

# Foreword

Doncaster's Developing New Forms of Support project was commissioned by the Joint Improvement Partnership (JIP) in 2009 as part of a much wider personalisation programme. The programme aimed to support local authorities and their partners to deliver the Government's Putting People First agenda, and support transformation more generally.

Now, in the summer of 2011, the political landscape is quite different, yet personalisation continues to be a key priority for the Government. Its Think Local Act Personal strategy re-emphasises personalisation and the need to deliver authentic choice and control to social care customers. Doncaster's Developing New Forms of Support project locally mirrors the national picture surrounding personalisation - it is more relevant than ever despite the rapidly changing context.

The relevance of the Developing New Forms of Support project is derived from the fact that, whilst most Councils, certainly in Yorkshire and Humber, have over 40% of people eligible for personal budgets receiving a personal budget, the amount of authentic choice and control offered to customers is variable. This view - that there is sometimes a limited transfer of choice and control from professionals to citizens in some areas, is a very reasonable concern. It is supported by the perception that there are often no alternative local, small scale services available to social care customers with a personal budget, and fears about the quality and reliability of small scale providers.

Meaningful choice requires new creative, cost effective alternatives to mainstream services that are available to social care customers in people's own local communities. If this range of choice is not available at a local level, then the 'offer' from councils for people to take control via a personal budget is not authentic. It is this critical issue that Doncaster's Developing New Forms of Support project has directly addressed.

Specifically, the project engaged small local providers in the pilot area of Rossington and offered information, advice, mutual support, networking & training opportunities to them. This has helped the small providers to grow, and develop the skills and expertise they need to meet quality and performance standards set by the Council. This, in turn, enables creative and alternative services to be made available to social care customers.

The project has generated a number of products that will support other local authorities, their partners and of course micro-providers as they respond to the ongoing challenges of personalisation. In particular this toolkit provides valuable contacts and information enabling new providers to start up, and existing ones to be sustainable. This is available with the option to download the whole document or specific sections. Other tools developed by the project include a 'gaps in service' questionnaire, a Forum application form, a training needs analysis form, and minimum standards and code of conduct documents.

It is envisaged that the learning from the project will eventually inform the roll out to all areas of Doncaster. It is also clear that the shared learning created by this project will deliver benefits across the region as its products and tools are shared and used.

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