond what we can meet.

4.4 Citizen Directed Support represents an opportunity to make this shift in perception. We can embrace the tools available within the personalisation movement to create more empowering person centred services but build them on a solid foundation of co-productive community development.

4.5 This transformation is about experimenting in how we build more ‘organic’ interconnected relationships with the:

- People that we serve
- Communities in which they live.

To exchange the:

- divisiveness of ‘Them and us’,
- For the inter-connectedness of ‘I and We’.

This will enable us to build more cost effective, Sustainable, and Empowering services.

4.6 In this paper we have laid out some of the issues that underpin the developing model of Citizen Directed Support in Wales. This thinking is now starting to lead to a significant practice development across Wales this will be translated into demonstration projects due to start in 2010.
Bibliography


