

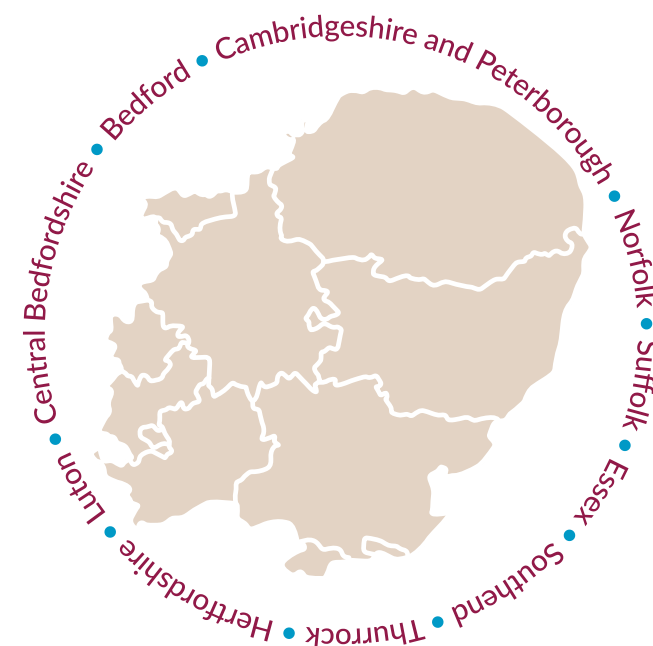
Reflections from the Building Positive Futures Programme

A values-based approach to sector led improvement



Contents

Introduction	3
Programme stipulations	3
Action Learning Groups run since December 2020	3
Bringing Self Directed Support back to its roots	4
Reflections from Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) and the National Co-production Advisory Group (NCAG)	6
Reflections from Essex County Council	7
Reflections from Norfolk County Council	9
Individual Service Funds – how can we get more people benefiting from flexible support	11
Reflections from Self Directed Futures	13
Reflections from Essex County Council	14
Reaching out and empowering carers	16
Evaluation of the programme	18
What are the next steps?	19



Introduction

The East of England has developed a values based approach to sector led improvement which is helping to grow and drive innovation at a local level. The Building Positive Futures Programme has been running since December 2020 with sessions booked into 21/22. This work has come about during the response to the COVID19 pandemic, with most teams working virtually and not meeting face to face, and aims to refocus energy and build motivation around core Adult Social Care values and practice. The series of low cost (to the region) 2-hour virtual action learning groups are intended to compliment regional sector led improvement and the work of other networks in the East.

Programme stipulations

At the start of the programme, ADASS East of England Adult Social Care set out some stipulations which we thought were important to follow:

- 2-hour virtual learning groups
- No agenda but clear learning outcomes
- Facilitated by an external organisation
- No more than 30 people to keep it focused and manageable online
- Cascading the learning from those who attended to other colleagues within their local area
- Every local authority to have at least one representative
- Learn from practice outside of the region as well as across the region
- Provide some practical space to discuss challenges, barriers, successes and opportunities
- Flag national resources which can help local improvement work
- Provide lived experience from people who are accessing care and support
- Provide a one page graphic of the key messages

Since running the programme during 2020 and the first part of 2021, interest in the action learning sets has increased and maximum attendance has been increased to 50.

Action Learning Groups run since December 2020

There have been six 2-hour action learning groups run from December 2020 to March 2021 and these were as follows:

December 2020

Bringing Self Directed Support back to its roots

Think Local Act Personal and the National Co-production Advisory Group

December 2020

Individual Service Funds and work in Devon

The Centre for Welfare Reform & Self Directed Support Futures

January 2021

Micro-enterprises and Local Area Co-ordination

Community Catalysts

January 2021

Self-Directed Support and Individual Service Fund innovations

The Centre for Welfare Reform & Self Directed Support Futures

February 2021

Co-production

Think Local Act Personal and the National Co-production Advisory Group

March 2021

Reaching out to carers

Bringing Us Together

Bringing Self Directed Support back to its roots

What is Self-Directed Support?

Self-Directed Support is a way of providing social care support that empowers individuals to have informed choice about how support is provided to them with a focus on working together to achieve individual outcomes.

What are the key messages from the Action Learning Group?

The key messages were captured in a one-page graphic by Pen Mendonca, Graphic Facilitator, *please see overleaf*.

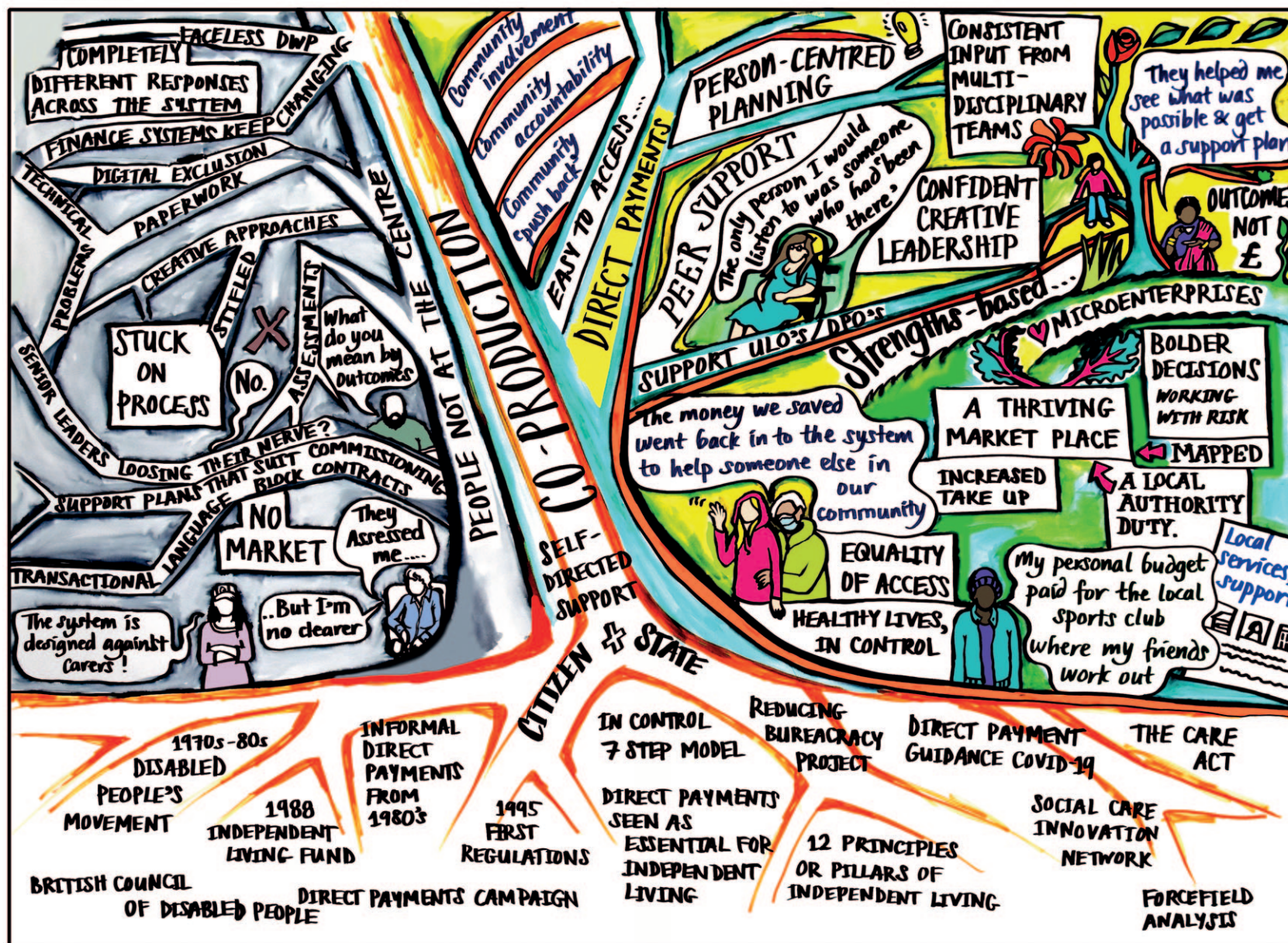
Some of the barriers faced by people

- Faceless Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Inconsistent responses
- Changing finance systems
- Stuck on process
- Transactional language
- A system designed against carers
- Creative approaches stifled
- Senior leaders often losing their nerve
- Lack of understanding of what outcomes mean
- Technical difficulties
- Digital exclusion
- Support plans which suit commissioning block contracts
- No choice in the market

Conditions for success

- Person centred planning
- Confident creative leadership
- Peer support
- Easy access
- Consistent input from multi-disciplinary teams
- Strengths based conversations
- Micro-enterprises
- A thriving market place
- Ability to ensure money saved goes back into the community
- Bolder decision making
- Flexibility
- Equality of access
- Community focused
- Increased uptake of Direct Payments
- Outcomes not financial focus
- True co-production

BRINGING SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORT BACK TO ITS ROOTS



East of England Building Positive Futures Programme, ADASS and TLAP. Online, 2020-2021. Graphics by www.penmendonca.com @MendoncaPen

Reflections from Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) and the National Co-production Advisory Group (NCAG)

Do you feel the graphic reflects how it feels right now and why?

Discussion with Council staff in the east of England about progress with self-directed support was largely reflective of what we hear at TLAP from across England. There are pockets of interest in making headway that we are aware of across the country. We welcome the leadership in the East Of England to consistently get better at self-directed support across the region.

The graphic depicts commissioners' and practitioners' frustrations along with those we hear from people who need care and support. Barriers that prevent people experiencing good Self-Directed Support have been identified and are being used as a basis to make progress, highlighting accurately some of the key pinch points and issues we hear repeatedly more widely.

How do we get over some of the barriers?

By remembering from where and whom this agenda was driven – people, not the state. The problems with process seem to dominate and at the heart of this lies issues of trust on many levels and between a variety of stakeholders.

Overcoming these trust issues will be key to Self-Directed Support and personalisation more widely moving forward. Our discussions explored this in depth and stimulated healthy discussion, captured well in the graphic.

What are the conditions for success going forward and what does a positive future for people accessing care and support look like?

Visionary and brave leadership of the kind being displayed in the East of England is needed – the kind of leadership that is brave enough to say 'we don't have all the answers, we know some of those answers lie with our citizens, and we are ready to work co-productively with them to work this all out' – something, to our delight, we are seeing happen in the East of England ADASS region.

To keep up to date with resources, please see the following link:
SDS and Personal Budgets

For more information...

Martin Walker, Policy Advisor, Think Local Act Personal
07841141961 • martin.walker@tlap.org.uk
www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk

Reflections from Essex County Council

How has Essex developed the opportunity for Self-Directed Support?

Essex County Council has developed a transformation programme called Choice and Control. The choice and control programme aims to put personalisation at the heart of all we do in Adult Social Care and Children and Families. The programme is specifically designed to work in parallel across four workstreams to improve personalisation and increase the take up of more Self-Directed Support.

1. We are working to improve practice and build front-line workers' confidence in Self-Directed Support through a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) offer, providing positive stories and information and advice.
2. We are working to increase and improve the personalised care and support options available in the market through improving the PA market, Community Microenterprises and developing a vision for personalisation, this will inform our wider ASC vision to ensure people at the centre and an agreed set of principles and values to ensure it is delivered. We have also started the work to build ISFs in to our core offer, starting small and getting the foundations in place, learning about what works/what doesn't and then spreading to offer ISFs more widely.
3. We are improving the infrastructure to support Self-Directed Support options and making internal processes more effective and efficient, for example testing digital solutions and using lean and agile approaches to improve processes.
4. We are working with colleagues in the NHS to look at options to work together to make the process more streamlined for individuals, for example Personal Wheelchair budgets and implementing Tribe in North East Essex alongside the alliance hub.

How does Essex work in partnership to achieve Self-Directed Support?

In Essex we have worked hard to build a movement for change across the county to improve the Self-Directed Support options for people who access social care support. We are actively working with Direct Payment recipients, colleagues across the health and social care sector, service providers, carers and community groups.

As part of this work, we are working alongside TLAP and NCAG, as well as Essex residents and key stakeholders to redesign a new Direct Payment offer in co-production. This co-production work is ensuring that the Direct Payment offer is fit for purpose and helps people live their version of a good life with the right support to direct their own care and support.

The Covid19 Pandemic has been a real catalyst for improving partnership working. Many of the old barriers have disappeared. It has also helped us improve communication and trust with Direct Payment recipients through our regular updates about the virus and also made a strong case for the flexibility that Self-Directed Support offers particularly at a time of crisis or major change.

What have been some of the barriers?

The complexity of the current system acts as a barrier in that people are confused about how the system works so few practitioners have the confidence to promote Self-Directed Support. Also, many people who direct their own support don't fully understand the opportunities available or the expectations placed upon them to manage the budget effectively. We have not spent enough time shaping a market that can respond to what people are looking for in terms of local, flexible and personalised solutions. To do this work takes courage and good leadership and the ability to ensure we break old cycles, co produce with people and try new approaches. A leadership and culture challenge also exists, akin to many other areas of the country. Together we can and will overcome these barriers – we are up for the challenge and its what we come to work for, because we care and want to improve and make positive progress.

What would you describe as the conditions for success?

Trust is the number one factor for success. This is created by building long-term relationships between the council, people who access support and other partners. If there is enough trust that everyone is acting in each other's best interests then this reduces frustration, misunderstanding and the need for bureaucracy to hold people to account.

Our regular and open communication through the pandemic has helped us to build trust with people who use Direct Payments. This has been critical in terms of recruiting people to be part of our co-production work

What have been the outcomes for people?

We are still early on in the process but we are already starting to see real positive outcomes for people where they are able to access support to help them live their vision of a good life with:

- More person-centred options available in the market through the Community Micro-enterprise project.
- Support for PAs and PA recruitment.
- More person-centred care via ISFs giving people greater flexibility over how they are supported.

For more information...

Lisa Wilson, Head of Strategic Commissioning and Policy and Stephen Watt, Commissioning Manager, Essex County Council
lisa.wilson2@essex.gov.uk and stephen.watt@essex.gov.uk

Reflections from Norfolk County Council

How has Norfolk developed the opportunity for Self-Directed Support?

Norfolk County Council, as part of our Living Well Approach is undertaking significant work in respect of our Direct Payment offer for people who use services and their carers. This model of working promotes the importance of strengths-based discussions at the heart of our work in Adult Social Care, and provides greater choice and control to enable people to have services tailored to meet their identified needs and support achievement of their outcomes.

Direct Payments for children and young people can also be accessed through the Short Breaks offer. Short Breaks give children and young people who meet the eligibility criteria the chance to take part in activities, explore new opportunities, form friendships, become more independent and enjoy themselves.

Work includes improving practice and workers knowledge in this area, to enhance their confidence to utilise Self-Directed Support, including considering this at every assessment and review that is completed. Our Direct Payment and Support service is engaging with teams and other key stakeholders to promote the changes to this area of social work and improve provision of advice and information.

We have also worked on our existing PA register and market, and are exploring how we can improve the facilities we have available to access a PA and provide more robust support and advice for staff and those receiving Direct Payments, on areas such as recruitment, payroll etc. The Direct Payment Support Service Employment and Payroll teams have been central to achieving this.

We are also working on streamlining our internal processes to make them more effective, and are using digital solutions to enhance engagement from staff and people who use services and increase take up of this offer.

How does Norfolk work in partnership to achieve Self-Directed Support?

In Norfolk, we are working to influence and change practice in this area and improve the support available for people who are able to access it. Work has been undertaken with existing people who use services engaged with this support to gain their feedback. Work has also been undertaken and is ongoing with colleagues across the system, including carers, key stakeholders and relevant groups, to collate feedback and use this to enhance our offer.

Co-production work is taking place through the Direct Payment Support Services Advisory Group, to redesign and enhance the Direct Payment offer; to ensure it is developed to meet individual needs, support their carer, improve their wellbeing and outcomes and enable them to access timely and consistent advice and support; in turn providing them with the confidence to use this form of support.

What have been some of the barriers?

Confusion from staff and recipients has meant it has been challenging to promote the enhanced service offer. The pre-existing system and processes in place were quite complex to navigate and understand, meaning practitioners were not fully confident or aware of what support could be available. Another barrier was that recipients were not always aware of the responsibilities placed on them to manage their Direct Payment, including employment responsibilities etc. Also, the market was quite challenged; and work has been undertaken to stimulate and encourage recovery.

Covid19 has been a significant barrier as many of the services accessed by both adults and children have been unavailable during the pandemic. Ongoing support and flexible use of Direct Payments has been a priority for both Adults and Children's services to continue to support people.

What would you describe as the conditions of success?

Good communication and co-production are key ingredients in this area. Ensuring that guidance issued is user friendly and easy to understand and follow. Another key condition for success is having investment from staff and other key agencies, including people who access care and support, to draw upon this form of advice and support when needed.

What have been the outcomes for people?

In terms of this work, people are experiencing positive outcomes when they are able to access Direct Payments to help meet their needs and achieve their outcomes, in turn enhancing their wellbeing and giving them greater flexibility and control. Greater centralised information and support is also available for people who use services, carers and PAs with the introduction of the Direct Payment Client Services team, Employment and Payroll teams. These provide ongoing guidance and support to everyone involved with Direct Payments, alongside the dedicated webpage www.norfolk.gov.uk/dpss.

For more information...

James Stewart, Operational Business Lead – Adult Carers
james.stewart@norfolk.gov.uk

Individual Service Funds – how can we get more people benefiting from flexible support

What are Individual Service Funds?

In simple terms an Individual Service Fund (ISF) is a personal budget that is held by an organisation (or micro provider) which has been nominated by or on behalf of the person and can be used to meet some or all of the outcomes that have been identified as part of a Care Act assessment as directed by the person.

What are the key messages from the Action Learning Group?

The key messages were captured in a one-page graphic by Pen Mendonca, Graphic Facilitator, *please see overleaf*.

Some of the barriers faced by people

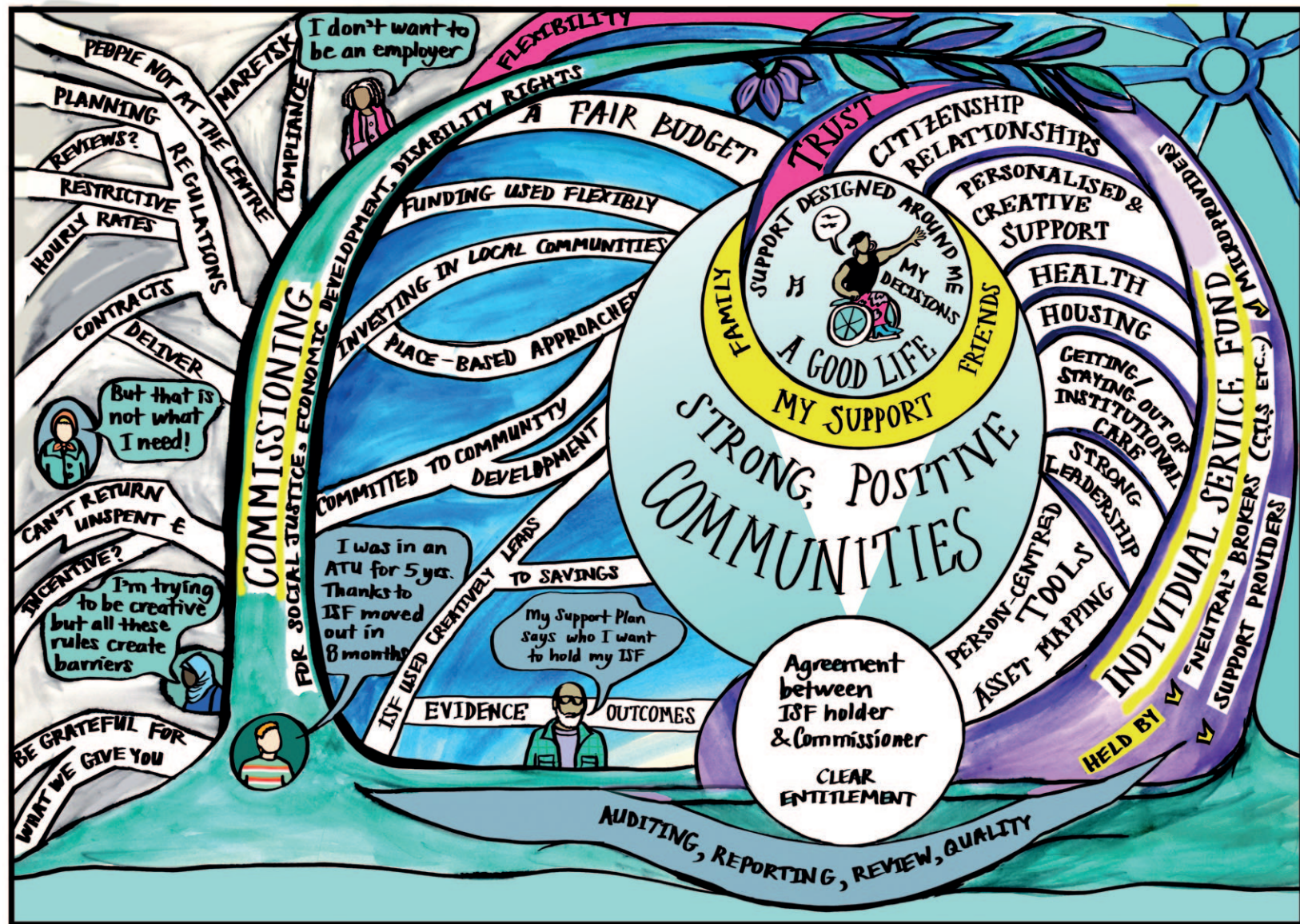
- People who access care and support do not always wish to be an employer
- People are not always at the centre
- Planning, regulations and compliance can get in the way
- People say they can't return unspent money
- Rules stop creativity
- There is not always a fair budget
- People are not always offered what they need

Conditions for success

- Commissioning for social justice, economic development and disability rights
- Keep people out of institutionalised care
- Use ISFs creatively as often they lead to savings and offer good outcomes for individuals
- Have placed based approach with strong leadership
- Funding should be fair and flexible
- Support which is designed around the individual and what a good life means for them
- Grow citizen relationships
- Ensure a clear entitlement between the ISF holder and commissioner
- Clear support plan which states who the person wants to hold the ISF

HOW CAN WE GET MORE PEOPLE BENEFITING FROM FLEXIBLE SUPPORT?

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE FUNDS TRANSFORMING COMMISSIONING



East of England Building Positive Futures Programme, ADASS and TLAP. Online, 2020-2021. Graphics by www.penmendonca.com @MendoncaPen
This graphic includes work presented by the Centre for Welfare Reform and colleagues

Reflections from Self Directed Futures

Do you feel the graphic reflects how it feels right now, and why?

The illustration is a great representation of where things feel like they are right now with individual service funds generally around the country. Progress is still in pockets, but it feels like a growing movement that is gathering energy.

There hasn't really been much change in commissioned services in the last 20 years or in what is broadly on offer. In most parts of the UK, you will still find Homecare, Day Services, Supported Accommodation and residential care. Although the make-up and mix of these has changed over the years it's broadly the same set of options. Contrast that with progress in other areas of life over the same period, for example moving from fossil fuels to electric cars.

Nationally around two thirds of people still have a 'commissioned' service but there is no reason why they can't achieve the same levels of flexibility and creativeness through Individual Service Funds.

We also often talk about asset-based approaches but 'commissioned services' are inherently done to people, not with or by them. We have then set up whole eco systems that contract and procure and perpetuate this relatively small menu of service-based options. This goes round and around in bureaucratic contracting cycles every few years which continues to centralize control within administrative systems rather than in communities.

How do we get over some of the barriers?

Local authorities and the NHS can offer Individual Service funds and Third-Party Budgets to everyone, which means that commissioned services can then use funding more flexibly and adapt to day-to-day changes in how people want to be supported. At the moment not enough people are given this opportunity but the number of areas offering these is steadily growing.

Most innovations over the last few years have been driven by people and families using Direct Payments. When people receive a budget, instead of a service, and are allowed to be creative in designing their own support they often come up with solutions that aren't just services!

Recently, I counted scores of different types of support options via Think Local Act Personal's directory of innovations in community-based support, and the list is growing. Alongside this the Community Catalysts small, good stuff directory lists hundreds of small-scale community organisations offering alternatives to commissioned services and this list is expanding rapidly.

What are the conditions for success going forward and what does a positive future for people accessing care and support look like?

In some areas, commissioners are beginning to see themselves as community shapers whose role is to ensure that everyone has access to a personal budget and that they then help facilitate the development of community-based solutions based on what people and families want locally.

This is the future of community led support – built from the ground up by people, local organisations and statutory authorities working in partnership using flexible funding and commissioning approaches.

For further resources, please click here:

www.centreforwelfarereform.org/library/individual-service-funds-isfs-guide.html

For more information...

Christopher Watson, Founder Self Directed Futures, 07453 299057
www.selfdirectedfutures.co.uk

Reflections from Essex County Council

How has Essex developed the opportunities for an Individual Service Fund?

We worked with internal colleagues to build trust in the Individual Service Fund mechanism including Finance, Legal, Policy and Operational colleagues. We also worked with providers in the early adopter site area to identify organisations that were willing to go on a learning journey with us to provide this additional choice and control for their customers. We have had lots of detailed conversations with the providers and social work colleagues about the theory and practice of ISFs to ensure we are all on the same page and that this will work as well as it can. We looked at the infrastructure to make this work and to ensure it felt different from our more traditional managed services.

How does Essex work in partnership with its providers to achieve Individual Service Funds for people?

We have worked really closely with a small group of providers to learn how to implement this, well before growing it to make sure that it achieves good outcomes for people and the system. We have walked alongside the providers at all stages and provided support to them through Self-Directed Futures and the Centre for Welfare Reform to ensure that they are given the tools and expertise to implement this well, and in the spirit of the care act.

What have been some of the barriers?

Our internal infrastructure has been a challenge. Some of our processes and systems, such as our charging mechanisms, are set up for managed services and are really clearly defined, e.g. set up around hours of support or set up to work for Direct Payments. This has meant we have had to use the mechanisms originally designed for Direct Payments which don't always fit but could be adapted to get the early adopter off the ground. Our pricing structures and hourly rates for care can act to stifle innovation as the provider's sustainability and profit is wrapped up in an hourly rate which can limit the opportunity to be truly innovative due to the commercial pressures that they are under.

We hope to use this work as an opportunity to use ISFs to try to create an alternative way of building and utilising a personal budget. We are influencing colleagues internally to ensure future process and systems enable ISFs to be offered more widely following the evaluation of the early adopters rather than these issues acting as barriers to future success.

What would you describe as the conditions for success?

- A good and trusting relationship with the providers.
- Providers that are open and really understand their business.
- Tenacity and the understanding of the real benefits that ISFs can offer to people to deal with challenges and resistance.
- Building a strong case for the benefits for people and creating an easy way to explain that to people to ensure they understand what it is and the benefits it can bring to them.
- Really good social workers who believe in Self-Directed Support.
- Ensure that learning is taken forward and feedback from people with lived experience informs both the early adopter work and when we look to mainstream ISFs as part of our future offer – we don't know what success looks like yet but the key is to build the future collaboratively.

What have been the outcomes for people?

We are starting very small but already this has had a major impact upon one person's life. They have struggled to engage with services in the past but having control over their support and a flexible service that is focussed on them has helped them to thrive. They had been bed-bound for some time but within weeks of the new service were getting up and about and engaging in daily living activities. This has had such an impact that they are writing an article on their experiences in a national charity newsletter.

For more information...

Lisa Wilson, Head of Strategic Commissioning and Policy and Stephen Watt, Commissioning Manager, Essex County Council
lisa.wilson2@essex.gov.uk and stephen.watt@essex.gov.uk

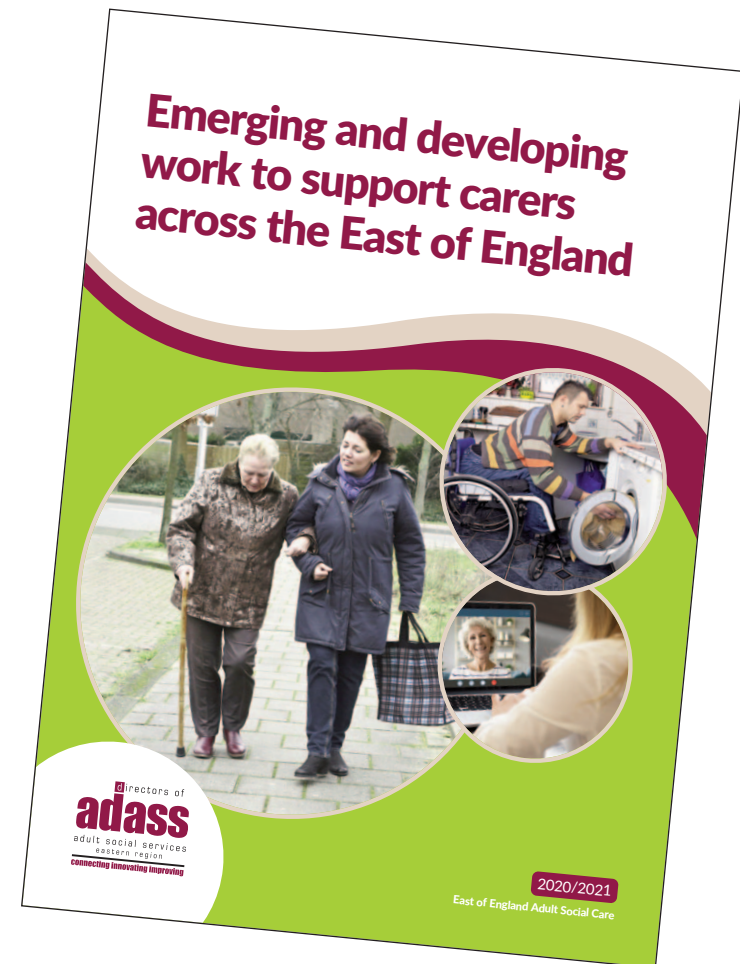
Reaching out and empowering carers

What is a carer?

A person who provides unpaid support to a partner, family member, friend or neighbour who is ill, struggling or disabled and could not manage without this help. This is distinct from a care worker, who is paid to support people.

What did the discussions within the learning set find?

The conditions for success and key barriers are clearly highlighted in the graphic overleaf. We have also published a recent report which highlights the emerging practice across the region in relation to supporting carers which can be found [here](#).



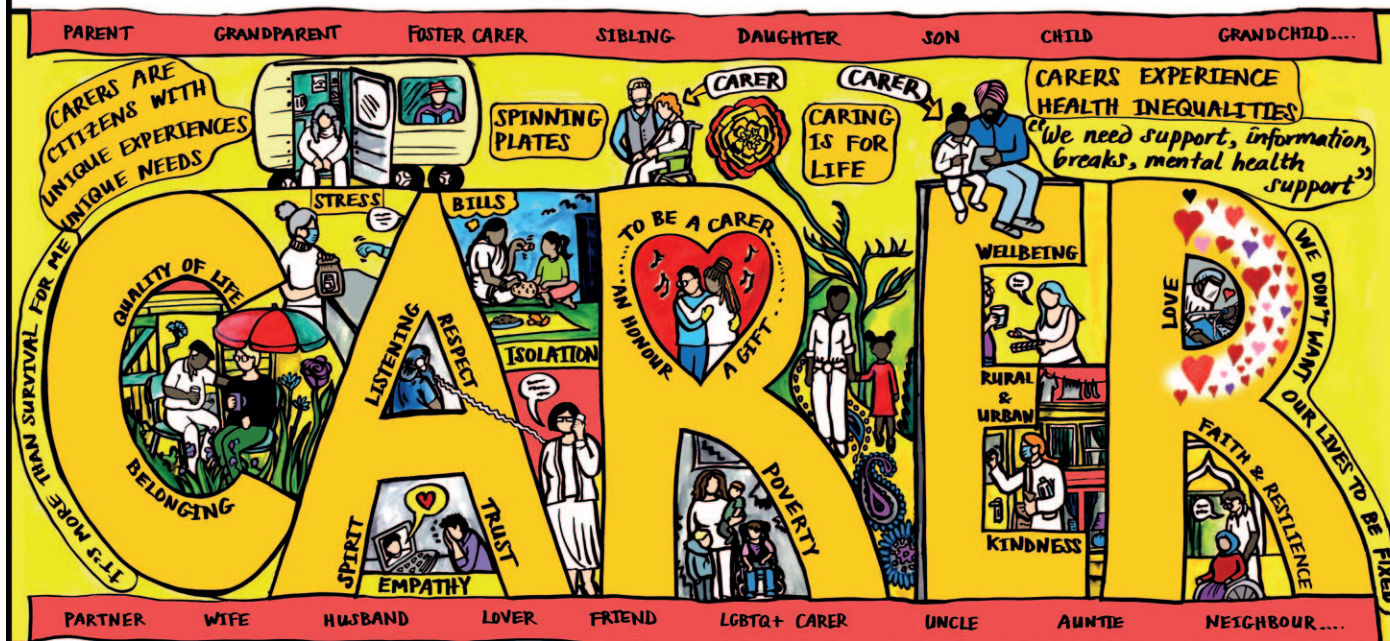
REACHING OUT & EMPOWERING CARERS

CARERS NEED THE RIGHT SUPPORT, IN THE RIGHT PLACE, AT THE RIGHT TIME

More than 500 people put on DNAR orders without consent
More carers have to stop/reduce work
No breaks for carers
36% on Carers Allowance struggle to make ends meet
Carers Employment Allowance inadequate

DURING THE PANDEMIC

Contact with local communities improved, Neighbours support
Lots of work on carers strategies, forums, co-production
Reaching out to carers not known to social care
The Care Act, NICE guidelines used to support carers
Digital solutions: zoom, social media, ipads, videocarphones



What will happen to our loved ones if/when we are no longer able to support them?

Involve carers in Covid-19 recovery planning now!

Long-term care & support at the heart of a REFORMED, SUSTAINED SOCIAL CARE SYSTEM
Invest in/ support infrastructure (workforce/markets)
Enable long-term, emergency & contingency planning
Support people to access Self-Directed Support,
Direct Payments, Personal Budgets, Circles of Support

WHAT NEXT? WHAT HELPS? CO-PRODUCTION

Provide good information & guidance, PA register
Look beyond services
Help carers put their needs first, carers assessments
Reach out to faith communities
Invest in carer champions (working with peers & allies)
Use positive messages to lobby for change

Evaluation of the programme

What did people say about the sessions undertaken during December 2020 to March 2021?

The benefits...

- Wider audience
- Increased awareness
- Shared learning
- Less pressure
- Easier way via chat to share ideas
- No travel
- Hearing from lived experience
- Useful presentations in a manner that people can learn, take away, implement in their own council
- Sharing innovations and exposure to innovative ways of working
- Networking
- Honest discussions

*All wanted the
programme to continue.*

What we have inspired people to do...

- Develop a self directed support approach as opposed to “we offer direct payments”
- Increase choice to contribute to self directed support
- Develop a self directed support strategy
- Explore how we can work intergenerational and utilise young carers to support older carers with digital inclusion
- Develop training to support staff to know how to identify and support carers
- Liaise with carers about lived experience
- We have applied for transformation funding to support ISFs
- Use of information from the session to strengthen proposals which are going to elected members and committee
- Work with young carers/other volunteers to help with digital inclusion and getting over scams
- Continue to review replacement care and breaks
- Work with employers
- Discussions with young health-watch to support digital inclusion
- Started ISFs now

What are the next steps?

Due to its success the Building Positive Futures Programme will be extended into 21/22 and we have already undertaken or have scheduled a number of sessions for our focused work, these include:

19 April 2021	Digital in action, how (and why) technology should be part of our social care toolkit?	<i>LGA and Rethink Partners</i>
5 May 2021	Supporting connections with purpose and meaning	<i>Community Circles</i>
11 June 2021	Economic Development	<i>Power to Change</i>
18 June 2021	COVID19 Learning Event	<i>SCIE</i>
6 July 2021	Personalised Care Programme	<i>NHSE/NHSI</i>
19 July 2021	Social Prescribing	<i>NHSE/NHSI</i>
21 September 2021	Mental Health Transformation and Integrated Care	<i>SW for Better MH and NHSE/NHSI</i>
8 October 2021	Golden Age of Pirates and Co-production	<i>Curators for Change</i>
8 November 2021	Working Together for Change with Central Bedfordshire	<i>Simon Stockton and Central Bedfordshire</i>
8 December 2021	Assistive Technology	<i>TSA</i>
TBC	Support Brokerage	<i>Imagineer</i>

We will be writing a report at the end of 2021/22 on some of the key findings.

For further details about the project, please contact sarahbaker@southend.gov.uk who is the Regional Personalisation and Prevention Network Chair or Natasha.eastsli@gmail.com, East of England ADASS Sector Led Improvement Programme Manager