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Way Ahead

Our early experience in North Lanarkshire
of demonstrating the impact of the
in Control approach

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Cover Picture:
'Big Heids' by David Mach on the M8 in North Lanarkshire



‘Way Ahead’

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Foreword



In North Lanarkshire, our aim is that people may exercise maximum choice and control over their lives, including control over any support they may require. We take great pride in our efforts to lead the drive towards ever more personalised approaches. Indeed we have already individualised the planning, design, service delivery and funding for over a thousand people across North Lanarkshire. But, until now, we have rarely been clear with each person and upfront about the financial resources available to meet their needs. By not doing this we have not maximised the extent to which each person can truly exercise choice and control.

The In Control demonstration project tested out an approach that supported people to undertake their own assessment of need, leading to a financial value that we believed was reasonable to meet their needs; we then invited each person to make best use of those resources in ways that suited their own unique needs and circumstances.

The small numbers of people in the demonstration project seized this opportunity in highly innovative and exciting ways. We have much to learn from their experience and must now apply this learning to improve the lives of many more people in North Lanarkshire.

We believe passionately that people should not be denied opportunities because of their age or the nature of their disability or needs, so the people involved in the project had a wide range of needs and circumstances arising from autism, frailty, dementia, long term neurological conditions, mental health problems, alcohol related brain damage and learning disabilities. Their ages ranged from 9 to 98 years.

I would like to thank all the people and their families who were involved as well as the staff in Younger Adults and Finance Sections within Social Work services and Keith Etherington for their leadership in this important work. The testimonies of the people concerned are very powerful endorsements of the approach taken. As one carer said “being in receipt of In Control money has given us a life again”.

The challenge now is to make their experience a reality for everyone.

Duncan Mackay
Head of Social Work Development
North Lanarkshire Council

Introduction

In April 2008 North Lanarkshire Council Social Work services launched a demonstration project designed to explore an exciting innovation in social support and/or care arrangements for individuals. The ideas being tested involved allocating people who need social care support their own individual budget with which they and their families could design and implement their own unique support package. The intention of this approach was to offer greater choice and control to participants and their families over the support on offer and to ensure it was tailored to their unique wishes and aspirations. As a result of this demonstration project 16 people, together with their families, took control of an individual budget.

Whilst at its heart this is a simple idea, the approach represents a radical departure from our normal arrangements for providing help to local people, and presented a significant challenge. We needed to design a way of saying to people how much money each person should have available in their individual budget. The amount of money needed to reflect their level of need and their social circumstances as well, of course, also needing to be realistic and affordable to the local authority in the longer term.

To appreciate the significance of this simple but radical innovation it is important to consider how the current system works. Despite our attempts to personalise our services, people in North Lanarkshire who are believed to be entitled to support are generally subject to a professional assessment process. Following on from this, if they are seen to be eligible for help and assistance, they would generally be allocated support arrangements from one of a number

A 'Resource Allocation System' (RAS)

The RAS takes the form of a simple supported self-assessment questionnaire that is used to let people know early on in the process how much money is available to them from the local authority to fund their support. It also clearly states the intended outcomes of their support plan. The RAS gives an indication of the maximum amount of money that should be in a person's individual budget and what it must achieve.

The 'individual budget'

An individual budget is the money made available to a person for them to use to develop a support plan. The money can be held by the person themselves, by their representative, or by the local authority. The important thing is that the person and those close to them have control of the money. Knowing how much money is available and what outcomes must be achieved, the person and their family can take control of their individual budget and plan how it is used. Once the person, or those closest to them, have developed a plan, the local authority is then asked to approve the plan and arrange for the money to be used as agreed. This important check provides a mechanism through which the authority is able to meet its wider social and financial responsibilities.

of Council services, allocated support from an approved service provider, or in some instances, receive a direct payment to buy hours of support. These approaches often struggle to meet the divergent needs, and wishes of large numbers of service users. This traditional "care management" approach has been criticised as being outdated and in need of reform for a number of reasons.

- People with disabilities are passive recipients of support
- There is a lack of transparency about entitlement
- There is little incentive for family friends to contribute
- Services often struggle to respond flexibly enough to individual needs
- Individuals are slotted into an existing service

The Executive Summary of the document 'Changing Lives: Report of the 21st Century Social Work Review' in Scotland recognised that continuing to provide support and services in traditional ways is neither feasible nor desirable:

'Doing more of the same won't work. Increasing demand, greater complexity and rising expectations mean that the current situation is not sustainable; tomorrow's solutions will need to engage people as active participants, delivering accessible, responsive services of the highest quality and promoting wellbeing.'

We wanted to test whether we could improve on the traditional way of working and establish a more person centred and flexible approach - one based on a greater partnership and transparency between the Council, its social work staff, people and their families. This meant we needed a way of genuinely sharing decision making. By creating a simple framework to allocate resources, we established for each individual and their family a ring fenced pot of resources – we gave them their own individual budget. We were then free to help them plan how these resources should be used to achieve a set of agreed outcomes.

The In Control approach to organising social care has come to be known as self directed support, and is based upon a 7 step process.

1) Money – people are told how much money they can have in their individual budget and what the money must be used to achieve. If people are to direct their own support it is important to be clear early on how much money is available to use in a support plan and the outcomes it must be used to achieve. To do this the local authority must develop a resource allocation system (often known as a RAS).

2) Making a support plan – people who have an individual budget, plan how to spend the money. If people are to have support that is personal to them there needs to be a good plan describing what it needs to achieve and what it will look like. The things that the plan needs to achieve must be agreed by the individual/family and the social worker, but it is important that the person and those close to them lead on how this is to be achieved. Some people, but not all, have help from a social worker to produce a plan.

3) Agreeing the plan. As the local authority is making money available to fund the support plan it is reasonable that they will want to agree how that money is used. The local authority also needs to ensure they are happy with any risks the person may be choosing to take.

4) Organising money. Once the money and the plan are agreed the person needs to be in control of the money so they can direct their support. There are different ways this can be achieved. Taking the money as a direct payment is not right for everyone, so other ways of being in control of how the money achieves what is important to the person need to be available.

Origins of in Control and self directed support:

It is widely acknowledged that a lot of the early work and thinking around in Control and self directed support has its origins in Scotland and, in particular, in North Lanarkshire, emerging from the work and thinking that developed during the closure of long stay hospitals for people with a learning disability. Since the early part of this decade, self directed support and individual budgets have been further refined and feature strongly in the reform of social care underway in England. The demonstration work in North Lanarkshire has drawn heavily from some of the learning and resources that have emerged from this.

5) Organising the support. Now that the budget is under the control of the person, they can arrange for the support to be delivered. This can involve such things as buying equipment, negotiating with a provider how, when and what support needs to be provided; and how people are involved in recruiting staff.

6) Living life. When people are supported in ways and at times that are right for them it is possible to live a full and active life.

7) Seeing how it worked. It is important to take time to look at how well the plan has worked and to show what the money has been used to achieve.

'Importantly, as a Council, this work has allowed us to test the application of a resource allocation system so that we may consider such an approach on a whole system basis. Critics of In Control say the use of a resource allocation system is simply a way of gate keeping finite budgets. But any social care system requires us to do just that, and most are so opaque as to be impenetrable to people who may need support. This approach, in contrast, was transparent.'

Duncan Mackay
Head of Social Work Development
North Lanarkshire Council

How we set about implementing the in Control demonstration work

The plan for the in Control demonstration project was that up to 20 people in the area would be supported to follow the In control approach and system of self directed support.

The project team identified to take a lead on implementing the demonstration work was located in the Younger Adults Section within the Motherwell Headquarters of Housing and Social Work Services in North Lanarkshire Council.

The team comprised the Manager of the Younger Adults section; A Service Manager and Senior Officer from the section; a representative from Social Work Finance; a Social Work Assistant who provided the organisational support and an independent consultant who worked in the section part-time during the demonstration work. This group initially met fortnightly to review the progress of the demonstration work; discuss the indicative allocations of resources that were identified through using the supported self assessment questionnaire; and agree the costed support plans that were completed.

Who was included

We knew that the work would be of great interest and hopefully lead to positive outcomes so we needed to be clear who could be involved. We decided that the two priorities for being included in the demonstration work would be:

- people who did not have an existing service and who were not having their support needs met
- people where there was pressure for change in their existing support, (for whatever reason)

We also wanted to make sure the learning was spread widely across the council so we included people from across the 6 different Social Work Localities of North Lanarkshire:

- Airdrie
- Bellshill
- Coatbridge
- Cumbernauld
- Motherwell
- Wishaw

It was also decided to include people of all ages (from young children to older adults) with different reasons for needing additional support.

It was felt that this approach would provide the broadest opportunities for learning as well as ensuring that workers and families from the whole of the authority had some experience in using self directed support. We also wanted to test whether the system of self directed support could produce positive outcomes across a broad range of ages and needs. We knew we would be learning as we took the work forward so a Learning and Development group was established to provide feedback on progress and share and develop ideas throughout the period of the demonstration work.

How people came to be involved

We asked workers in each of the locality teams to refer people to the project, who met the criteria and who they thought might want to be involved. Workers were asked to ensure that anyone they put forward already had an up to date community care assessment. All referrals were processed through a Senior Officer in the Younger Adults team in the Social Work Headquarters in Motherwell and discussed at a project meeting.

This meeting was used as the way of ensuring that the broad spread described above was achieved. In fact, the age range of those who were involved in the demonstration work over the year was between 9 to 98 years.

How people got going

Once it was decided that a family or individual should be included in the demonstration work, an initial meeting was arranged with them, their social worker and someone from the project team to discuss self directed support and to help them to complete a self assessment questionnaire. The answers from this questionnaire were entered into our Resource Allocation System (RAS) to generate an indicative allocation of resources. This became the amount of money that the person or family could use to develop their support plan. Because the RAS had not been used before, the indicative allocation was discussed in the project team to test out if it was felt reasonable and appropriate before it was shared with individuals and families.

Both the supported self assessment questionnaire and the RAS were adapted and refined over the

Funding for the demonstration work

North Lanarkshire Council received a small amount of funding from the Scottish government through the Changing Lives programme to create some additional capacity to carry out, support and evaluate the in Control demonstration work over the year.

year as more experience was gained in their use. In particular, the questions in the supported self assessment questionnaire were refined to give a wider and more differentiated spread and adjusted to increase the scoring for people who needed significant support in personal care tasks.

Support planning

The support planning took longer for some people than others - some people developed a simple plan with relatively little help very quickly, whilst others took several weeks or even months to develop a plan with substantial support from their social worker. Almost everyone asked some questions about what they could spend their money on. The answer was 'anything, as long as it helps you meet the outcomes identified in your support plan and is legal'. This was a very empowering statement that made it possible for people to think differently and plan more creatively. Resources to help the support planning were gathered from a range of sources including the In Control website (www.in-control.org.uk). A simple review process was also established to take place, initially after the person had been in control of their individual budget for 3 months. In the review, we focussed on what had worked well, what needed to change and what if anything the person was concerned about, as well as ensuring that the money was being accounted for correctly.

The help people had to organise their support

During the course of the demonstration work, North Lanarkshire Council invested in creating additional time limited capacity in a national resource, the Scottish Personal Assistant Employers Network (SPAEN), located in Motherwell in the North Lanarkshire area. This ensured people could access support, guidance and training if they wished to take on the role of employer of a personal assistant. Although not everyone chose to employ personal assistants, the majority of those involved in the demonstration work did

choose to take at least part of their allocation as a direct payment of money. This may have been particularly pronounced because of the criteria for those chosen to be included in the demonstration work.

How people spent their individual budgets

People who were involved in the in Control demonstration work in North Lanarkshire spent their individual budgets in a wide variety of ways. Most people took at least some of their budget as a direct payment that they or a family member then managed directly, and almost everyone used some of their money to employ one or more personal assistants.

This is only part of the way in which people themselves made decisions and choices on the best way to spend their money...

For example,

- Vicky, the very first person to receive an individual budget in the area, spent some of her money on installing an air conditioning unit in her bedroom to help to keep herself as comfortable as possible in the hot weather; some money on accessing an Open University course as she had missed out on chances to learn, and some money on massage and reflexology – all linked to helping to alleviate her long term health condition
- Michael spent some of his money on support to attend the college of his choice, as well as having lessons to help him learn to play the bagpipes, and getting support to keep fit – all things that he enjoyed and



IN TUNE AND IN CONTROL

where he was able to be successful as a young man with additional support needs on the autistic spectrum

- Marc spent some money to help plan a holiday away with his family - instead of having to go away from his family to get a break.

All of this was done by individuals and families making choices about how they could best use their individual budget to have the most impact in their lives.

What Monica said about her experience of having an individual budget

'I am a young woman with a serious illness that restricts my physical and mental health. Therefore I had been unable to find a package of care that meets my specific needs. My mum has been my only support until now and I stay with her. Mum works full time as a professional in a school, and I have stretched her to the limit contacting her during working hours. As soon as she arrives home, I am waiting for her for total time and attention to meet my emotional and physical needs.

In Control has transformed my life, in many ways opening up a new way of thinking for the future. What makes In Control different from other support packages is the flexibility it allows me on a daily basis. With my personal assistant, I am able to access the community and venues of my choice: cinema, eating out, short breaks away, etc. (when I feel able). I am "in control" for the first time and do not feel guilty about not fitting into the ideas and plans that others have made for me.

Many thanks to everyone who has been involved in helping myself and mum through the process of In Control, especially to Caroline, my Social Worker. Caroline has taken me forward to a new life experience away from the isolation of being confined to the house. This has allowed me dignity, respect for myself and a better quality of life.'

What having an individual budget meant to Susan



Susan lives at home with her husband and was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis some 16 years ago. She gave up work 4 years ago and had been finding it increasingly difficult at home, especially when her husband was at work, due to difficulty with her balance and her increased fatigue.

At first, Susan and her husband applied for a direct payment under the existing scheme in the area, but when they heard about the In Control demonstration work, they were attracted to the increased flexibility this would bring. Susan was one of the first people in North Lanarkshire to get an individual budget and has been using this for about 9 months now. The money goes into a separate account they have opened for this purpose every four weeks. Susan spends some of the budget on employing a personal assistant to help her. She was able to employ someone who she already knew who lives locally and can work flexibly. Money to pay the personal assistants salary and tax etc goes out of her account as a direct debit to an organisation that deals with the payroll.

Reflecting on her experience of self directed support Susan commented 'I feel much safer at home now, having someone there to help and support me'

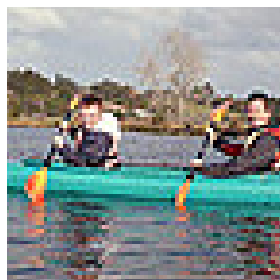
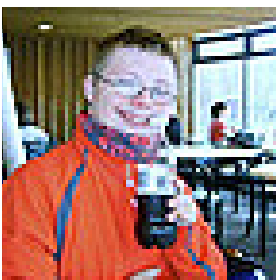
As well as employing an assistant Susan bought a small electric wheelchair to help her move around the house more easily which she adapted further to make it easier to control. She also spends some

of her money on extra physiotherapy in her own home and to help her get to a local resource, where she can meet people and gets the chance to enjoy other therapies, including yoga and aromatherapy.

Recently Susan went into Hospital to have her medication reviewed. The stay in Hospital was longer than had been anticipated at first, but during this time Susan's personal assistant was able to change the hours she worked so she was around at weekends when Susan was at home. Since Susan was fully discharged from Hospital she has made changes in how she uses her budget. She has increased the hours of support she buys each week from her personal assistant whilst still keeping within her overall allocation. Being able to use her budget in this way and make changes has been important to Susan and her family and has given them greater choice, control and peace of mind.

Susan feels **'My plan is working very well and I am enjoying the flexibility of it and being able to decide when and what I want.'**

What having a individual budget meant to John



John is 14 and is a young man with Down's syndrome who lives at home with his mum and dad. He has two older sisters who both now live abroad. He goes to a local school but has found it harder as he has got older to get to keep contact with friends outside school. He wanted the chance to be able to try some new things as well as get out more with people around his age, to enjoy more of things he likes to do.

John's family had also begun to plan about how they might all get a break and had been thinking about John going to stay with another family for a holiday. They considered applying for a direct payment under the old system, but felt there may

be too many restrictions around this, so were very interested when we talked to them about being involved in the In Control demonstration work in the area. After finding out how much money was available to John in his individual budget, John, his mum and dad developed a support plan. The first thing they did was to recruit a 6th form student from John's school as a personal assistant, to share in, and support him to take part in some social events and activities, mainly at weekends. So far, they have been to music events, sport activity and on a film making course together. John has also used some of his money for skiing lessons and for drumming tuition so he can be part of a local drumming band.

John's dad said **'It has been great for John – having the flexibility and independence to try new things with support available.'**

Next year, John's personal assistant will be going off to University, but as it's still local, she thinks she will still be able to support him in this way. John's mum manages the money and his personal assistant is paid through a local payroll firm who deal with her salary.

John has been using an individual budget for about 6 months now. His big adventure is that later in the summer he will be going on a trip to New Zealand without his mum and dad to see his sisters and young nephew. He plans to pay the fare of a family friend who will take him over and come back with him.

John said **'I miss my sisters, but going out to town with my support worker is good too.'**

What Rosemary (who is a family carer) said having an individual budget meant to her

'The payments from the In Control programme have completely transformed not only my life but also my mother's life. I am a full time carer for my mother, who will be 90 later this year. In June I will be sixty. We were really struggling financially. Over 10 years ago, I had to take early retirement on the grounds of ill health and my pension was reduced considerably. The Carer's Allowance – as all carers will know – is a sick joke. Since I have no

brothers or sisters, and no relatives who are willing to help with the care of my mother, the entire job of looking after her fell to me. She is a really lively person but the strain of caring for her twenty four hours a day was beginning to get to me. I used quite a lot of my pension money to buy in help from people.

Luckily, when I had practically reached the end of my tether, North Lanarkshire included me on their In Control pilot scheme.

Now we have money to pay for care for my mother – in her own home – so that I can have a break for twelve hours a week.

However, the best part is that we can now do what my mother loves best in the whole world – go travelling.



TRANQUIL IN TIREE

We don't go to far flung corners of the earth but we are able to take little trips to Scotland, England and Ireland. Last autumn we were able to rent a cottage in Shropshire and my cousin and her daughter came and stayed with us. These were people my mother hadn't seen for years. For her birthday, we booked an extra special few days in Aviemore – and somebody else did the cooking for a change. Later this month, we're off to Tiree for a week. Holidays make my mother come alive. Her dementia never seems so bad and she has things to talk about and to tell other people. Being in receipt of In Control money has given us a life again.'

The evaluation process

The evaluation of the demonstration project was carried out by Prof Chris Hatton from the University of Lancaster and John Waters from In Control in England.

The evaluation included contributions from a range of relevant stakeholders including:

- people who were allocated individual budgets
- their families
- Care managers and frontline Social Work staff
- Social Work managers

The evaluation was undertaken in two parts.

The first part involved gathering information using structured interviews and evaluation questionnaires and took place in early April 2009. Separate questionnaires were completed by people in receipt of an individual budget; their families and/or carers, and frontline Local authority staff who had been involved with at least one person in the demonstration work.

The second part involved holding A Shared learning event at the end of April 2009, where aggregated information gathered in part 1 was shared with a wide range of people and its implications considered. This part included all the four stake holder groups identified above.

Part 1: Information gathering

Information was collected from each of the three stake holder groups using a standard questionnaire, designed to measure the effect that having an individual budget had on that group. An independent researcher helped people to complete these questionnaires. Using a simple 3 point scale of:

- Helped
- Made No Difference
- Made things worse

the questionnaires asked people to judge whether having a individual budget had affected a number of areas of life. The questionnaires used had previously been employed in evaluations of similar work in 3 other local authorities in the United

Kingdom - Cambridgeshire, Worcestershire, and Hertfordshire - meaning the data produced could be compared with findings from elsewhere. This was particularly helpful given the modest size of the samples involved. At the point at which the questionnaires were completed, only people who had been in receipt of their individual budget for at least three months were asked to complete a questionnaire. The numbers involved were further reduced, as two of the people included in the demonstration work had very sadly died during the year.

| Stake Holder Group | Respondents |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Individual budget recipients | 7 |
| Family members | 8 |
| Social workers | 10 |

People using individual budgets

Questionnaires were returned from seven people who had been using individual budgets in North Lanarkshire for 3-9 months. There were almost equal numbers of men and women, and the group of people was diverse in their needs as identified by North Lanarkshire.

How people used their individual budget

People had used their individual budgets for a wide range of purposes:

- People to help (Support worker, employment of live-in carer, personal assistants)
- Cleaning and laundry
- Holidays
- Equipment (e.g. computer, ipod)
- Transport (Travel to/from college, taxis, electric scooter)
- Education (Courses e.g. film making)
- Access to leisure (Museums, exhibitions, cinema, music, entertainment, clubs, shopping)
- Improving health (Gym membership, acupuncture, physio at home)
- Social life and seeing friends

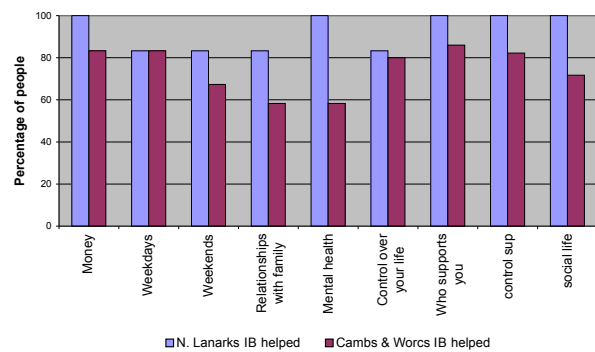
No person using individual budgets in North Lanarkshire reported a negative impact of their individual budget on any area of their life. In most areas of life, people reported highly encouraging levels of positive impact that are similar to information collected from almost 50 adults in two English counties.

However, individual budgets in North Lanarkshire had so far had less impact in the areas of neighbourhood, paid work, volunteering and helping the community compared to the work completed in England.

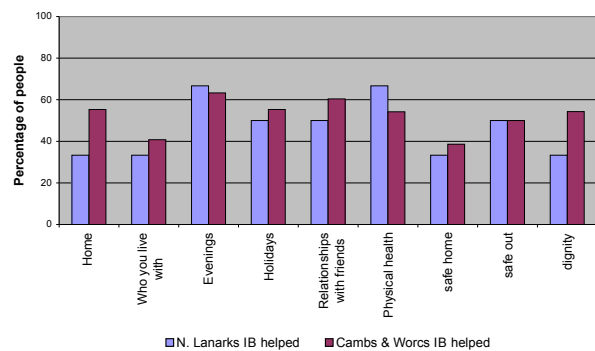
The questionnaires allowed individual budget recipients to provide comments these included:

- ‘Delighted with arrangement’
- ‘What would be helpful would be training or assistance with the financial records needed’
- ‘Happier because [I] can depend on an [the] amount of money’.
- ‘A very good thing, best thing I’ve ever had.’

INDIVIDUAL BUDGETS HELPED ALMOST EVERYONE WITH...



INDIVIDUAL BUDGETS HELPED SOME PEOPLE WITH...

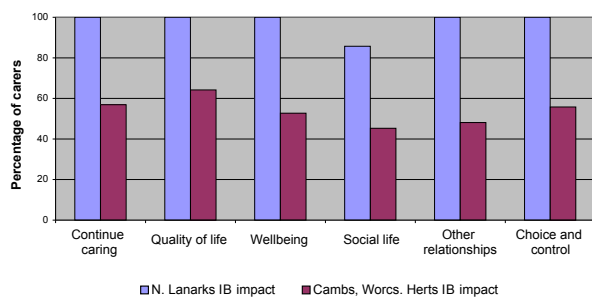


Family carers of people using individual budgets

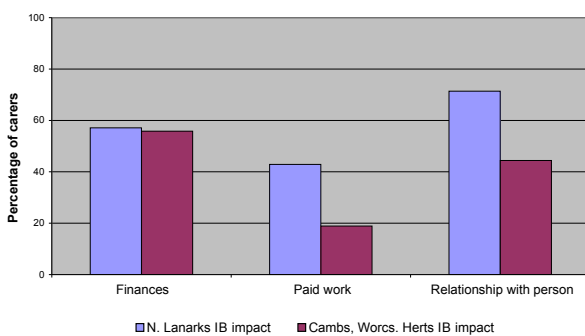
Questionnaires were returned from eight family carers of people who had been using an individual budget in North Lanarkshire. Family carers reported that half of the people using an individual budget had been using them for less than 6 months and the other half between 6 months and 1 year. People using individual budgets had diverse needs, and most had not used paid support from social services before their individual budget. Family carers were

diverse in age and gender and almost all were living with the person using a individual budget and were involved in a caring role for over 20 hours per week. All but one of the family carers reported feeling that they were very much an equal partner in developing the person's support plan.

INDIVIDUAL BUDGETS HELPED ALMOST ALL CARERS WITH...



INDIVIDUAL BUDGETS HELPED SOME CARERS WITH...



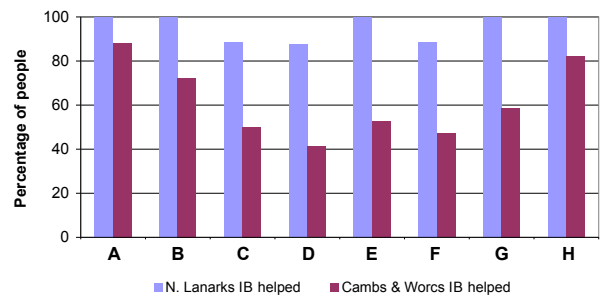
No family carer in North Lanarkshire reported a negative impact of their family member's individual budget on any area of their life. In most areas of life, family carers in North Lanarkshire report highly encouraging levels of positive impact that compare very favourably to information collected from over 50 family members in three English counties.

- 'We need to monitor the extra burden of paperwork and bureaucracy carefully. Need explicit and clear guidelines on appropriate expenditure.'
- 'Still issue about not being able to employ immediate family members.'
- 'Freed time and increased quality time.'
- 'I can go out more – meet friends. My life is much improved.'
- 'It has been a long, hard struggle to get to this stage. I am so relieved to have this money – it has made my life so much easier financially and emotionally.'

Staff working with people using individual budgets

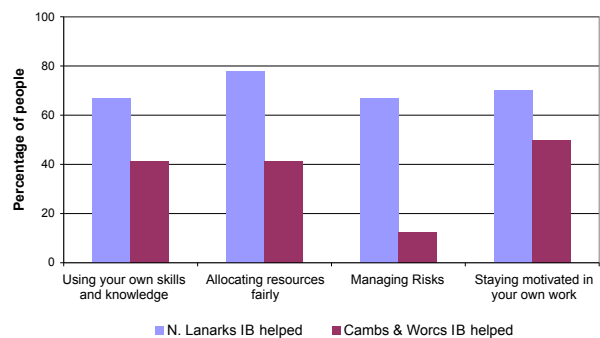
Questionnaires were returned from 10 Social Work staff, all of whom had been involved in supporting people develop their individual budgets in North Lanarkshire.

ALMOST ALL SOCIAL WORKERS SAY THAT INDIVIDUAL BUDGETS HELP WITH...



KEY: **A** Making a positive difference to people's lives; **B** Helping people plan creatively; **C** Getting the right amount of help to people; **D** Getting help to people in a timely way (when they want it); **E** Helping people to maintain existing support networks; **F** Supporting people to take an active part in their community; **G** Supporting people to take control and make choices about their lives; **H** Developing support that is tailored to the needs of an individual.

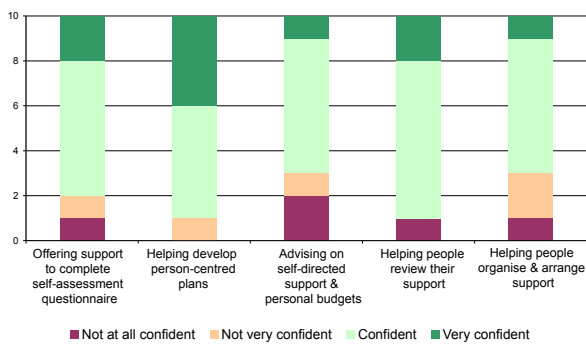
SOME SOCIAL WORKERS SAY THAT INDIVIDUAL BUDGETS HELP WITH...



One Social Work staff in North Lanarkshire reported a negative impact of the individual budget process on one aspect, that of allocating resources fairly. In most aspects, Social Work staff in North Lanarkshire report highly encouraging levels of positive impact that compare very favorably to information collected from almost 20 community team members in two English counties.

Confidence levels

The questionnaire completed by Social Work staff also asked responders to comment upon their confidence level in various aspects of the role they carried out when helping people take control of a individual budget. At least 7 out of 10 Social Work staff reported that they felt confident in all the aspects of the individual budget process we asked about.

SOCIAL WORKERS' CONFIDENCE...

Social Work staff were asked to comment on their experience of self directed support responses included:

- 'In some way there was more responsibility on the service user to find and set up services, so may be there was some reduction in my workload. However as this was the first time I had used an In Control model I worked at every step with the service user.'
- 'Individual budgets are an added workload.'
- 'It has made me think differently about how people can use allocated funds to live their lives with support that is valued and inclusive.'
- 'It has allowed families to design support for children in a way which suits all family members. It allows for thinking "out of the box" and making supports individual to each family. It also makes families accountable for their supports and spending of monies for the child thus shifting the control.'

Social Work staff were asked to identify areas in which individual budget would mean they needed improved knowledge or skills three themes emerged:

- Resource allocation and financial monitoring
- Monitoring how budgets are used
- Thinking creatively about options for support

When asked about the wider social care system and if it needed to change Social Work staff identified four common areas for change:

- To be more localised.
- To become simpler and faster.
- More resources to allow social workers to spend time with people using individual budgets.
- More clarity about the process.

Part 2: Shared learning event

Part 2 of the evaluation took the form of a shared learning event held in Motherwell on 28th April 2009. The purpose of the event was to allow a range of stake holders to consider the collective experiences of people involved in taking forward self directed support in North Lanarkshire. Participants at the learning event were given information from the first part of the evaluation and took part in one of three separate seminars for different stake holder groups, following which all participants worked together to identify key themes issues emerging from their personal experience of self directed support, the aggregated evaluation data, and the seminar discussions.

Participants at the learning event included:

- Local people who had an active personal interest in social care this included people who needed support and their family members. Many of this group had direct experience of individual budgets, or were about to take up a individual budget.
- Social work staff who had worked to support people directly with individual budgets.
- Managers and other senior staff with strategic responsibility

Summary / Key Messages from the Shared Learning Event

Before talking about what people said at the event, it is important to note the commitment and spirit with which people engaged at the event. First, people's commitment to discussing individual budgets was shown by the fact that the event was fully subscribed, with many people who had intended to attend only the morning staying all day. Second, the event included people using individual budgets with very different needs and in very different circumstances, family members, practitioners who had helped people use individual budgets and a range of managers who had been involved in the demonstration project. These different groups of people worked together in a spirit of mutual respect, with a shared aim across everyone of working together to understand how individual budgets were working in North Lanarkshire and how they could be made to work better.



LISTENING AND LEARNING

Although people at the event discussed issues in relatively small groups, before sharing their thoughts with everyone, what they said was highly consistent and therefore formed key messages, so we will simply report these key messages here collectively rather than from each specific group.

How are individual budgets working in North Lanarkshire?

Individual budget holders, family members, practitioners and managers were all very positive about the impact of individual budgets in the North Lanarkshire demonstration project. Positive themes consistently mentioned included:

- The flexibility of individual budgets, allowing for spontaneity, creativity and developing imaginative ways to support people.
- Individual budgets allowed much more control and flexibility about who was employed to support the person holding the budget, in ways that fitted people's lives much better and reduced anxieties for family members.
- Individual budgets were really useful for 'filling in the gaps' that were not provided or funded through other sources, such as physiotherapy, gym membership etc.
- In Control's approach offered more choice and control for the individual budget holder, with the balance of power shifting away from services towards the person and their family.
- Using the supported self assessment questionnaire and the RAS offered a consistent way of working out exactly how much the budget was, and what outcomes people wanted to focus on.
- Using the RAS was simpler and quicker than existing ways of agreeing levels of service needed.
- The In Control process meant that practitioners spent more time getting to

know people and their families and developing mutual trust, rather than making assumptions about what the person must need.

- The In Control demonstration project received strong support in North Lanarkshire, including highly valued support and advice from key individuals.
- The positive impact of *In Control* spread more widely than the individual budget holder to the whole family around the person.

People with support needs, family members, practitioners and managers also identified several areas where the operation of individual budgets could be improved in North Lanarkshire:

- Some people wanted the process to be quicker.
- Questions in the RAS could be made more flexible and more specific for specific groups of people, to reflect their needs more accurately.
- As individual budgets run alongside the existing benefits system, this can make the administrative task of keeping track of incomings and outgoings highly complicated.
- The process of identifying individual budgets as the most appropriate support option could take a long time.
- As the individual budgets system was running alongside existing support systems, practitioners didn't always feel that they were being allocated the time necessary to really develop and review personal support plans.
- Making sure North Lanarkshire employs a individual budgets 'champion' to act as a source of support, advice and information for those wishing to receive the money from an individual budget, family members and practitioners.
- Ensuring that expertise and commitment to the In Control approach is widely shared throughout the whole of North Lanarkshire.

Finally, people at the shared learning event wanted more clarity on a range of issues concerning how individual budgets worked, including:

- In the long-term, what the approvals process for approving personal support plans would be.
- For people over 65, how individual budgets fitted with definitions of free personal care.
- How monitoring and review processes would happen to ensure proper oversight without stifling creativity and imagination.

- Information and support for people employing personal assistants, in terms of information and support on employer liability, payroll issues, CRB checks etc.
- Step-by-step guides to help all stakeholders through the individual budget process.
- How potential conflicts between individual budget holders and family members would be resolved.
- How flexible the individual budget could be when someone wanted to make changes to their personal support plan.
- For people who were already using an existing support package that they valued, information on weighing up the pros and cons of personal support compared to what people were already using.
- Where responsibilities lay in terms of 'duty of care' and dealing with unacceptable practices.

Looking ahead and key messages for In Control in Scotland

Although most of the day focused on In Control in North Lanarkshire, people at the event also raised some key messages for social support and/or care systems in Scotland more generally, including:

- In Control provided the opportunity for a real transformation in how people were supported, with some people talking about In Control becoming the new core business of Social Work services.
- Such a shift also had the potential to radically improve the openness and transparency of support systems for people who use these systems.
- Such a shift would require major changes to current systems, with political leadership required at a local and national level
- Current complex processes for delivering resources to people using support need to be untangled and made much more transparent to people.
- Increasing transparency and flexibility in how money can be used to achieve outcomes for people may result in a major increase in demand, for which systems and responses would have to be ready.

Conclusion

The learning from the In Control demonstration Project in North Lanarkshire, and from wider findings from elsewhere in the U.K., convinces North Lanarkshire Social Work staff and managers associated with the work so far, that it is the

direction of travel for the future. The approach is consistent with progress already begun on developing self directed support, to empower people who need support to gain this in line with their own personal needs and wishes, to achieve agreed life outcomes in a transparent and equitable fashion.

Before the whole system introduction of the In Control approach can be considered however, further steps are needed:

- People with support needs, carers, service providers and politicians need to be engaged in how existing systems and arrangements need to and can change
- A range of materials for staff, service users and other key stakeholders needs to be available to explain and explore how this approach can deliver more positive life outcomes, social inclusion and citizenship.
- North Lanarkshire appropriate "adaptations" to the RAS – its supported self assessment questionnaire, allocation of financial award to the scoring and overall financial affordability checked out
- Consideration of ongoing support for staff, service users and carers to work in this new fashion need to be on hand for those who need this
- Agreement on which groups of individuals, geographic areas, age groups or care groups should next be identified for the approach to be applied
- Consideration of service user contributions to meet some costs associated with support plans needs agreed
- A process to agree a staged route for political agreement on progressing this work needs to be considered

'Social Work in North Lanarkshire is committed to the radical changes we think are needed to help people to improve their lives. We believe that this is the right approach to the challenges faced by people, who need assistance, their families and communities. This might be done by providing advice, help to plan their lives and/or to make direct support arrangements. North Lanarkshire intends to continue its leadership role in self directed support and therefore we have entitled this report: "Way Ahead".'

Bobby Miller
Manager, Younger Adults



North Lanarkshire Council is the fourth largest local authority in Scotland with a population of approximately 320,000. The council recognises the important role we play in the everyday lives of the local people we serve – our Council motto is ‘service and people first’. When they think of North Lanarkshire council, many local people will think of the services we provide to them in their daily lives, such as housing, education and transport. As well

as these essential everyday services, we are also responsible for providing help and assistance to some of the most vulnerable and socially excluded members of our community.

We are charged with ensuring that those people living in the area who need additional support with everyday living, because of age or disability, have the opportunity to lead full and active lives as full members of society. We recognise this important group of local citizens and their families have many strengths and talents but will also need additional help from time to time. This report describes an exciting innovation in the way we work to ensure the support people receive from the council is tailored to their own unique needs, wishes and aspiration.

About in Control and in Control Scotland

A social enterprise, In Control, has been working since 2003 to transform the current social care system. In Control has worked in partnership with UK central government, local authorities and people who need support to figure out a new way of organising the social care system in the UK.

In Control Scotland was launched in January 2007 as a partnership between Altrum and the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disabilities, to promote the in Control approach and system of self-directed support in Scotland. In April 2009, in Control Scotland was established as an independent and separately constituted organisation in its own right and is a member of in Control international

The intention of the work of In Control has been to ensure that those people who need support are able to lead lives as full and active citizens. In Control’s work draws from and supports work undertaken by disabled people themselves, the independent living movement, and all of In Control’s learning is shared openly. In Control’s work to reform social care features key innovations of resource allocation and

individual budgets, within a wider system of self directed support and these innovations hold potential for wider welfare reform.

This report is an account of our work and the things we believe we have learned by implementing Self-Directed Support in North Lanarkshire. The findings are not intended to represent the results of an academic study; rather they are a critical self evaluation of progress to date. The findings represent our best attempt to understand and report the things people have said to us about their experience of taking control of an individual budget.

If you would like more information about the in Control work in North Lanarkshire, please contact us either by phone: **01698 332286**; or e-mail: **incontrol@northlan.gov.uk**.

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